Chapter 3

Educational Attainment of Children and Socio-Economical Differences in Contemporary Society

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ABSTRACT

Access to education for all has been restricted due to the rigid socio-economic structures prevalent in different parts of the world. Almost every nation promotes equality in education for all in the age group of 6 to 14 years. Many international agencies and non-governmental organizations are working to improve the access to education in the developing and under-developed nations. Some of the nations have improved the child enrollment ratio, and some of the nations are lagging in spite of well-framed policies, legislative measures, and the involvement of non-governmental organizations. In this context, the chapter examines the influence of social structure on child educational attainment and its interaction from a social capital perspective. Finally, the study will provide suggestions and recommendations to the existing policies to overcome the socio-economic differences in child education from a global perspective.

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of social capital has undergone a meteoric rise to prominence over the last three decades, as even a brief search of publications and databases throughout the social sciences document. Moreover, the concept was more focussed in the field such as public health and (Morrow, 1999) and policy debates (Woolcock, 1998). The prominence is clearly reflected in educational research. Coleman (1988) and Bourdieu (1986), the figures most frequently credited with theoretical development of the notion of the social capital, both displayed an abiding interest in the sociology of education, thus ensuring that the concept would make itself known in the field of inquiry. The paper takes as point of departure on the most frequently invoked kinds of social capital – that of social class of the parents – to examine its impact on children’s educational attainment. The paper also provided a general appraisal, a review of the state of many of the key issues concerning the relationships of socioeconomic status to educational achievement. The theories and concepts, issues and debates raised here are intended for the consumption of the interested practitioner. This paper may appear implicit to those scholars immersed in the subtle complexities of class, status, caste, ethnicity, race, and other forms of social distinctions within populations; but it is hoped that even they may find it informative. Further, the paper concludes by arguing that in the educational context, social capital may be just as likely to functional as a mechanism that facilitates the inter-generational transmission of advantages as one that ameliorate its effects.

SOCIAL CAPITAL AND EDUCATION

A large number of scientific papers emphasise, in particular, the significance of the relationship between social capital and the educational achievements of an individual (Acar, 2011; Byun, 2012; Rogosic & Baranovic, 2016). Further, scholars seeking to understand why some students and schools perform better than others have suggested that social capital might be part of the explanation. Social capital in today’s terms is argued to be an intangible resource that emerges—or fails to emerge—from social relations and social structure (Plagens, 2011). Further, in the context of education, social capital in the forms of parental expectations, obligations, and social networks that exist within the family, school, and community are important for student success. These variations in academic success can be attributed to parents’ expectations and obligations for educating their children; to the network and connections between families whom the school serves; to the disciplinary and academic climate at school;
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