



Challenges Of Current Education System & Spiritual Education

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ABSTRACT

“By Education, I mean the all-round drawing out of the best in child & man-body, mind and soul”. M.K.Ghandhi. This definition of education is apt in today's time where the all-round development has mind & body, but not soul. In ancient times education was imparted in Guru- Shishyaparampara (Master- Disciple system) which is now more formal system of teaching i.e. school system. Primary, secondary and higher education is imparted in a group and in a systematic, orderly form in schools and institutes. Students are taught by many faculties and are exposed to multiple subjects at a given time. Today's education is completely subject oriented where you have to memorise certain facts about particular subjects and reproduce those on the examination day .It's more like a memory test than learning test. This has resulted in a situation of learning crisis. Today's education teaches the student to be competitive & to always win and score. It doesn't teach them to be practical that learning while making mistakes is fine. It doesn't teach them to be sensitive enough towards other colleague's needs and sentiments. It teaches them to be a good fighter but not a good human being .The road ahead is not just to make students ready for future challenges but also to sensitise them towards becoming a good human being first. This change is possible by changing the mind-set of the people. This is possible only by including subjects like human values,ethics,and emotional well –being in the school curriculum at primary level only. This can do wonders and bring positive results. This will not only empower them to fight& survive in a competitive world but will make them prosper with self- esteem and live a dignified respectful life. This will improve the inner well –being of the people of the society. The overall health of the individual and society depends upon the inner well – being of the individuals and not merely upon economic status of the individual ,society and nation.Inner well – being is possible only through spiritual and value – based education.By doing so we'll truly achieve the above said definition of education given by M.K. ghnadhi i.e.”By Education, I mean the all-round drawing out of the best in child & man-body, mind and soul”.

KEYWORDS : Education , Curriculum , Spirituality , Value based Education

Introduction

“Education is the foundation stone of life. Education is not preparation for life, Education is life itself”- John Dewey.

This definition of Education has a holistic approach towards education.

Education is the only tool which can mould the person in the desired form and prepares him & develops him to survive and adjust with the surroundings so as to lead his personal as well as social life successfully. Let's understand the literal meaning of education first.

Educationalists & scholars have opined that word education is derived from the following Latin words

Word from which derived	meaning
1. Educatum	To train, or act of teaching or training.
2. Educere	To lead out, to draw out.
3. Educare	To mould/to bring up, to raise, to educate.

Morphologically, the word 'education' is a combination of joining together E&Duco, i.e. E+ Duco of which the 'E' means from inside while the 'Duco' means to develop from inside. Education is for the child/Individual. In the context of a child, what can be the meaning of 'to develop from inside'!

The child/Individual inherits certain powers or talents which are referred to as his innate powers. Education is that tool which can bring out these innate powers and manifest them.(1)

Education can be imparted to a child through formal as well as informal agencies of education. Education is a life –long process and Life & Education can't be separated .Education is a basic necessity of life just like food, shelter & clothes.

In narrow perspective generally education is taken as knowledge given in schools in a specified time through pre-structured curriculum and through set methods of teaching. The elders of the family, society try to achieve pre-determined aims of education through formal education. Below are few definitions which make the narrow sense of education even more clear.

S.S.Mackenzi “In a narrow sense, education may be taken to mean any consciously directed effort to develop and cultivate our powers.”

James Drever “Education is a process in which and by which the knowledge, character and behaviour of the young are shaped & moulded.”

However education should not be just limited to a set of factual knowledge available in the books & taught through formal agencies. Education has a much wider meaning and has been defined with a much larger perspective by few eminent scholars.

“In the wider sense, it is a process that goes on throughout life, and is promoted by almost every experience of life.” By S.S.Mackenzi

C.V.Good highlights “Education is the aggregate of all the processes by which a person develops ability, attitudes and other forms of behaviour of practical value in society in which he lives.(2)In simple terms C.V.Good views education as a process by means of which the individual develops ability, attitudes & creative social values.

In its wider sense, education is not just the intentional acquisition of knowledge through instructions by faculties in planned Institutes by the learning of readymade material, education is unintentional here. Education is a life-long process. In this education is a process where it consists of all those experiences which affect the individual from birth till death. Hence it is definitely more than just teaching or instruction. It is synonymous with the act of living.(3)

John Dewey has rightly said “Education is the development of all capacities in the individual which enables him to control his environment and fulfils his possibilities.”

In fact, education is a vital part of human life. Human life has many aspects Sociological, Cultural, Spiritual, and Biological. While biological aspect is common to all the biotic organisms, Spiritual aspect is only associated to human beings. It is that aspect which not only differentiates human beings from other biological organisms but also makes them superior than the rest.

The great German philosopher Immanuel Kant believed that human

beings occupy a special place in creation. Of course he was not alone in thinking this. From ancient times humans have been considered not just essentially different from all other creatures but also superior. It is important to emphasise here that it is due to spiritual aspect of their life.

What is spirituality and Spiritual Education?

The power of management of mind & body by staying connected with our true self (soul) is spirituality.

Spirituality is devotion, spirituality is self-less welfare for all, spirituality is in simplicity & non- complicated practices in life .spirituality is when your body acts in accordance with your mind as well as soul. Spirituality is when you take control of your five senses & act for the betterment of just yourself, your immediate family but you consider your society, nation & whole world as your family .spirituality is when you take care of your inner self .Spirituality should be made a habitual practice .spirituality should not be practiced on only weekends but should be made into daily routine life through regular activities. It should be practiced at a deeper level and not at a superficial level. Spirituality can be summed up as self-awareness.

Spirituality can be achieved by walking on the path of simplicity. What is simplicity? Simplicity is walking on the righteous path of self-discipline and self-governance, where you think of welfare of all .The essence of spirituality is in this Sanskrit mantra.

"Om Sarve bhavantu sukhinah

Sarve Santu Nir-aamayaah.

Sarve Bhadraani pashyant,

Maa Kashcid –Duuhkha –Bhaag-Bhavet,

Om ShaantihShaantihShaantih.

This mantra is taken from Upanishad.It means may all become happy, may all be free from illness.May all see what is auspicious, may no one suffer.Om peace,peace, peace.

In a nutshell it says Be humane and live humanly .This is possible by the virtues of patience, humanity, compassion .These virtues are rarely seen or experienced these days .People are getting polarised on the basis of religion, caste, community, social status and class.It is in fashion to have opinion about anything and everything under the sun. Gone are the days when people were neutral and saw things as they are, without getting judgemental about little things. Now petty things become bigger issues by a hashtag through social media. Everyone can spread any message to millions of people without any scrutiny. This is generally misused by destructive minds to generate a mob, influence their minds into wrong directions for their vested interests. This is a result of lack of self-governance or lack of involvement of any thought process. One gets involved in pretentious emotionally charged environment and loses the freedom to make choices based on righteous judgement.(4)The death of self-governance ,self – discipline ,thought process is due to decay of moral values & virtues in the people and lack of spiritual growth and grounding.

Answer to all this lies in working on our education system and processes and including spiritual education in the curriculum.

Education is a very effective tool & can bring immense spiritual social & political changes. "The history of the world proves that education has been a vital tool for any change which took place in social, cultural, spiritual,political & economic aspects of human life .It is only through education that human being becomes a rational human being (5)

Education process awakens the hidden dormant powers. We are unaware of the existence of these powers lying dormant for years with in us. Education awakens us, awakens our power, develops them, and manifests them.

Different scholars have chosen to define this term in their own way

however we still can see similarity in their definitions as all of these talk about and emphasise on spirituality & internal progress .These scholars have given equal importance to spiritual growth through education as much as they emphasise on growth of mind and body. Let's look at some of these definitions.

Froebel "education is a process by which the child make its internal external."

Socrates "Education means the bringing out of the ideas of universal validity which are latent in the mind of every man."

Pestalozzi "education is a natural, harmonious and progressive development of man's innate powers."

All of these definitions talk about development of internal powers.

We all are made up of mind, body & soul.Out of all the three, soul is very subtle and beyond comprehension of the normal mind. (6) A large section of the humanity certainly ignores this important aspect of ourselves i.e. our soul. Scholars defining education as the process of development of innate powers emphasise on the spiritual element and development of spiritual element. Spiritual development is the highest form of development .Man achieves the goal of his life only when intellectual growth is complimented with spiritual growth. Such Spiritual education which acquaints the learner with the knowledge and powers lying nascent inside his soul, so that he may liberate himself from his constraints.

Swami Vivekananda had described education as "Education is the manifestation of the purification already reached in man."

Sri Aurobindo said "Education is the inspiring power of a progressive soul which includes a man to seek the light hidden inside him."

Horne "Education is a reflective process which helps the individual, who is mentally and physically liberated, conscious and emancipated, to identify himself with God."

Education as the process of Development of innate powers

Education gives us a grounding. It gives us enough wisdom to balance the fast progressing material world and spiritual advancement. To manifest the divine power within us, we need to adopt a spiritual path. It is what guides us through stages of our life .We are all spiritual beings but we are not aware of it. Education makes us aware of the fact. Connectivity to our soul brings clarity in our thoughts, frees us from mental blockages, enlightens us, and connects with your innermost feelings and experiences of life. It is also necessary that we stay true & honest to ourselves and experience these innate powers through education.

As mark twain said "the two most important days in your life are the day when you are born and the day you find out why?"

Education helps us knowing ourselves better. Education helps us grow spiritually strong and remove the clutter of our mind so that body gets correct commands and you act righteously without any dilemmas. Education balances priorities of our mind with priorities of our soul and then maintains & balances this connection of mind, Body & soul.

Education and pedagogy in current scenario

Education in its present state is far away from the definitions discussed above. What is the purpose of education? The purpose of education is not just acquisition of pre-determined set of skills, but rather the realisation of one's full potential and the ability to see those skills for a greater good.

What should be the correct process of imparting knowledge and how education should take place with the formal agencies of education like schools, educational institutes? What is the ideal pedagogy? Currently it is subject centric and focuses on the subject

matter. Here the student is in active. "The child is simply the immature being who is to be matured, he is the superficial being who is to be deepened." (7)The process of imparting education should be effective enough and must be in a way that students should be able to relate their classroom lecture knowledge with their day to day life.

The pedagogy approach neither should be subject centric and nor should be student centric. In the second approach too much emphasis is given on the student which is also detrimental to the learning process. Here the potential flaw is that it lessens the importance of the subject matter as well as the role of the faculty. The quality of the faculty determines the effectiveness of the education system. Here it is not just the educational qualifications of the faculties but also their ability to connect with children, understand their emotional and psychological needs.

The present system of education and pedagogy methods have led to learning crisis. Where students are expected to memorise all the factual subject knowledge available in books and reproduce the same on the days of exam.

Present system doesn't focus on internalisation of the knowledge. There should be a balance between delivering knowledge to students and learning process. Here we also need to understand that not only pedagogy tools should be replaced but also the assessment systems should be reviewed. The focus should shift from scores to knowledge acquisition and learning. It should inspire students to explore.

Most of the schools and higher learning institutes now emphasise on skill based education to include practical learning. What is tried to achieve through this is to develop certain skill-set in the students to empower them to meet future financial & survival challenges. However I will differ here. I believe that the purpose of education is completely diluted here. In the current scenario it is just limited to train students for work by providing them a limited set of skills & information to do a particular job. Also the teachers are trained in those limited set of instructions and discipline-centric skills to prepare students to meet the needs of the employer & demands of the workforce. Instead of instilling them with societal ethics, morals and developing strong moral base schools emphasises on mastery of the subject.

There is a collective responsibility on schools and teachers to not just impart subject knowledge but also develop ethical and moral values and character in the student. Schools are not just formal agencies of education but also a centre of social development & reform. The school and the teacher as a workforce and provider of a social service, have a unique responsibility to produce socially responsible, intellectual, disciplined, individuals with strong character.

This development of right intellect, skill and character will give student ability to act wisely and effectively in their respective occupations and in different situations of life. This morally responsible group of students will later become responsible citizens of the nation. This morally sound, ethically strong people with deep character are the criteria of the degree of civilisation of a society and nation. There is a dearth of these virtues in the society and the main reason behind this moral decay of the students is lack of spiritual growth in them. The solution to this is not just to make students ready for future challenges but also to sensitise them towards becoming a good human being first. This change is possible by changing the mind-set of the people. This is possible only by including subjects like human values, ethics, and emotional well-being in the school curriculum at primary level only. This can do wonders and bring positive results. This will not only empower them to fight in a competitive world and survive but will make them prosper with self-esteem and live a dignified respectful life. This will improve the inner well-being of the people of the society. The overall health of the individual and society depends upon the inner

well-being of the individuals and not merely upon economic status of the individual, society and nation. Inner well-being is possible only through spiritual and value-based education.

Challenges with current education system

Almost all the countries are facing similar issues as below and we need to collectively address these. Below given are few of those.

1) Monetary aspect associated with education is very high. Education is treated only as a mean to achieve materialistic goals of life. Spiritual aspect is not given enough priority neither it is emphasised and nor it is cultivated or nurtured through education. Generally education is correlated with problems of life, thinking it can get us a good job with handsome pay package and can solve most of the problems related to life and in turn can give a better lifestyle. A promising bank balance is the ultimate goal of education these days.

2) There is also a rapid rise in the means of transport, modes of communication & internet has shrunk the whole world into one small unit. Also due to rapid progress of scientific inventions & technological advancements, material culture has over shadowed other aspects of human life virtues, ideals, values, ethical norms of life. These aspects are not seen enough in today's fast changing world. One of the main challenges that education is facing today is to cope up with this fast changing technical & modern scientific advancement and the problems arising out of it.

3) Education helps us becoming who we are. But today's system of schooling and higher education only believes in giving students certain subject or discipline-centric skills and knowledge. There is a strong need to involve subjects based on morality, ethical behaviour, righteousness and self-governance in the curriculum. There is a strong need to balance the intellectual and materialistic growth with spiritual advancement. To manifest the divine power within us, we need to adopt a spiritual path. Realising this truth of a divine power within us and staying connected to it is the way forward.

Conclusion

When intelligence, skill, character & values are instilled in each student then the community is composed of citizens who can think, plan and act not only intelligently but morally too. We cannot ignore the impact of imparting these qualities in present life of young minds of students, as they will make the future of the society and nation in the coming times. These young minds will grow into the adults and will ultimately go & participate in all the future dealings of the country.

The youth holds the future, as institutes of education, bodies of curriculum making & as faculties, and our efforts should inspire the youth to tread an ascending path which leads them from the human to the divine. True humanness consists in cultivation of spirit that gets reflected in capabilities, intellectuality and morality.

Let us wake up and dust off the negative thoughts that forms a cobweb and block our minds and vision. These are road blocks and we must guard ourselves against these negative thoughts which act as road blocks in our growth as a human being. Only spiritual education can detox us from all negative thoughts and help us in organising our thoughts and life which will help us in looking at a brighter future.

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