

MASS EDUCATION AND MASS CONSUMPTION

(Mass education is adult and community education per se. It is an effort to make the people in general basically and functionally literate. Basic literacy is concerned with the development of the ability to read and write. Functional literacy goes beyond basic literacy, enabling the individual to read with understanding, to write letters, compute in the mathematical processes, acquire fundamental knowledge in health and citizenship, use his reading and writing skills to improve his social and economic life. A functionally literate individual is an enlightened and well-informed person capable of participating in the affairs of the community.)

(Considering the present knowledge explosion brought about by new discoveries and advances in science and technology, the populace needs continuing education if it were to adjust itself in

a fast changing economic and social environment.)

Mass education is the concern not only of the schools but also of the homes, the churches, the radio and TV stations, the newspapers and book publishing houses, civic organizations and business and commercial establishments. These agencies and institutions can disseminate knowledge and information, a cursory analysis of the pamphlets, posters, cartoons, films, lectures and community assemblies.

In order to show the correlation between mass education and mass consumption, cursory analysis of the Philippine economy should be made. (The Philippines is blessed with rich natural resources, yet it has remained a developing country the past several years. Its economic system is still under subsistence economy. The lack of concerted and effec-

tive effort in mass education, explains why its natural resources remain untapped. The people have not acquired the necessary vocational and technical education that would enable them to utilize fully the country's natural resources.

The Philippines exports raw materials such as logs, abaca, ore, copra and other products, only to import them in processed and manufactured forms. As a consequence, the margin of profit is greater for the manufacturers than for those exporting them in raw form. The implication of this observation is that (unless the human power resources are developed through education and training the country cannot rise to greatness above the degree of educational achievement level of its people. Educated and trained individuals usually occupy key positions who serve as agents of development. In simple terms, mass education facilitates the entry of the people, young and old, into productive employment.)

The educational achievement level of the Philippines is low compared with more

progressive countries. Studies on school dropouts point to the fact that almost half of the pupils enrolled in Grade I drop out after Grade IV. This means that the average Filipino is a grade-fiver. In the rural areas, the figure is even more skewed because the average rural folk is a third-grader. Based on a recent study in Rizal province, grade-pupils are still not functionally literate. In other countries, the educational achievement level is within the high school years.

If one-half of the 33 million Filipinos are not functionally literate, there is need to exert more effort on mass education. Education of the masses, by all means, must be the concern of all, be they in the Government service or in private life.

(Some people live in affluence, others live in destitute and misery. What happens to the persons next to them, affects their life. As such, the cleavage between the rich and the poor would lead to social unrest and unless a form of safety valve is applied, the situation may lead to an explosive point — that of unwarranted violence

The importance of mass education is made more imperative today than before in view of population and knowledge explosion. Economists point out that population growth exerts pressure on the economic resources of the country that deters economic development. By necessity, production and consumption must be equated in order to prevent social and economic dislocations.)

Consumption of the bare necessities in foods and manufactured articles is on the minimum among the low-income group. The figure on average family annual income gathered from the Bureau of Census and Statistics as of 1961 is ₱1,800. By computation, the monthly income is ₱150 and the daily income is ₱5. If the average size of the family is six, each member has ₱0.83 for daily expenses.

It should be mentioned that the figures refer to the average Filipino family or the middle income group. What about those who belong to the low-income bracket such as the farmers and the laborers? The daily in-

come of these people would be obviously less than the average, an income in which it is not possible for the family to have a decent house, presentable clothes, good food and adequate education of the children. These are the people who cannot purchase some luxuries in life because of the high cost of living.

The masses cannot afford to stay on a rut of ignorance and poverty for a long time. Society has the responsibility of helping the masses extricate the people from the bondage of want. Mass education is a significant factor in narrowing the socio-economic stratification in a society.

As the people are enlightened through mass education, they will soon gain added vocational skills and brighter outlook in life. The consequence is increased income and with increased income, increased purchasing power follows. In addition, the increased purchasing power of the masses will support the industrial and commercial establishments in the form of greater consumption.

Therefore, economic plan-

ning should integrate education in the facets of the national plan. Infrastructure and education should receive priority consideration if the country were to accelerate socio-economic development. The principle behind such plan should be that education in an economic investment. Positive steps have

to be taken to provide adequate education for the masses today and several years hence. The more educated the masses, the higher the income level that will certainly increase production and consumption. — *Petronilo A. Buan, Senior Executive Assistant, UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines.*

BANKRUPTCY

The following note was found among the effects of a businessman after his death. He had long been known for his frequent lapses into bankruptcy.

“I hereby name the following six bankers to be my pall-bearers. Since they have carried me for so long during my lifetime, they might as well finish the job now.”