

CHALLENGES IN INDIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

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Abstract

The article highlights about the revolutionary and sweeping changes that are to be brought in our present educational system. It initially highlights the meaning and relevance of education to the society. Subsequently, it dwells in length about the effects of education in our society and what are all the areas where there are critical gaps. What makes the difference between an educated and an uneducated man is focused clearly and crisply. The tools and techniques to overcome the defects in the present system, by filling the critical gaps are also laid stress upon. At the end it summarizes the script with a mind-blowing message related to character education.

Keywords: *What is Education and Society, Effects of Education on Society, Education and Experience, Problems in Present Education, Tools and Techniques to Overcome, Conclusion and Message.*

*"Education is for improving the lives of others and for leaving your community and world better than you found it", **Martin Wright Edelman**.*

What is Education and Society?

Education provides the man with information, imagination, knowledge, ideas, values, ethics, reasoning and overall makes the man a complete man. Education brings refinement, adds to intelligence, and makes an independent and confident man. It is only the human beings who can get armed and equipped with education, which is missing in animals. Education does not mean only reading and writing but also thinking, learning, reasoning, practical experiences and so on. Education is a learning process from cradle to grave. It is education that has brought out many changes in this world and transformed the entire civilization since time immemorial. Ariel and Will Durant quoted, "Education is the transmission of civilization".

The growth of society solely depends on the type of educational system adopted.

Education makes tremendous impact on the society. The quality of the society depends on the quality of the educational system implemented. Someone correctly said, "Better institutions are essential if we are to lead better lives". Right education makes the people build character, values, ethics, and prepares the society and country as a whole to catch up with the rest of the world. Right education is the legacy or the gift, which we pass on to our next generations. George Peabody said, "Education: a debt due from present to future generations".

Effects of Education on Society

Kerala is the first state in India, which attained cent per cent literacy. It encouraged other states to contribute their best so as to attain total literacy. Rather Kerala has become a model state and an ideal state to be emulated by the rest of the country in providing importance to education.

No nation can develop without proper education. And India too developed as a society and as a nation for the last 60 years. India has now vast human resources and it has the thirteenth highest technical manpower in the world. Although the effects of education in the society are tremendous, yet there are grey areas, which need to be addressed. India as a nation has developed politically, culturally, economically and socially but yet much needs to be focused in a right direction.

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world", said Nelson Mandela. It is very obvious that no weapon is superior to education. Apart from education, the influence of technology has brought out significant changes in the society. If technology is used in the right direction and if it is coupled with education, we can expect miracles in the society as a whole.

Education and Experience

"Education is when you read the fine print. Experience is what you get if you don't", said Pete Seeger. All human beings make many mistakes resulting in bitter and, of course, experience. If an individual is educated, he knows the things because he reads the fine print. He tends to make a few mistakes in his life. Whereas if an individual is not educated he tends to make more mistakes because he does not know the fine print. An uneducated individual believes in trial or error method. If he succeeds in his trial, he pursues or else he drops. The uneducated man mostly believes in observation and practical knowledge. The success rate is far higher in educated man rather than in an uneducated man. Education brings down the complexities in one's life thereby making

life easier, simpler and comfortable. John Dewey rightly said, "Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself".

Challenges in Present Educational System

India is the second largest populated country in the world and unfortunately it is nowhere near in number qualitatively. It may be again due to huge population and the type of administrative and political system we have. There is stress on cramming, memory and mugging up. One who mugs up and puts in examination paper is treated as a meritorious candidate. It does not encourage imagination, creativity and originality. There is no effective emphasis on practical aspects of life. It is mostly beset with theoretical aspects and concepts, which any one can read even without going to institutions.

School children are loaded with many books and they find it highly stressful. Education, in fact, should be filled with entertainment and fun so that student can discover the joy of learning, which is missing now. Children find it horrible to go to schools because of too much of study. Even at home children engage themselves so much on school homework. Such things do not promote the relations between parent and child at home. Inadequate infrastructure and inexperienced teaching staff are another bane. Unfortunately, in India, both the primary and secondary level education is still struggling to survive qualitatively. The views and opinions of the students are not being respected. Students are always imposed whatever is there in the textbooks resulting in lack of imagination and innovation. R W Emerson rightly said, "The secret in education lies in respecting the

student". Only when students are respected and valued, they will try to think creatively, innovatively and out of the box. Students should be provided with more freedom of thought.

It is very unfortunate that the teachers are not paid handsomely. Best brains are pursuing other careers for monetary benefits and for better prospectus. It is a pity that those who stick to teaching profession either due to their aptitude and taste and temperament towards teaching or because there is no other alternative (TINA factor) career.

Pandit Nehru's policies and Kothari commission have brought some significant changes in the education but still there is no healthy and constructive impact. There is commercialization of education, and a few fly by night operators entered into this sacred field and spoiled the standards.

How to Overcome?

Teaching faculty must undergo regular training to update and upgrade their skills and abilities. Encouraging regular workshops or seminars or courses related to teaching methodologies can enhance and sharpen their skills. Such seminars will encourage the teaching faculty to exchange and gather more information.

"He who opens a school door, closes a prison", Victor Hugo. Children from the age of 6 to 14 are to be admitted in schools to provide education, as this is the best age to tune them for creating interest in education. Child labor has been abolished but unfortunately it is not enforced effectively. Children should be encouraged by various innovative ways and means to get into

educational institutions.

Content and curriculum in the educational system needs to be addressed. Streamlining the educational system on national basis from Kashmir to Kanyakumari will raise the educational standards. There are disparities in the educational system in various states and efforts must be made to fill those gaps.

Govt. levies 2 per cent educational cess and authorities must ensure that the funds go in a right direction to create strong educational infrastructure. Nobody is against the levy of 2 per cent cess but the right application and mobilization of the resources will bring right results rapidly.

Focusing more on vocational education is the need of the hour. Presently there is a vast gap between industry and academics. Infosys has come out with 'Campus Connect' initiative to bridge the gap between the industry and academics and it is a step in right direction. The corporate leaders have a vital role in funding the educational system. They make money for themselves, pay handsome salaries to their employees and paying dividends to their shareholders and all the people who are involved in the business are earning one way or the other. But what are they contributing for the education and society? It is a well admitted fact that the helping hands are far better than praying lips. Corporate, whether big or small, can wholeheartedly come forward to contribute their best for bringing Indian educational system on par with global standards.

It is essential to bring reforms in education from time to time as the tools and techniques involved in teaching are changing rapidly

due to the influence of technology.

For professional qualifications like engineering, management, medicine, computers etc., the students should be engaged in the practical education and project works from the first year itself. Such activities will build more confidence in the minds of the students as they grasp the needs of the industry and thereby fine-tuning as per the industry expectations. Fee structure needs to be rationalized and the deserving students should be provided with scholarships.

Providing interest free educational loans will help the deserving and poor students. Also, *it is desirable to encourage non-professional degree holders to get vocationalized.* "Education is not filling a pail, but the lighting of a fire", said William Butler Yeats. Education must ignite the minds of the students and it must move the students from comfort zone to effective zone. The students in the comfort zone will not achieve as much as that of in effective zone.

Conclusion

There is a strong need to streamline the present educational system. The problems in the educational system need to be addressed immediately. Education should

focus on ethical, social, vocational and academic aspects. Education builds man and man in turn builds nation. A strong nation can be built only when there is a strong character education. Abraham Lincoln aptly said, "Character is like a tree and reputation like its shadow. The shadow is what we think of it; the tree is the real thing". Hence the essence of any education is the strong character. The evolutionary approaches and revolutionary changes in the present educational system are the need of the hour. We must build a nation where youngsters have a vision to think beyond their geographical boundaries. There should be scope for the students to expand intellect, reinforce mind and make them to stand on their own feet.

Message

Education and character are two sides of the same coin and one without the other is meaningless. Money may come and go but it is the character that counts from beginning to the end of life. Any individual when equipped with character education can excel in any part of the world. To put it in the words of Martin Luther King Jr. "The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically..... *intelligence plus character....* That is the goal of true education".