

# The implementation of compensatory education in Britain and the U.S.A and the criticisms levelled against it.

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يتعرض هذا المقال إلى مفهوم تعويض النقص الحاصل في التربية والتعليم . وهو مفهوم أمريكي يعني الإجراءات الاجتماعية التي تهدف إلى تخفيف أو حل مشاكل التلاميذ الذين يوجدون في وضعية غير مناسبة في مجال التعليم . وقد قمت بتحديد أهم الصفات المميزة للتلاميذ الذين يحتاجون إلى تعويض في التربية والتعليم و تنحصر في المشاكل الاقتصادية و التغريب الاجتماعي أو التمييز العنصري الناتج عن الأصل العرقي و الثقافي و الاجتماعي .

تعرضت في صلب الموضوع -بالشرح و التحليل- لأهم برامج تعويض التربية في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية و بريطانيا . و ذكرت أهم الانتقادات التي وجهت إلى هذه البرامج

## INTRODUCTION :

In this essay, I have attempted to clarify the concept of compensatory education. I have used a definition of compensatory which is a social measure aimed to solve or alleviate problems of the disadvantaged .Then I have clarified the characteristics of the disadvantaged which could be summarized as problems of economic deprivation, social alienation or ethnic discrimination. I have given also a descriptive image of the compensatory programmes In the U.S.A. The compensatory education in U.S.A is characterized by the fact that it is a response to the demands of civil rights movements.

Its target has been directed to three age-group, pre-school children, pupils in the early grades of the elementary schools, and adolescent drop-outs from high-school. I have also focused my attention on the policy of compensatory education in Britain which is based on two important reports. First the Newson Report which dealt with the education of pupils aged 13 to 16. The second is the Plowden Report which dealt with primary education. This Report made use of the E.P.A concept. The Plowden Report suggests that the authorities should act politically in favour of the E.P.A. The British government made its compensatory policy in reference to both reports, Newson and Plowden. The second part of this essay is dealing with the criticisms against compensatory education.

In the end, I have to notice here that the interest in the problems of disadvantaged children was developed as a result of a variety of movements, philosophies and ideas that came to the fore in American Society in the 1950 and 1960. The development of interest in European countries seems to have been an overflow from the United states. It was probably largely mediated through the literature and through various international bodies like Unesco, OECD and more recently the council of Europe (*Kallaghan*, 1977,p19)

- E.P.A : Educational Priority Area

**Definition of compensatory education:**

Chazan (1973) argues that "since the end of world war II there has been a rapidly growing interest in the needs of children whose school progress and life chances are adversely affected by social handicaps such as poverty, a broken or incomplete home, a background offering little stimulation, or membership of a minority social group" (P 01)

He defines compensatory education by saying that" In the mid 1960<sup>s</sup> ,the term compensatory education come into vogue to describe educational and

social measures aimed at solving or alleviating the problems faced by these children, now categorised as "socially disadvantaged" or "culturally deprived" (Chazan, 1973, P01)

Tiedt (1968) believes that "several sub-groups within the population of the United States have been indentified as disatvantaged by psychologists, sociologists and educators" (P05)

He argues also that "some authorities would include in the disadvantaged those

children who come from homes where money is plentiful but where love is lacking. The child from a broken home may also be considered disadvantaged - and in many important respect aften is- " (Tiedt, 1968, P5)

**Characteristics of the disadvantaged:** In order to clarify the characteristics of the disadvantaged, Kellaghan (1977) refers to the definition of the California Advisory Committee on Compensatory Education.

The committee used a combination of personal and environmental characteristics in their list of criteria of the disadvantaged. According to the Committee, children are disadvantaged if they are below average in school achivement as measured by standardized tests in combination with one or more of the following problems: economic deprivation, social alienation caused by racial or ethnic discrimination and geographic isolation" (Kellaghan, 1977, P16)

Kelsall (1971) believes that the socially disadvantaged children have the following characteristics:

1)" One feature that is common to all socially disadvantaged children is that their academic performance in schools is relatively poor in comparison with the average or even minimum standard achieved by middle class pupils, and which the school has, therefore come to expect of all pupils"

2)The socially disadvantaged children have a feeling of apathy or are hostile towards schools, their attitudes are almost permanent feature of their relationship with their school. They have an undisciplined behaviour which often, makes teachers complain that some of their pupils show complete lack of respect for the property of others, behave in a thoroughly undisciplined manner and constantly indulge in profanity.

3)The disadvantaged children are subject so often to frequent changes of schools. It can be said that just a damaging to a child's educational development as a poor attendance record can be frequent changes of school.

4)The last problem which faces the social disadvantaged children in a high drop-out rate from school, they fail to take advantage of, or benefit from educational opportunities .( Kelsall, 1971, P19 to 35)

### **Compensatory programmes in the U.S.A.**

In recent years, U.S.A has seen an extraordinary activity in publishing books and reports related to compensatory education; this is because of the number of problems caused by poverty and social inequality in American society ( Chazan, 1973,P02)

Chazan ( quoted in wilkerson,1970) says that" In the Post-War period a number of factors combined to make the need for compensatory education an urgent one, including the increasing value which is being placed by society on educational achievement, the wastage of talent arising from the inability of numerous children to take advantage of their educational opportunities, and a growing dissatisfaction with the school system . By some, however, the developments in compensatory education in the U.S.A are seen largely as " off-target responses" to the demands of the civil rights movement for radically integrated schools" ( Chazan , 1973 , P3)

Charzan (1973) argues about wilkerson's view by saying that " according to this view, Compensatory programmes were the outcome of insistent demand of the Negros people for better education, and to a very large extent compensatory education in segregated schools emerged as an expedient alternative to school integration" ( Chazan,1973,P3)

The compensatory programmes in U.S.A. were firstly directed to the Negros, and secondly to the Puerto Ricans, Mexican Americans and American Indians.They are minority groups living in the urban ghetto and suffuring from material and cultural deprivation in terms of the dominant culture.( Chazan, 1973,P3)

Chazan (1973) ( quoted in Gorden and Wilkerson,1966) says that" the programmes have included measures to alleviate poverty, the provision of extra medical facilities, the rehousing of families, the building of new schools, changing teaching approuchs, devising new educational materials and techniques, increasing the impact of educational technology, extending children's experience and establishing projects to involve parents and the community.They have also aimed at the reduction of the size of classes and the increased availability of specialized supportive personnel for the teacher" (Chazan , 1973 , P4)

Compensatory programmes in the U.S.A have been directed for children and young people at all educational levels. These programmes were stimulated by the support of the Economic Act (1964), and the Education Act( 1965) issued by the Federal Government. The compensatory programmes in the U.S.A have been dealing with three age-groups. I shall draw light on each of these age-groups.

2)Pre-school projects: It was largely admitted in the U.S.A. that early intervention is beneficial to the disadvantaged child. This is why a large number

of pre-school projects have been developed in the U.S.A. First of all they start with the "Headstart Programmes" which began as eight week experiments in the summer of 1955, and expanded to full year. The purpose of these programmes is to prepare disadvantaged children to cope with later school life and to prevent - in some way- development deficit which would hamper their educational progress ( Dill and Spreeche 1969 , quoted in Chazan 1973, P5).

1)Follow through programmes: the follow through programmes have been focused on the early grades of the elementary schools. "They have been designated to the extinction of educational gains initially made in the pre-school compensatory programmes". The follow through programmes started in the School year 1967/1968.(Chazan , 1973, p6).

3)Programmes for early drop-outs: programmes for early drop-outs were taken in consideration by the Economic Opportunity Nationwide "Upward Bound" programmes. Their aim was to identify and help potential college student who need to be favoured School councillors have played a role to pick out such students in high school to support them and to advise them to take the step of higher education

Usually , the contact is arranged with a "sponsoring" college, and over a period of time, the relationship between pupil and college improve especially through the summer programmes. There are common features of the programmes for early drop-outs, such as special classes, tutoring, job training , work experience ( Wilkinson, 1970, quoted in Chazan, 1973, p6)

### **Policy of compensatory education in Britain:**

Chazan , in his book " Compensatory Education ,1973" reports that "in Britain although there has been little experimentation with compensatory programmes, the problems arising from educational handicaps associated with membership of families of low " social class " have received a great deal of

study and have been comprehensively documented in both official reports and research publications" (P10).

But in his book " Deprivation and the Infant school, 1978" he argues that in Britain " Although both research studies and official reports have highlighted the adverse effects of an unfavorable home background on a child's progress at school, action to help disadvantaged children has been more limited". (P1)

He draws attention to the Newson Report (1963) which he said " dealt with the education of pupils aged 13 to 16 of average and less than average ability ". He added that " the Newson enquiry included in its sample a group of schools specially selected for the known difficulties of their social and physical environment, and the Report comments on the severity of problems of these schools, particularly over educational retardation, ill health , truancy and delinquency" ( Chazan , 1973 , P11)

Chazan (1973) also, focused his attention on the Plowden Report (1967) which dealt with primary education and made emphasis upon the more seriously deprived children who are the main target at which compensatory education is aimed (P11). He gives more explanations about Plowden Report. He said that " the Report has discussed in some detail the educational needs of primary school children in deprived areas and proposed a nationwide scheme for helping schools in neighbourhoods where children were most severely affected by a combination of social and educational handicaps" (P11). The Report used the concept " Educational Priority Areas" which refers particularly to the grossly deprived areas. The Report recommended that schools in E.P.A areas should be given special help so that they could supply a compensating environment (Chazan,1973,P11).

Chazan (1978) points out that " the concept " Educational Priority Areas" has tended to dominate thinking on the need of deprived children in Britain". He

argues that " the identification of such areas is a useful starting point in the redistribution of resources which is needed to bring extra help to families suffering from social and economic disadvantages" (P12)

Chazan (1973) ( quoted in Halsey 1972) said that on the basis of action-research in England, Halsey concluded that the concept of E.P.A is a socially and administratively viable unit through which one can apply the principle of positive discrimination. Even though it is difficult to define precisely the " E.P.A" areas, Halsey, is still confident in using this concept , however ,he carefully points out that while a focus on locality is important " In the end the appropriate unit is the individual and his family" ( Chazan, 1973 ,P2)

In order to see the application of the concept " E.P.A", we must give some examples applied in Britain by researchers. The best example is " the Oxford Study of Educational Priority Areas" which was an action- research project in four E.P.A's (Deptford, in London, Balsall Heath, in Birmingham, Liverpool 8, and Denaby Main, in the West Riding). The essential idea of E.P.A as Halsey (1975) points it out " is to produce a quantitative measure of concentration in a given area of the social " have-nots" and to turn this assessment of disadvantage into a financial formula of positive discrimination which would determine the flow of extra resources from Central to Local Government for education"

( Ruston and turner ,1975 , P47)

I would like now to select the survey of West Riding Project as an example to help us see the social effect registered on the disadvantaged children. The survey of West Riding E.P.A has concentrated on the features most relevant to the educational and social fields. By the end of 1972, there have been a tendency towards improving accommodations and housing of the disadvantaged. Also, a tentative to built new schools and extension of others have been going well enough. There have been a much concern of the staffing

problems which face several schools in 1969. As a remedial to staffing problems some schools have received extra staff to relieve head teachers who were previously responsible for a class. The creative work and activity methods have spread to more of the primary schools. ( Smith, 1975 , P54 , 55 , 56)

After drawing up the policy of compensatory education in Britain in the more academic and research level. I would like to focus now on the practical aspect of such policy on disadvantaged children.

Based on Plowden Report, the practical aspects of Britain's policy was not of great deal of actions as Chazan points it out, but nevertheless, it starts in several directions. In 4<sup>th</sup> April 1967 the D.E.S announced that out of the £ 54 millions to be reserved to school buildings in 1968-69, 6 percent ( 3 millions £) was to be directed to schools in the areas known by the Plowden Report as "E.P.A". From the 1<sup>st</sup> April 1968 teachers were to receive an extra £ 75 per annum, if they are teaching in schools of exceptional social difficulty. The second remarkable event was the announcement in the summer of 1974 of an increase in the total amount available for payment to teachers who are working in areas of social difficulty. The increased amount of money was to £11.4 millions.

There have been a good response of government in favour of the disadvantaged when came the announcement of setting up of three units by the DES, in August 1974. The first is the Educational Disadvantage Unit which has the duty to serve as a focal point for consideration of matters, at all stages of education, connected with educational disadvantage and the education of immigrant, to influence the allocation of resources in the interests of immigrant and those identified on the best currently available criteria, as suffering educational disadvantaged ( Robinson, 1976 , P54 , 55).

### **Criticisms against compensatory education:**

There have been a lot of criticisms against compensatory education from many social scientists. The criticisms have been firstly focused on the concept itself, for example Bernstein(1972) argues that " the concept of compensatory education" " serves to direct attention away from the internal organization and the educational content of the school , and focus our attention on the families and children" ( P106). He points out that we should not talk about "offering compensatory education to children who in the first place have not, as yet, been offered an adequate educational environment "(Bernstein , 1972 , P106)

In order to prove his point of view, Bernstein (1972) brings some information from Newson Report. He says that " 79 percent of all secondary modern schools in slums and problems areas were materially grossly inadequate". He thinks that " we should stop thinking in terms of " compensatory education" but consider instead, most seriously and systematically the conditions and contexts of the educational environment" (Bernstein,1972 , P108)

Halsey (1973) believes that compensatory programmes have set themselves unrealistic objectives. This problem as he said " is particularly marked where vague non-educational goals are put forward for example " breaking the poverty cycle" (P21)

Charzan (1973) in his book " Compensatory Education" sums up the main critics levelled against compensatory education.

1)He believes that a compensatory education has not been successful in achieving its aims and should be considered as a lost cause . He argues that " in 1967, after a survey of about twenty compensatory programmes in the period 1957-1966, focused on Negro pupils in primarily Negro schools, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights concluded that while it was satisfied that

such programmes would be helpful to individual disadvantaged children, there was no evidence that any of the programmes reviewed had significantly raised the achievement of participating pupils, as a group (Chazan , 1973 , P15).

2)The second point is concerning the role of genetic factor in the education of pupils. According to Chazan's point of view, compensatory programmes have tried to change what cannot be changed to any great extent such as genetic factors. He said that they are much more important than environmental factors in producing differences in intelligence (P17).

In order to find a support to his point of view Chazan (1973) refers to Jensen who said that " extreme environmental deprivation can keep the child from progressing in learning, but an enriched educational programme cannot push the child above that potentiel" . Jensen 'idea is based on the assumption of the race differences. He believes that Negro children score something like 15 points below white children on intelligence tests. He claims that these tests have been found empirically . This criticism does not have convincing arguments, because Unesco has declared in 1951, that "according to present knowledge there is no proof that the groups of mankind differ in their innate mental characteristics, whether in respect of intelligence or temperament" ( Eysenck , 1973 , P19)

3)Chazan (1973) criticises compensatory education because there have been an emphasis upon the identification and labelling children as " disadvantaged" (P14). His argument is based on the fact that " the labelling of any handicaps is fraught with difficulties and often encourages stereotype thinking" (P14).

He gives as example that some children from the poorest homes do well in school and they have no problems, while some children from middle class

families are suffering deprivation such as parental warmth and affection. He concludes that we have to use another term which could replace the word "disadvantaged. In this point , I disagree with Chazan , I do not see the problems of "disadvantaged" childrens related so much to the term itself . The solution to their problems is not done by chosing the best qualification for them

4) There has been too much emphasis in compensatory education on the significance of the early years of the child's life in the shaping of his later development (Chazan , 1973 , p14 )

Chazzan justifies his point of view from the interpretation of Piagetian Theory by ( El Kind 1969) who believes that the concentration of compensatory effort on the pre-school age is not approved scientifiquely. But the years from six to twelve are much more important . ( Charzan, 1973 , P19). The same point of view is held by Bernstein (1970) who said that the early years are of great significance for child's later developement.

5)The last criticism against compensatory education is levelled by Robinson(1976). Ronbinson (quoted in Barnes and Lacas ,1975) Said that the question which we have to ask is whether the policies of positive discrimination reach the majority of disadvantaged children . From the (Barnes and Lacas) investigation the answer for this question is unfortunately « no » .

Robinson (1976) reported that, Banes and Lacas, have been using data from a survey of the reading performance of all eight year old children in London Junior Schools in 1968, and the performance of the same children when aged eleven in 1971, and information gathered for the ILEA deprivation Index.

They conclude « it seems likely that the majority of children are not in disadvantaged areas and the majority of children in the disadvantaged areas are not disadvantaged (P19)

The authors ( Barnes and Lacas) go further to say that positive discrimination is based on schools – in a way – that there will be a hope for individuals to reap some benefit .

It seem to me that this findings are quite strange, but this things could happen because of the difficulty to define exactly who need to be helped. The policy of compensatory education is using the EPA concept as a tool to differentiate between areas of priority, so that the policy could act in favour of some areas ; but some times it happens that some areas does not need help.

**Conclusion :**

From this essay, which is covering the compensatory programmes in both USA an UK, and the criticims against them, I can draw a deduction about the policy of compensatory education. It seems to me that compensatory education is not enough to solve or alleviate the social problems of the disadvantaged children. From the criticisms levelled against compensatory programmes, it was shown clearely that compensatory programmes have not done a lot to these children qualified as “ disadvantaged ”.

I think that the problem of the disadvanteged children is within the social and economical system as a whole. It is not possible to solve – forever- the problems of disadvantaged children, if the social and economical system is not helping for that. It is because of the malfunction of the social and economical system in society that the problems of disadvantaged emerge on the surface of the facts.

In order to exterminate the disadvantaged's problems, we have to revise the efficacy and the righteousness of our social and economical system.

I can give some examples to clarify my idea. We all consider that sub-groups in American society , such as Negros Porto-Ricans , Mexican American ,in some way, are in a desadvantaged situation. Their grave problem is because the

American society as a whole have a specific argument about them which is not respectable - so that they are in a disadvantaged situation even some of them are not lacking money. The same example could be said about a classe society. The people in a lower classe have a lack of opportunities and in deduction have a lack of material commodities. It is not possible to compensate their education by offering them some of these needed materials. In fact they don't need a temporary solution, but they really need a helpful society and a rightful social system

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