

FOCUS ON ETHICAL VALUES IN ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE: INDIAN GREAT THINKERS, INDIAN EDUCATION COMMISSIONS AND NEP-2020

Dr. Sanjiban Sengupta, WBES

Associate Professor, Govt. Training College, Hooghly
Former Joint Director of Public Instruction, West Bengal

ABSTRACT

The purpose of education cannot be, even at its best, to merely create a literate individual, or a highly informed person, or to prepare an individual to find a job, or to create a good worker, a skilled technician, a scientist, or to make an efficient doctor or lawyer, or to produce a capable industrialist or politician, or even to create a good and law abiding citizen. Therefore, the great Indian Educationists, various Education Commissions of India and especially the latest Education Policy (NEP-2020) stress to inculcate Universal human values and ethics right from the beginning of one's life.

KEYWORDS: Constitution, National Education Policy, Values, Ethics, Harmony, Integral Education, Human Rights, Literacy, Social Evils

INTRODUCTION

In every modern house there is now a whisper: There must be more money / There must be more money / Money, money, money / Brighter than sunshine and sweeter than honey. In the present circumstance, almost every one of this so-called educated society is busy to topple others in the race. All are driven by money, power and sex – no matter whether the human ethics and values are trampled down or not. This state of affairs cannot be allowed to go unbridled in this holy land of unique culture.

The complexities and problems of life of people have been widening day by day along with their increasing intensities. Surely, to come out of the present day evils seems to be not a very easy task. Positive ideas for eradicating social evils on the one hand and developing value-based ideas on the other, can only be made effective if one and all take up the matter seriously and sincerely and put efforts right from the early childhood education. Otherwise, erosion of human values and the magnitude of the social and ethical problems causing crisis in humanity will assume a devastating and serious threat to the mankind in near future.

It is for these reasons, most of the great minds of India have advocated for the introduction of value ridden education in all strata of formal and informal education.

In addition to them, various commissions and committees have been evolved to address the question of values in education system of India. Recently NEP-2020 has also given emphasis upon the moral and value-based education to ensure the attainment of true education and mental well-being of all citizens of the Country.

GREAT THINKERS OF INDIA

In pursuance of the proposition stated above, the leading thoughts of the great thinkers of India on the relevant subject may be introduced for eradicating social evils or erosion of values. Education should play a very important role in forming the future of mankind.

● Swami Vivekananda: Acquisition of information is not enough for education. Education is a man-making, life-building, character-making process. It should unfold the hidden powers in man. Swamiji defined Education as - "Education is the manifestation of perfection already in man". According to Swami Vivekananda, education means the exposition of man's complete individuality.

● Sri Aurobindo: Now in the present set of circumstances, it occurs to us that the complexities and problems of life of people have been widening with multiplying effects day by day along with their increasing intensities and dimensions. Surely, to come out of the present day evils is not a very easy task for which Sri Aurobindo has said: "It is not our contention that the actual system of ancient instruction should be restored in its outward features, - a demand often made by fervid lovers of the past. Many of them are not suited to modern requirements. But its fundamental principles are for all time and its discipline can only be replaced by the discovery of a still more effective discipline, such as European education does not offer us."

● Rabindranath Tagore: The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence. In Tagore's words: "Education means to find out that the ultimate truth which emancipates us from the bondage of the dust and gives us the wealth, not of things but of inner light, not of power but of love, making the truth its own and giving expression to it".

● M. C. Gandhi: People want to provide only such education as would enable the student to earn more money, they hardly give any thought for improvement of character of the educated. This feeling finds a vent in Gandhiji's words: "By education I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in the child and man – body, mind & spirit".

● Dr. S. Radhakrishnan: The goal should be towards commitment to knowledge and fostering of a strong relationship between the teachers and the students. He aptly opined, "Unless we have dedicated and committed teachers to take to teaching as a mission in their lives, a good educational system cannot be developed".

VARIOUS COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES

Various Commissions and Committees on education have furnished reports since 1949 successively to the Union Ministry of Education or Ministry of Human Resource Development for inculcating Universal human values of truth, peace, love, cooperation and those values emanating from our Constitution such as patriotism and democratic decision-making. With this background, the National Policy on Education (NPE) was approved by the Parliament in May, 1986 and the Programme of Action (POA) for its implementation in August, 1986. The National Policy on Education emphasised on value education for cultivation of social and moral values. The values (moral and social values 84, NCERT) are in conformity with the fundamental duties of an Indian citizen enshrined in Article 51A of the Indian Constitution, which affirms, adopts and enacts Human Rights proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 10, 1948 under “Universal Declaration of Human Rights”. In spite of this, it is unfortunate that the Education Departments of the Government of India and State Governments are still lagging behind evolving and adopting specific curricula for the same. The importance to imbibe ethics and values in the Indian Education System has been reflected throughout the various education commissions as follows:

- Radhakrishnan Commission (1948): “If we exclude spiritual training in our institutions we would be untrue to our whole historical development.”
- Secondary Education Commission (1953): “... moral instruction should be given in schools.”
- Kothari Commission (1964-66): “Indian should strive to bring science and the values of the spirit together and in harmony” & “... Knowledge with the lack of essential values may be dangerous”.
- 5th Five-Year Plan (1974-79): “Perhaps the most significant need of the hour is to transform the education system with a view to cultivating the basic values of humanism.”
- National Policy on Education (1986): “The growing concern over the erosion of essential values in society has brought to focus the need for readjustments in the curriculum in order to make education a forceful tool for the cultivation of social and moral values.”
- Programme of Action (1992): The framework emphasized value education as an integral part of school curriculum.
- 11th Five-Year Plan (2007-2012): The importance of value education is realized in contemporary times to strengthen the secular, democratic, non-discriminatory and scientific spirit among youth.
- National Education Policy (2020): For the purpose of developing holistic individuals, it is essential that an identified set of skills and values will be incorporated at each stage of learning, from pre-school to higher education.

EMPHASIS ON ETHICS & VALUES IN NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY (NEP) - 2020

The National Education Policy, 2020 (henceforth NEP-2020) speaks for ethical values such as respect, empathy integrity in the true sense of the term and responsibility among the students at large by dint of variety of educational programmes. NEP-2020 states for the significance of imbibing fundamental values through whole academic discipline. To make it in reality the role of the teachers is very great and they must be at the centre of the fundamental reforms in the education system.

NEP-2020 aims to address the many growing developmental imperatives of our country while building upon India's traditions and value systems. The rich heritage of ancient Indian knowledge and thought has been a guiding light for this Policy. It further declares that the pursuit of Knowledge (Jñāna), Wisdom (Prajñā) and Truth (Satya) were always considered in Indian thought and philosophy as the highest human goal. This Policy promulgates for the Holistic Development of learners stating that the aim of education will not only be cognitive development, but also building character and creating holistic and well-rounded individual. It further promotes the lines of the Indian great educationists that since knowledge is a deep-seated treasure, education helps in its manifestation as the perfection which is already within an individual. Thus this National Education Policy advocates that "Knowledge of India" will include knowledge from ancient India and its contributions to modern India.

The Policy has given emphasis on inculcating ethical values among the students not only for the development of their personality but also for the positive marching of the society. The NEP-2020 promulgates for a number of steps to be taken to ensure these ethical values.

NECESSITY FOR ETHICS & VALUES

It is worthy to be mentioned here at this juncture of human existence that what the future is demanding before the brute compares, either in the materialistic world or in the human behaviour; probably is a life of integrity, a social human being, capable of thinking rationally, feeling like a man, expressing like a thinking animal, approaching like a most developed creature of the Universe. But in reality the uncertainty demands, malpractices reign supreme and ingenuity prevails at every footprint of our life. To combat from the shackles and the proximity of the complexity and incomparable consumerism along with alluring challenges of the modern days, the students are to be equipped advancing with the comprehensive nourishment of all the inner layers of humanity, sufficient to bear the identity of manhood through the integral growth and mastery over himself by dint of ethical values, so that they will be able to lead the society ahead through contributing to the genuine and sure progress of the equitable society.

CONCLUSION

An inner change must precede the outer if it must be lasting and meaningful. An integral education is the key to this inner change on a larger collective basis; it is the key to true progress of the World and a better future for mankind. One must therefore understand education in its widest and deepest sense. Education is meant to bring out the best in Man, to develop his potentialities to the maximum, to integrate himself with his own inner self, his surroundings, his society, his country and humanity to make him the “complete man”, the “integrated man”. In Sri Aurobindo's words : “That alone will be a true and living education which helps to bring out to full advantage, makes ready for the full purpose and scope of human life all that is in the individual man, and which at the same time helps him to enter into his right relation with the life, mind and soul of the people to which he belongs and with that great total life, mind and soul of humanity of which he himself is a unit and his people or nation a living, a separate yet inseparable member”.

If this is the meaning of education, then what passes in its name today in our educational institutions - is obviously very far from the yardstick mark. Would we not like our children to be truthful, courageous, generous and benevolent? The purpose of education cannot be, even at its best, to merely create a literate individual, or a highly informed person crammed with information and facts, or to prepare an individual to find a job, or to create a good worker, a skilled technician and scientist, or an efficient doctor or lawyer, or a capable industrialist or a politician, even to create a good and law abiding citizen. These may be needed but they are not the ‘be all and end all’ in themselves. Education in its true sense takes into account even more important aspects of the individuals - their characters, their personalities and their value-systems. Only when their academic qualifications or professional efficiencies are named with the sense of humanity and impulse of integrity, stamped with comprehensive value-system, the education we are aiming at, will take up most of the business of the facets of the multifarious problems of our lives surely.

REFERENCES

- Altekar, S.A. (1951). *Education in Ancient India*. Nand Kishore & Bros.: New Delhi.
- Brahmachari, M. (2003). *Fundamental Thoughts*. Sri Mahanambrata Cultural & Welfare Trust: Kolkata.
- Chakravarty, A. (1966). *A Tagore Reader*. Beacon Press: Boston.
- Dash, B. N. (1995). *Foundation of Educational Thought and Practice*. Kalyani Publishers: Calcutta.
- Fröbel, F. (1826). *On the Education of Man*. Wienbrach: Keilhau / Leipzig.
- Hirsch, E.D. (1999). *The Schools We Need and Why We Don't Have Them*. Doubleday: New York.
- Jennings, Frank (Ed.) (1975). *Teachers College Record*. 77.2, pp. 298-303. Columbia University: Columbia.

- Kilpatrick, W. H. (1916). *Froebel's Kindergarten Principles Critically Examined*. Macmillan: New York.
- Kripalani, K. (1980). *Rabindranath Tagore - A Biography*. Visva-Bharati: Calcutta.
- Lilley, I. (1967). *Friedrich Froebel: A Selection from His Writings*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
- Mookerji, R.K. (1960). *Ancient Indian Education*. Motilal Banarsidass: New Delhi.
- Sengupta, B. (1995). *Education in the Light of Psychic Consciousness*. Kolkata.
- Sri Aurobindo (1972). *The Harmony of Virtue*. Sri Aurobindo Ashram: Pondicherry.
- Sri Aurobindo & The Mother (2004). *On Education*. Sri Aurobindo Ashram: Pondicherry.
- Tagore, R. (1929). *Ideals of Education*. Visva-Bharati Quarterly (April-July), pp. 73-4: Calcutta.
- Vijay (Ed.) (1980). *How to Bring up a Child*. Sri Aurobindo Society: Pondicherry.
- Vivekananda, S. (1972). *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*. Advaita Ashrama: Calcutta.

Source from Journals

- ... (1987). *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* . ©2008 American Psychological Association. 53.3, pp. 550-562.
- ... (1994). *Journal of Social Issues* . Jossey-Bass, San Francisco: California. 50.4. pp. 19-45.
- ... (1998). *Journal of Management*. © 1998 Southern Management Association. 24.3, pp. 351-389.
- ... (1969). *The Public Opinion Quarterly*. The Oxford University Press. 32.4.