

Editorial

Need for Value Education in Global Context

The background note on National Consultation on Value Education induced me to ponder over this most important issue in academics. The reasons given for the introduction of value education in our schools are noteworthy. Indian society is in a flux and despite our best efforts there is an overall decline in moral values in all spheres of public life. Science and technology have taken roots in Indian soil. The impact of globalization necessitates a new global morality. Educationists are searching for new curriculum models to cope with the tremendous impact of information technology. Modern science and its offspring, high technology, has accelerated the rate of progress from centuries to decades.

The industrial revolution put society into motion in Europe; people moved from farms to factories, from villages to cities. India missed the industrial revolution but the changes envisaged in Europe then, are happening in

India now. Its immediate impact can be seen in our big cities where posh localities and slum areas are expanding in a constant ratio. The poverty and richness are also growing in a constant ratio. The truth is that all our economic growth can no longer be viewed as the ideal way of reconciling material progress with equity. Our educated elite has become more aggressive, individualistic and materialistic in nature. There is an overall decline in moral, social and cultural values in Indian society. The youth are totally alienated from Indian cultural heritage and take pride in aping the west in all possible manners.

Guru Nanak Dev, the first Guru of the Sikhs, realized during 15th century, the derailment of Indian society from its cultural moorings. He exhorted the Indian elite not to adopt the language and modes of life style of the rulers (Mongols/Turks), who invaded India. His views on education are also note-worthy.

Guru Nanak condemned the educated elite of the day (Pandits & Mullahs) for looting the poor and illiterate masses. The exploitation of Indian masses by the modern day educated elite finds an echo in Adi Guru Grantha. The purpose of education is clearly defined and the role of educated person is also stressed. Some of the quotations from Adi Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) for reference are given below :

Education will become a benefactor to humanity (AGGS, p. 356)

What is the point of reading, studying and debating, if one loses his roots? (AGGS, p. 88).

The more one reads and writes, the more one burns in pride (AGGS, p. 467).

That scholar who is full of greed, arrogance and egotism, is known to be a fool. (AGGS, p. 140).

He alone is educated, and he alone is a wise Pandit, who contemplates the Guru's Shahad.

(AGGS, p. 650).

All attempts to inculcate the value education have failed so far because all our attempts are aimed at reforms of the intellectual approach, and we do not touch the subjective dimension or the inner world of man. The whole world is looking towards India for an action plan to resolve this human paradox. Before independence, India patronized a holistic system of education which is absolutely desirable to develop body, mind and soul of a person. We are living in a time of deep change. It is becoming evident more and more that our educational system needs change.

Concept of Holistic Education

Education implies equipping the mind-body-brain system with the social and cultural sensitivity. Education should not be a burden on the mind-body-brain system but a relaxation. Due to cut throat competition for admissions to professional courses, the student's originality and creativity suffer a great loss. Life is creativity and the cosmos is an unfoldment of that creativity. Creativity implies unconditional freedom, and therefore it is spontaneous. The education should not dry the founts of creativity.

Our education system produces robots but not sensitized human beings.

Holistic education results in a quantum jump from symbolic-dualistic frame of reference to non-symbolic, non-dualistic and non-conceptual frame of reference of mind spectrum. The non-dual frame bestows intuition, spontaneity and creativity. Education implies mutation of the conditioned psyche. Holistic education bestows freedom, order, harmony, non-violence, love, truth, peace and so on to human life.

Unification of Science and Spirituality

Quantum theory has brought a revolutionary change in the concepts about nature of reality. In today's world, the proposed dialogue between science and religion is not an option but almost an obligation. In the University of California at Berkeley, a new discipline has been introduced recently which integrates both science and theology. Science and Spirituality are no longer antagonised but a unification of the two is the need of the future. Quantum theory alongwith the Big Bang cosmology have created new paradigms

in philosophy. Swami Vivekananda also echoed the symbiosis of the occidental and the oriental. The potentialities of the oriental mind have yet to be realized.

Conclusions

India cannot go back to the Vedic age where a teacher was considered next to God. To enable science and technology to play a useful role in building a nonexploitative and a peaceful society, we need holistic education which is value based. The need of the hour is to open a dialogue between scientists, philosophers, educationists and mystics in all countries. Such a dialogue will lead to an epistemological revolution where intuition is fundamental and rationality is derivative. This will blossom into a new realm of harmony, order, non-violence and peace for mankind. War clouds are hovering in the sky of Asia. It is imperative to teach global ethics to our school children to put an end to war. The greatest peril to mankind is not from nuclear weapons but from minds without value based education.

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