

WHAT WENT WRONG WITH EDUCATION?

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ABSTRACT

The present article is based on the system of education prevalent in our country. The different problems facing the education system have been mentioned in the article. The measures for the remedy have also been suggested by the author.

INTRODUCTION

All human endeavor is directed towards single goal-achievement of happiness. Education is no exception. Happiness is a state of mind originating from satisfaction which is again dependent on a person's thinking. A person can feel happy even if he / she is a pauper and a person can feel sad even he / she is richest with all luxury of life. Education can become a powerful tool to train individuals and channelise their thought process in right direction with superb power of positive thinking and negate negativity.

Education has to be relevant to the students in relation to the present as well as to the future.

Man is not just his body. He has a body, mind and intellect and perhaps, a spirit. Unless one pays attention to all the aspects of human existence, one cannot have happy, well adjusted persons who can accomplish difficult tasks. A burning example is the case of mythical Pandava Prince Arjun. He was taught by teachers like Drona and yet when he came to the battlefield for the most crucial battle of his life, he laid down his arms and refused to fight till he acquired wisdom from lord Krishna himself. Before his enlightenment, he was proficient but not efficient.

It would be helpful at this juncture to know the concept of basic learning needs defined in the "World Conference on Education for All" (1990) held in Jomtien, Thailand. These needs comprise both essential learning tools-literacy, oral expression, numeracy and problem solving and the basic learning content knowledge, skills, values and attitudes required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in developments, to

improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning.

No society can afford to remain static and unsensitized nor would its people like to stay unconcerned with the scientific and technological advancement and achievements. Information technology has grown rapidly in the recent past. Certainly it is going to open a new vista of sensitization, consciousness, awareness and adaptation of the curriculum which would meet the demands of the pupil and the society because new categories of jobs are emerging with demands of advanced training. Students as well as their parents recognize this shift. Education has to prepare students for this segment also.

Secondly, we have not change our mindset. The vulnerability of Planet Earth has also become evident during this century. Everyone in the world has come close to everyone else. We have become neighbours but we are not neighborly. We have medicines and developed medicinal science which can reduce pain, but we have not learn how not to inflict pain on others. Attitudinal change is the need of the hour and education, to be successful, must strive to bring about this change through education.

REASONS FOR FAILURE

Education, in its present form, is usually concerned with only one aspect viz. intellectual. This is why it fails to bring happiness.

The plain truth is that our education system is relevant only for one-third of our people; it leads them to jobs in organized and semi-organised sectors, but it is not relevant for the rest of the people who mostly live in villages without any assurance of economic demand for their skills.

One important factor for failure of education system is lack of dignity of labour or manual work. This is the root cause of many of

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our ills. The general apathy in the children for manual work is due to a very strong age-old psychological factor that working with hands is inferior and to be done by inferior people.

Another important factor also contributes to aggravate the situation. The rapid developments in technology are demolishing the old social framework. The protection offered by large/joint families, communities and tribes has disappeared. Earlier one learnt something about the art of living by just living in a large family. This has also disappeared due to nuclear families which has increasingly become the choice of most of the new generation persons. With the growth of technology and urbanization, one becomes more and more dependent and worried about daily needs such as water, electricity, fuel, transport and housing over which one has no or little control. Thus for survival in a city, one needs new skills and different ways of thinking and behaviour. Sometimes, the people thus migrated from small towns or villages to big cities find themselves under stress because of the pressure of cultural change they experience. This unidirectional migration of educated people from the rural areas to cities generally happens because the living conditions in the cities are far superior to those in the rural areas.

The rigidities within the system deny admission to several students to courses of their choice. The system is thus full of unresolved riddles leading to many tragic instances of unrealized human potential. It is important to note that novel ideas can never replace indigenous thinking in resolving such riddles. Moreover, what is good for one country may or may not be good or relevant for the other country/ countries.

At this juncture, it would be relevant to quote the 'Father of Nation' M.K. Gandhi who once said that "I would like to keep windows open to breezes from all corners of the world but will refuse to be blown off by any one of them."

Yet we are confronted with another serious problem, i.e. the problem of unemployment and also of underemployment. Thus, the wastage in the education system is enormous. A related phenomenon in contrast is the brain-drain involving migration of those trained in emerging areas in excellent institutions to the developed world.

Last if not least is the problem of

regionalism, casteism, favouritism and other associated considerations in our educational system while recruiting professionals for education despite the fact that it is said in the NPE (1986) that "Recruitment of teachers will be merit based to ensure objectivity". The facts are far from truth. The individual who has no source/approach is seldom selected. On the other hand, less qualified and even under qualified persons are selected throwing all norms of recruitments to the winds. In most of the cases candidates are selected even prior to the interview schedule. Such instances make our system sick since the qualified and meritorious candidates demoralize and depress for no fault or theirs. Their faith evaporates and sometimes they feel that one should not be fair and honest and try to adopt different routes to be successful in future.

SUGGESTIVE REMEDIAL PROGRAMME

Education, to become relevant must get linked intrinsically to the lives of the people, their hopes and aspirations. Money no doubt is needed for educational reforms, but money alone, whatever its quantum, can never achieve the goal. The more significant price that the society has to pay for education includes the investment of thought, of dedication, of sustained hard work by teacher, students, educational administrators and other, of courage to take hard and unpleasant decisions and above all, of willingness to change the society.

Since education is also a social experience through which children learn about themselves, develop interpersonal skills and acquire basic knowledge and skills. This experience should begin in early childhood, in different forms depending on the situation, but always with the involvement of families and local communities.

Education is one of the few forces working in the society for equality and if quality education is available only on the basis of ability to pay, then obviously the objective of equality will not be well served. In such a situation the local bodies should have a clear target of mobilization of resources for education and be responsible for some levels of education.

Educational experts in India claim that

we are on the threshold of a revolution. Whether this revolution will be productive or abortive will depend on our capability to devise a technology which will update and extend education. Qualitative improvement of education is dependent on curriculum reform, which in turn is expected to trigger introduction of improved teaching and learning approaches and methodologies, teaching enrichment programmes, examination reform and production of innovative material suited to different needs.

The curriculum, therefore, needs an overhaul and it should be framed as per the needs of the area and its people.

There is need to bring about attitudinal change and spread the message that problem of unemployment can best be tackled through vocationalisation which essentially includes manual work and after sensitization, the curriculum should include a very strong vocational component pertaining to the skill development relevant to the local needs.

Tomorrow's students will be their own instructors, with a computer programme as their tool.....the traditional concept of technology no longer suffice. Reading, writing, arithmetic will be needed as they are today, but literacy now has to go well beyond these foundations. It requires numeracy; it requires a basic understanding of

science and of the dynamics of technology; it requires an acquaintance with foreign language. It also requires learning how to be effective as a member of an organization, as an employee.

Tomorrow's educated person will have to be prepared for life in a global world. He or she must become a "citizen of the world" in vision. Horizon, information. But he or she will also have to draw nourishment from their local roots and, in turn, enrich and nourish their own local culture.

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