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REINVENTING EDUCATION IN GLOBALIZED INDIA

World and Reality of Life has changed in post-liberalization India. Malls have emerged as the motif of consumerist India. Chips & chocolates have taken over Kheer and Halwa. Internet and E-mail has taken over domestic gatherings. We therefore need to strike a balance between the needs of modern consumerist India and the cultural ethos of the country. Because, no individual can succeed in personal & professional life without being rooted in the indigenous culture. Every region, state & country has different and rich cultural heritage. Therefore, while we prepare new generation of boys and girls for professional excellence, we should also provide the cultural and spiritual cushion to absorb the shocks and stresses of modern professions. We need to be happy and healthy in personal life as well as successful in professional life. We need Gyan (Knowledge) for professional success and Dhyan (meditation) for personal healthy growth. Teacher is needed for imparting knowledge, while Guru is needed for initiating us into Dhyan. Dhyan provides the mental and emotional space to make proper use of Gyan. Dhyan is the compass to guide Gyan. Therefore, emphasis on cultural and spiritual education of children is as important as their academic education.

2) Education today is suffering from narration sickness. Too much is being taught to be absorbed effectively by children. Heavy school bags of children tell the story. Therefore, education must resolve the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers *and* students. It should transcend what Sartre calls the “digestive” or “nutritive” concept of education, in which knowledge is “fed” by the teacher to the students to “fill them out.” We should feed students only as much as does not cause indigestion.

3) Dialogue is way to strike a balance between what students can grasp and how much teachers should feed them. Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with student-teachers. Education then becomes practice of freedom of mind, heart & soul. Students come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation. What great educationist Paulo Friere calls as “Problem-posing education” focuses on children as beings in the process of becoming-as unfinished, uncompleted being in and with a likewise unfinished reality. The unfinished character of children and the transformational character of reality necessitate that education be an ongoing activity. There is no true word that is not at the same time a praxis. Thus, to speak a true word is to transform the world. The education being imparted must focus on eternal values of Truth, Love, Faith and Honesty, to enable children to be truthful in their life, which is core of stress-free personal and professional life. Values of truth, love, faith and honesty are essential for physical, mental and emotional well being as well. The moment we go against these basic human values, we create stress for ourselves, leading to all diseases as well as failures.

4) Education can be revolutionary if dialogue between students and teachers is emphasized. Dialogue should not be reduced to the act of one person “depositing” ideas in another, nor can it become a simple exchange of ideas to be “consumed” by the students. Founding itself upon love, and faith, dialogue should become a horizontal relationship of which mutual trust between the teachers and students is the logical consequence. Without dialogue, there is no communication, and without communication there can be no true education. Education which is able to resolve the contradiction between teachers and students takes place in a situation in which they are mediated. Thus, the dialogical character of education as the practice of freedom does not begin when the teacher-student meet with the students-teachers in a pedagogical situation,

but rather when the former first asks herself or himself what she or he will dialogue with the latter about. And content of dialogue becomes the basis of content of education. It is to the reality which mediates men, and to the perception of that reality held by educators and people, that we must go to find the program content of education.

5) I have studied in hindi medium in my village school till 12th class, yet I have competed successfully with the best in English medium, in I.I.T. BHU, and Civil Services Exam. I faced no problems on account of rural background because rural schooling those days allowed creativity and full freedom to the students. Teachers were respected more than parents and they deserved it as they were gurus, not only teachers. They imparted values and idealism. The self-confidence and commitment to values which my school gurus ingrained in me, has enabled me to handle the pressures of English medium and competition from the students of elite institutions of the country as well as achieving success in my career as Civil Servant besides winning Lalit Kala Academy National Award for painting. Therefore, in my view, whether rural or urban and whether elite or common, the key focus of school education should be expansion of mental and emotional horizon of students. They should be encouraged to develop open and free mind by asking questions and being involved in dialogue with their teachers. Therefore, extracurricular activities of painting, plays, sports, visits to historical places and spiritual exposure etc. are as important as the academic courses. In life, what finally matters is self-confidence and ability to perceive, comprehend, accept the truth and reality of life and to sincerely work upon the reality to transform it and remain liberated, thereby becoming active subject. The students in globalized India, need to be taken away from mechanistic teaching programmes of school and colleges and stressful dehumanizing TV programmes they watch at homes, which disconnects them from reality and real life. The educational institutions, therefore, should reinvent themselves to cope up with demands of new globalized India, by imparting value based dialogical educational programmes.

6) India, according to several economic forecasters, is on its way to becoming the third largest economy in the world by 2040. In India, today, 480 million are less than 19 years old. Our father of nation, Mahatma Gandhi had asserted that the best test of any major decision is the benefit it would give to the poorest person one could think of. And he insisted that the ends never justify the means. Bad means, he said, would corrupt society. He was a great role model. Mahatma Gandhi's observation that nature has enough for all our needs but not enough for our greed has become prescient. The type of society we want to be and the values we will live by must be essential facets of our vision for India. On the contrary, Gorton Gecko in the movie Wall Street says, "Greed is good. Greed makes the economy grow", He tells an aspiring apprentice that the ends are what matters : get rich quick, no matter how, and no matter whom you hurt ? We see more and more professionals in globalized India following Gecko and not Gandhi ! Why ! The answer lies in reinventing educational system of our country, by providing value based, dialogical education.

7) The young in India are aspiring to get ahead and make more money. Their drive will push the economy to grow. But, do they have compassion for those left behind ? Who is the role model that Indian youth admire most — Gandhi or Gecko ? Whose values are they emulating ? The answer to this question will deeply affect the type of society we will become in the next decade. The values our youth will conduct their lives by, as they aspire to have more and get ahead, will determine what shape our country will be in coming years. While the mantle of leadership into the future must pass on to youth, older citizens cannot abdicate responsibility for nurturing the bodies, minds, and especially values of children. Children are not merely resources for an economic machine. Imparting value based education to the children is central to the agenda for the balanced and healthy development of India in the next coming decades with mentally and physically healthy population.

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