

Explore the link  
between its provision,  
equality and social  
inclusion of  
educatio...

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Education policy, Equality and its social inclusion Policy can be defined as anything that governments, intergovernmental organizations or institutions choose to do or not to do. Public policy refers to actions and the position taken by the state that consists of range of institutions that share the essential characteristics of authority and collectivity. Public policies are normative and express both the end and means designed to steer the action and behavior of people. Policy refers to things that can be achieved in principle, to matters over which authority can be exercised (Rizvi & Lingard 2010, p. 4). Public policies such as the education policy of any country and by any government must emphasize the purpose and the goal of education. Any education policy should be aimed at having an effect in the broader social cultural and economic domains; Policies can either be distributive or re-distributive. Distributive policies simply distribute resources, human labor and otherwise while redistributive policies seek to intervene against disadvantaged through positive discrimination mostly but not always in relation to funding (Basit & Tomlinson 2012, p. 32). Britain has tried to adopt education policy that is based on social inclusion and equality in its national education curriculum. The education policy outlines social inclusion in the curriculum; the policy outlines different principles that ensure there is social inclusion in the education system. These principles include the setting of suitable learning challenges; responding to pupils diverse learning needs; and overcoming potential barriers to learning as well as assessment to individual and groups of pupils. In these principles, issues of race, gender, disability, sexuality, religious and cultural differences, special needs and ethnicity tend to be fore grounded. However, the policy has trivially

addressed issues of social class. Social class is either forgotten or disregarded in the discussion of social exclusion in education (Hill & Helavaara 2009, p. 42). The education policy does not draw the distinction between social inclusion/exclusion versus equity and equality. In matters of public policy such as the education policy, social inclusion is not the same as equity. For instance, the unambiguous emphasis in government education policy on raising achievement standards plays a big role in increasing inequality. Furthermore, the emphasis on social inclusion downplays the gross inequality and privileges enjoyed by the elite private schools within hierarchical educational structure (Hayes & Stidder 2012, p. 8). Equality has been the target of the policy makers in the education system during the post war period in Great Britain. From 1944, the British government included 'equality of opportunity' in the rhetoric of schooling. In 1960s and 1970s policy makers were mostly concerned about the equality of opportunities in education. The policy changed towards the twin goals of greater equality and increased economic growth. During this period, research indicated that, curriculum, syllabus and content excluded the experience of girls and women. At the secondary level, where choice was available, girls tended to opt for humanities, languages, and social science while boys took science, mathematics and technological subjects. Additionally, student tended to be directed to traditionally male and female subjects and careers. Girls' careers were believed to be less important than boys. In relation to performance, girls were seen to be performing well in primary level although they did slip back at the secondary level especially in science and mathematics. In general young men were seen to have a greater advantage in the labor

market. This is because the majority of young women tended to opt for low paid jobs that were regarded to be feminine due to their low occupational aspirations. There was a perceived school curriculum that was unwritten which was found to exert pressure on students to conform in sex-specific ways. Social inclusion and equality have become the national educational policy priority during the postwar period. It has become the key statutory objective and teachers have been encouraged to engender through the national curriculum inclusion statement. The statement expects that teachers will take account of the diverse needs and experiences of all pupils in their planning and teaching. Teachers are required to acknowledge the requirements of both boys and girls, in addition to pupils with specific, educational needs. Pupils with disability, pupils from different social and cultural settings, those of different ethnic groups including travelers, asylum seekers, and those from diverse linguistic and religious background (Furlong & Phillips 2001, p. 48). In the delivery of socially inclusive curriculum, teachers are entrusted statutorily to value pupil diversity and enable people to develop an understanding of different groups and at the same time view differences in others positively. A socially inclusive curriculum should allow pupils to see their identities, histories and experiences positively incorporated in the curriculum. Teachers should have high expectations of all pupils, set suitable learning challenges and overcome potential barriers to learning and assessment for individual pupils and group of pupils. Teachers are expected to challenge any form of stereotype, prejudice, attitude and racism in relation to class, disability ethnicity, gender, culture, religion, language or even sexuality. This fosters the participation of all pupils' fully in

class and develops the concept of equality and social inclusion in the education system (Furlong & Phillips 2001, p. 48). References List Basit, T. & Tomlinson, S. (2012). Social Inclusion and Higher Education, Bristol, Polity Press. pp. 32-34. Furlong, J. & Phillips, R. (2001). Education, Reform and the State: Twenty-Five Years of Politics, Policy, and Practice, London, Routledge. Pp. 44-48. Hayes, S. & Stidder, G. (2012). Equity and Inclusion in Physical Education, London, Routledge. pp. 8-14. Hill, D. & Helavaara, R. (2009). Equality in the Primary School: Promoting Good Practice Across the Curriculum, London, Continuum publishing group. Pp. 41-45. Rizvi, F. & Lingard, B. (2010). Globalizing Education Policy, London, Routledge. pp. 2-8