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Research Article

Education and modernism during the first Pahlavi era

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the performance of education in the field of developing the modernism during the First Pahlavi era and seeks to study the education functions in the field of developing the modernism through the descriptive and analytical methods and also historical approach as well as evaluating the performance of education during the First Pahlavi era. Reza Shah's government implemented the widespread program for modernization of society through the Western and Secular model with imperative approach. The department of education also had a significant contribution to government to enhance the skilled and technical labor as well as developing the modern life style among the students, and also the innovation, change and dissemination of science, and training the new elites and developing the social monitoring, but due to the mismatch between the education functions and the characteristics of authoritarian regimes and also the lack of coordination between the government policies with the objectives and aspirations of various classes of society and also due to the shortage of education budget and the large number of illiterates and shortage of facilities in Iran, most of the education functions in the field of modernizing the society had = poor performance and reached undesired results.

Keywords: Education, political and social functions, modernism, modern government, First Pahlavi

INTRODUCTION

The education is one of the most important institutions of modern world and is responsible for training the people and preparing the required human resources for organizations and complex structures of modern world. Training the human resources, whether professionally or intellectually and especially for accepting the norms governing the society and also the ideologies of governing political system and inducing the behavioral requirements of modern world, all are among the political and social functions of education institution.

This institution has left numerous problems behind in Iran over time. From the concern about changing in Iranian society, namely the defeat in the wars between Iran and Russia until the victory of Constitutional Revolution and then in Pahlavi Era, the major efforts were made to implement the

modern lifestyle and different models were utilized in each era to reach the modern society. However, none of these models were as influential as the authoritarian modernization of Pahlavi era on the structures of society. The modernism of Reza Shah Era went ahead with emphasis on the bureaucracy and military power and based on the monarchy system and the education was the best tool for encouraging the people in new society in this regard. After making the educational system governmental during the Reza Shah Era, this institution played a major role to change the people thought and establishing the Pahlavi regime ideology and training the human resources.

The basic question, which arises in this research, is as follows: What were the functions of education system to develop the modernism during the First Pahlavi Era? To answer this question, we should pay attention to the following questions: What political

and social functions did the education system have? How did the First Pahlavi government develop and control the education? How did it implement and utilize the modernism? What functions did the education have in this regard? And finally, what effect did the authoritarian nature of government have on the functions of education?

The texts are written in the field of studies on the history of education in Iran and most of them have gathered the history of education literature from the Antiquity until the contemporary era and they are among the descriptive works. In this regard, the book of "Education in Iran" by Takmil Homayoun [20] criticizes the educational policies of First Pahlavi government through the descriptive method and providing the authentic statistics for the spread of education and believes that the government diverted this institution from education and caused its unbalanced spread in Tehran City compared to other cities and villages by centralization in the curriculum as well as employing the non-expert individuals in the Ministry of Education and also making the educational system governmental. Another research is written by David Menashri (1992). In the book, "Education and the Making of Modern Iran", he investigates the efforts about the spread of education and control over the education system, and believes that the First Pahlavi took steps towards achieving its objectives as well as establishing its authority foundations by affecting this entity. However, the main focus of this book is on the Second Pahlavi Era. Another research in the field of education in the First Pahlavi Era is written by Rudi Matthee (2010). Investigating the biased view on the education during the First Pahlavi Era, this author seeks to have the unbiased view on this issue and thus it has sought to show the First Pahlavi Era successful in the field of quantitative development of education. However, he also believes that the government had implemented the policies such as the nationalism and secularism and westernization of society through the education system.

Other articles are also written about the relationship between the education and politics such as "The role of cultural policies during the Reza Shah Era in the status of education system in Tabriz City" by Naebian and Gholizdeh [14]. This article investigates the impact of centralized policies and the language and identity unification in this era and its impact on the education system of Tabriz City. The book of "Sociology of Education" by Alagheband [5] also investigates the relationship between this institution and government policies in Iran and has considered one of the major problems of education in Iran as the high centralization of government in cultural issues and plans of this institution. Confirming the above-mentioned views, the current research seeks to investigate the mutual impact of policies of modernism by the First Pahlavi government on the education and the functions of

this institution in line with the modernism policies of government.

Methodology:

This paper is conducted according to the library method and by investigating the books, articles, and documents associated with the education institution and modernism policies during the first Pahlavi era, and through the descriptive method as well as analyzing some aspects of education functions in this era and utilizing the sociological views of education on the functions of this institution.

To investigate the functions of education for developing the modernism, we need to initially study the concept of education and its functions. This institution, as an educational and training entity, plays a key role in advancing the objectives of governments. The modernism is another concept which should be explored in this regard. This phenomenon, which is resulted from the modernity thought, is considered as a prelude to most of the political and social developments in the European communities. The First Pahlavi government and its modern and totalitarian features is another concept which is investigated in this research because this government had the significant effect on the development of formal education and using the potential of institution by totalitarian feature and authoritarian modernism.

After defining the basic concepts, we analyze the collected information from relevant sources about the qualitative and quantitative expansion of education and the adopted policies of government on the way of developing the modernism through this institution and in particular, the way of utilizing the textbooks, and teacher and adult training education as well as applying the advertising organizations to achieve the objectives of government, and finally the functions of education institution for purposes of government, and their relationship with policies of First Pahlavi government and then study the other researchers' findings on the above-mentioned issues and come to the conclusion.

Isa Seddigh, an activist in the field of education during the Pahlavi era, defines this entity as follows: "The education system is a tool at the hands of community like the law, police organizations, newspaper, radio, and so on, but its way is indirect and is performed through induction of thought and inspiring the children in future generation and motivating them as well as creating the attitudes" [19]. In this paper, the education refers to the governmental department of education where is established and administrated by planning and financial, administrative and political support of governments. The education is severely taken into account by the governments due to its potential to educate people, so that some researchers have considered this institution as a tool of government for educating the abiding citizens, and others have

considered as the authority of employment, the others as the factor of creating the innovation and change in people and society. [5] This institution has various functions some of which have social and political dimensions. This paper seeks to investigate the above functions.

Employment of necessary human resources for bureaucracy (selection and transfer): This function refers to the human resources education and transferring them to various organizations and is among the most important functions of education to build a modern society. In today's communities, due to the complex division of work and various types of social classification, the individuals are trained for specific roles.

Education policy: It is the process of attracting and internalizing the norms and values of political system in the society and is considered as one of the main functions of education system; and its purpose is followed through the courses such as the history, literature, geography and so on. Furthermore, the complementary activities or the extracurricular activities of schools in the form of student associations, cultural and scouting camps, academic competitions, sports and recreation are often designed and implemented concerning the political objectives.

Personal growth development: It is another education function which builds a new society by teaching the students the issues such as the discipline in life, the independent spirit and also the personality values of modern life.

The change and innovation: The advanced society is interested in changing the values, creating the culture and adapting it to new social needs. In such these communities, the educational institutions are consciously utilized for innovation, knowledge creation and making the change.

Social supervision: Inducing the values of loyalty to the institutes of society, the education system acts as the mechanism of social control. The attraction and assimilation of social groups influenced by the common ideals and values is another method by which the formal education achieves the social discipline and control. This is achieved by promoting the language, values and common ethical criteria, and respect for the political and economic system especially in communities composing of different ethnic groups. [5]

The modern totalitarian state is another concept which should be investigated in this regard. The government in Pahlavi era is called modern since the Pahlavi Governor could achieve the objectively tools and aspects of modern state including the administrative and educational system, the modern military, tendency to Capitalism and industrial economy and the modern judicial system by conducting the successful authoritarian modernism. [18]

On the other hand, this government can be called the absolutist state because it was the first state which took the comprehensive efforts to centralize and monopolize the resources and tools of authority by developing the modern army and bureaucracy during the history of Iran and made attempts to cope with the dispersion and plurality in structure of authority in Qajar Era. [11]

During the Reza Shah era, the education was considered as a governmental matter and the government was committed to the development of this institution. "The idea, that the government should have a role in education, had no background until the early twentieth century in Iran, but the government's willingness to enter the education field was gradually enhanced. The establishment of the Ministry of Education was one of the results of Constitutional Period. From 1285 to 1300, there was a significant growth in public [state] schools". [11]

The modernism is a phenomenon was based on the modernity in West and was along with the issues such as the rationalism, rule of law, individualism, freedom and civil rights and democracy. However, it was first considered in the early Qajar mostly as the Westernism and acceptance of political, cultural and religious, etc freedom in the West. [7] In Pahlavi era, the modernism was understood in the same way with this difference that the government undertook to modernize the country and tried to achieve this aim through centralization, legislation and enforcement and utilizing the modern organizations. [2]

Through the policies such as making the community unreligious, changing the men's and women's clothing, new educational and judicial systems, and law of birth certificate, and obligatory military service law, and by implemented new laws, the government could define the new identity for people in Iran. This nature had the nature of modernity and nationalist and secular spirit and obedience to ruler. [4]

Data analysis:

Pahlavi government took numerous measures in line with quantitative development of education, so that "from 1923 to 1941, the annual registration was enhanced twelve times. In 1923, less than 55960 students registered at 648 governmental primary schools, private boarding schools, religious Maktabas, and schools of foreign Missionaries. In 1941, More than 287245 students were educating at 2336 new primary school and almost all of them were under the supervision of the Ministry of Education". [1]

The following measures were taken by the government to develop the education:

- Establishing some professional schools like the college (1922), military schools in provinces (1935), dental school and Faculty of Arts and Music (1931), and school for personnel at Department of Justice (1922), etc.

- Implementing the one-year exemption from military service for high school graduates (1926)
- Integrated curriculum for schools (1928)
- Teachers training (1934)
- Developing the centralized textbook (1928)
- Creating the mixed schools for girls and boys (1935)
- Adult education (1937) and so on [9]

The significant statistics of education in the First Pahlavi era reflect the full impact of educational policy in Iran during two decades from 1921 to 1941. In general, only a percent of Iranian population was studying at primary schools at the time of Reza Shah's abdication from the monarchy. Throughout this period, no measure was taken for making the elementary course compulsory. Furthermore, the education was not the first priority compared to other governmental activities. [11]

The big problem of this education system was its limitation to urban areas. The villages were almost deprived of educational facilities. However, since 1926, by approval of Parliament (Majlis), a half percent of income from the land taxes was spent for elementary education and the land taxes were generally received from the villagers, but the obtained revenue was invested in cities. [10] The investigation of statistics for the number of schools established in cities indicates that the numbers of established schools in Tehran were far more than other cities and this was due to high centralization policy of the First Pahlavi government. [20]

The curricula were more for memorizing rather than understanding and they were more theoretical rather than being practical for life. In general, these curricula integrated the native traditional models with foreign ones. [11] The rote memorization of lessons diminished the students' thinking power and personality. [10] During this period, the education failure and dropout were high in students with regard to the numbers of graduates. Furthermore, since the process of community specialization was at the early stages and the students were employed in labor market after completing the first stage of education or middle school, only 10% were successful in obtaining the high school diploma. [10]

Establishing the new institutions in education system such as the Thoughts Training Organization and scouting organization, etc, the Pahlavi government sought to control this institution and utilize it its benefits. The Thoughts Training Organization was among the propaganda agencies of regime and sought to perform the propaganda for regime's ideology and national integration and love for homeland and Shah and also the modernism, etc, through various methods such as the lectures, codifying the books, newspapers, plays, etc. [18]

The change in Iranian lifestyle and creating the ideal sample were among the objectives of renovation project in this period. The educational methods should be utilized to achieve this goal.

Making a nation uniform in terms of clothing and hats, promoting the Persian language as the national language, and forcing the citizens to use this language in formal documents, establishing the public schools and limiting the private schools, and monopoly of codifying the textbooks in state agencies, forcing the state staff to wear the special costumes and executing the instruction to prevent the spread of different dialects were among the mechanisms which were developed by government to implement the modernism. [4]

The modernization was performed in Pahlavi era according to the Western model. This was also observed in planning for education. In 1921, the Higher Education Council was established by modeling the Europe. This council aimed at paying attention to the curricula of schools in Europe and preparing the curriculum for teacher training centers. [6] In 1928, a new integrated curriculum was developed according to the model of French high school for high schools in Iran. [11]

The renovation project has also the secular nature in this period, thus combating the traditional and religious institutions was one of the governmental measures in line with the modernism policy. Therefore, Reza Shah implemented the plans for excluding the clergy from social issues; the programs such as prohibition of religious rites, eliminating the traditional system of education and judicial modernism and so on.

The compulsory religious education was eliminated from the curricula of schools in 1930 in order to put the seminaries under the supervision. Sepahsalar school in Tehran, was the first school where was under the supervision of government in 1931. [11]: "According to the statistics released by the Ministry of Education, the number of maktabks reached from 2402 in 1926 to 1890 in 1929, and also the number of students reached from 45998 to 35931 in the same period". [11]

According to the governmental policies for promoting the secular purposes, the government had replaced the nationalism with religious interests through the new textbooks. [10] "The governmental system sought to induce the values, which introduced the Iranian nation far away from the 1300-year history of Islam presence in this land and emphasizing the Iranian history before Islam at schools" [6].

However, the governmental secular policies were implemented like its numerous policies to establish the authority tool of government. "Since the purpose was initially to exclude the clergymen from controlling and supervising the education and taking the responsibility to government, the non-religious policy by Reza Shah was more based on the centralization rather than modernism". [11]

The First Pahlavi government utilized numerous tools to develop its objectives and paid attention to the issues like familiarizing the Iranians with the

European civilization and the statesmen, who took efforts to create this civilization in Iran as well as performing the reformation, in the textbook entitled as the "History of Civilization" at schools, and also referred to the history of newspaper and printing office in Iran and the need for imitating the European civilization, and Reza Shah's widespread measures for Westernization of Iran. (Ministry of Education, 1930, different pages)

Since the early establishment of government, it was thinking of establishing the powerful central government through centralization and this policy had the specific impact on the education. "Simultaneous with the creation of the first Pahlavi and imposing the State Employment Law in 1922 in the Fourth Parliament, the provisions were revealed for employment in state offices, holding the entrance exams and the quality of promotion" [1] and the entrance exams were popular for selection in bureaucracy. The high school and faculty graduates, whose numbers were risen due to the creation of a new education system, were employed as the administrative staff, professional technicians, director, teacher, physician or university teacher for serving in the government bureaucracy and providing the human resources". [16] The urgent need for skilled and technical manpower and the hasty effort of government to be converted into the industrial society were among the factors which encourage not only the Ministry of Education but also most of the other ministries to educate the human resources. The maximum effort of government focused on the development of high schools and centers for higher education. [11] The technical schools were established by ministries to train the technical staff. The ministries of industry, road and transportation, mining and war, and agriculture were among these ministries. [6]

According to Banani, the state was planned for utilizing the educational system and had developed the curriculum in a way that a new class of intellectuals and professionals in specialized jobs were supporting and promoting the regime and developing its ideology with the role of dependents [18]. The new middle class, which included the intellectuals, journalists, military officers, lawyers, teachers, physicians, writers and staff, was developed due to the educational reformation, expanding the state bureaucracy and capitalism by Reza Shah and became one of the main supporters of state renovation policies. [17]

Furthermore, the government sought to renovate and change the people lifestyles and stabilizing the pillars of power by developing the education among the nomads. However, this measure was implemented at the low level, but this measure sought to eliminate the nomadic system and changing them to efficient people for society, so that the schools, which were incompatible with their lives, were established for them and led them towards the

industrial society". The agriculture was taught at some of these schools, while the male Turkmen students learned the technical affairs associated with the railways at "Shahpor art school" in Bandar Shah". [11]

Providing the infrastructure for female education was the most effective plan which was implemented by the education system for changing the people lifestyles. In this period, the numbers of female schools were strongly enhanced for elementary and high schools. From 1927 to 1934, the number of girls was dramatically increased at schools, but this number was reduced after the mandatory law of Kashfe hijab and preventing some families from their girls' education. [14]

The adults' education was another governmental program for making the change in people lifestyles. "The classes for adults were established at all public schools in September 1936. There was a desire in regulations to implement and use this project as a lever to raise the national consciousness and creating the good citizen. The textbooks of these schools were about the patriotism and promoting the ancient history and Persian heritage". [12]

Research findings:

Regardless of the advocates and opponents' viewpoints on the renovations in Reza Shah era, this article investigates the performance of education institution for modernization in this era. According to Rudi Matthee, the education reforms by Reza Shah were totally different from the past and in fact this era included Iran to "New World". Reza Shah Regime was the first Iranian regime which took serious attention to elementary education and the difficulties of illiterate groups and the women education. [11], but according to the investigation and compliance of education functions for modernization through the educational activities in the First Pahlavi Era, it should be noted that this institution could not implement its major potential and even some of its functions were utilized in the ways opposite the main direction due to the influence of authoritarian and centralization state policies.

The education in the First Pahlavi Era was quantitatively developed and it implemented the government policies on the modernization of society as an entity. The government implemented its policies on the secularism, modernity and Westernization through this entity. For the impact of government on the education, the text books, lectures, teacher training, and extracurricular activities were the best tools of government.

For responding to the question about the functions of education in line with implementing the modernism in this period and the impact of state authoritarian policies on this issue, it should be noted that due to the purpose of First Pahlavi government for education entity and its efforts to utilized this institution for inducing the desired values including

the loyalty to the monarchy, linguistic and racial assimilation, modernism and Westernism for the whole population, the functions of this entity were more as the state tool for legitimization.

In this period, the education institution provided the personality and social identity and explained the Iranian identity with target values of government and thus the personal personality education was neglected.

The education in the first Pahlavi implemented the measures and plans for changing the people lifestyles. Basically, the philosophy of education in the first Pahlavi era was the change in the people lifestyles. In this regard, the primary society need, the need for professional and technical experts, became the main state plan and thus the state policy was on the expansion of high school and then the state ministries took efforts to establish the specialized schools. However, the government should pay attention to elementary education in order to change the people lifestyle. Therefore, these schools were developed and the requirements of society were taken into account in the curricula of these schools.

In the first Pahlavi Era, the education sought to encourage the youth to education and the future of country and induce them the sense of construction in order to invite them to preserve the achievements of society and more efforts by praising the Iranian race, history and culture of Iran and Iranians. However, the centralization policy of regime and preservation of traditional values and taking efforts to eliminate other languages and replacing the western life with the traditional life in Iran, etc, indicate that the education was a tool for promoting a language and culture in a society with ethnic, language and cultural diversity and also a tool for developing the Western lifestyle in a traditional society, but this policy could not develop the social supervision at least in ethnic and language groups and cultures and the traditional society of Iran. The numerous cases in documents and reports remaining from this period indicate that different ethnicities were not interested in accompany with government policies. It was due to the illiterate people's unfamiliarity with Persian language and the force for presence of officials and employees' wives without hijab in public sessions and incompatibility of presentations with people traditional and local customs.

Since most of the measures and also the established organizations like the Thoughts Training Organization were disbanded after Reza Shah Exile from Iran, it can be concluded that education institution failed to promote Reza Shah desired values in the community for the political development function as expected.

The First Pahlavi government could make a new society by the new-established institutions like the department of education. However, the absolute structure and texture of power in this period and the

governmental utilization of education for strengthening the pillars and personalizing the power prevented the education from building the modern and democratic, so that most of its functions spent for training the troops loyal to the regime and creating the spirit of subservience and dependence on the state among the school graduates. Finally, the absolute government policies and also the ethnic, linguistic and racial assimilation and combating the traditions and religion and the lack of economic resources and plurality of illiterates and the ethnic and linguistic diversity in the country, etc, were among the factors which reduced the efficiency of education institution in the field of implementing the modernization.

Discussion and conclusion:

The relationship between the education and First Pahlavi government was taken into account by most of the researchers. On the one hand, the researchers such as Rudi Matthee (2010) and also the constitutional period intellectuals, who considered the government involvement in public education necessary for development of country, evaluated this relationship as a positive correlation. However, according to those who considered the renovation in this era as a visual issue and believed that the apparent modernization in education led to the inefficiency of existing forces in bureaucracy [15] this relationship was one-way and just in line with Reza Shah's personal interests.

Takmil Homayoun [20] also considered the First Pahlavi government intervention in the education the reason for the inefficiency of this institution. "The education institution was often faced with stability due to the state and military reasons and not based on the culture and values of society, and also the religion and limited apparent adaptations of foreign countries and thus it did not progress linked to the traditions of this country" (p. 89). Akbari and Vaez [4] also believe that the First Pahlavi government should accept the model imported from the West for modernizing the structure of government and nation. This model was not derived from the inside of community, and thus it was faced with the opposition of traditional groups such as the clergymen, merchants and nomads and tribes. (P.16)

The supply of human resources needed for other new-established institutes was ones of the objectives of Reza Shah Government and it was approved by the statistics associated with the number of students and education graduates. However, the supply of skilled manpower was the minimum expectation of state from the education system. [11] In fact, strengthening the military and bureaucracy associated with Shah were among the main reasons for expansion of education institution. This is proved by the graduates' mismatched degrees with the jobs they did after graduation.

According to Khalilikhou [10], the graduates, who returned the country and also the graduates of educational institutions inside the country, had no opportunity to find the proper job and the government employed them in governmental offices just for preventing them to remain unemployed. Despite the fact that the number of educated people was enhanced, these people had the nominal and unbalanced education accumulated with the non-understood facts (P. 161). Since there was no balance between the educational institutions and industrial development, most of the government agencies explicitly disclaimed the responsibility rather than the advance of governmental goals. The direction of education at all levels of schools eventually led to a government employee. In fact, the government sought to employ the people officially due to the expansion of bureaucracy system in order to utilize this system for constructing the absolute state and absorbing the new middle class.

Utilizing the educational mechanisms and the monopoly dominance on the content and form of education system, the government transferred its desired values in the field of desired social identity to citizens. [4] Furthermore, since this government was affected by the Western models, some researchers have considered the Pahlavi Government endeavors and its collective achievements as the personal and self-interested issue for strengthening the structure and texture of authoritarian state. [3] David Menashri argues that the education was mainly efficient in social and political aspects rather than the personal education and personality in this period. [12]

All above-mentioned viewpoints about the negative effects of autocratic and centralized policies of government on the educational process of this country are consistent with the findings of this research, but this research is different from the previous works since it investigates the sociological functions of development of education in the field of modernization development and impact of state policies on these functions.

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