

Evolution Of a Global Educational System: A Scientific Approach, in A Philosophical Perspective

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Abstract

Every individual is a ‘Leader’. In the journey of education, the learners are developing, to lead. The article shows that the mind, which is the main object of education, can be developed. There are different faculties of the mind, and each individual works from different levels, of the faculties. It’s mentioned in the Bhagavad-Gita, that the undisciplined mind acts as our enemy, whereas a trained mind acts as our friend. Since minds relate to minds in a significant way, we would like to explore, the possibility of how interaction, with the other minds and the environmental nature, can enhance the learning process. The journey in togetherness, where there is no fear, there is freedom and awareness, in the observation of facts, co-operation and where knowledge, is not only for the immediate present, but for the future, there is a total developed.

We need to take into consideration and incorporate, in the current educational system, the methodologies, of our ancient past, in the combination of the various forms of art, in the curriculum studies, in order to build ‘a global learning system’, through better relationships.

Key Words – Education, Environment, Leader, Mind, Nurture

Aims & Objectives

To show that life is inseparable from learning, since both are there from the early years, till the end, of life. The students in the present, are experiencing much stress, in the journey of curriculum learning, and also in their personal lives. An attempt to focus, on the task of education, in order to impart the “art of living” in the society, as leaders. Education, is about right living. Instead of direct authoritative way of teaching, there is a method of learning, from experience and observation.

Introduction

Educating a child involves, nurturing, according to certain ends, or aims. It also means “to lead out” or “to draw out”. This means, drawing him out from or leading him out of darkness into light, from ignorance to wisdom. Swami Vivekananda mentioned, “Manifestation of that which is already inherent”¹. He also said, “Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divinity within by controlling nature, external and internal”². There is a manifestation from the lower to the higher. Education and personal development, are simply matters of unfolding from within, which will take place, when there is no authority and pressure, so we need to provide, for enabling conditions, for any mind to develop and manifest, its full potentiality as a human being. We need to provide a stimulating environment, for the development of a healthy mind, with confidence, in the effectiveness of good values. Our mission is to give “fire to their wings” of imaginations such that they can take high flight in education and in life. The former President APJ ABDUL KALAM had said that, young ignited minds are powerful source of energy, which is mightier than any resource on the earth, in the sky and under the sea and we must develop and encourage them to bring about revolutionary change and transform developing nation to a developed nation. A new faith and vision in the youths, will bring about a change in the educational system.

My research work in the field of ‘Philosophy of Education’, have revealed, the fact, that the changing social structure, environmental challenges, are affecting the learners, and the educational system, to a large extent. I have been visiting educational institutions in the various parts of the country, both in the urban and in the rural sectors, in relation to my research work. I am of the opinion, that we require a methodology, based on the philosophical ideas, of the philosophers and the educationists, of the recent past, for the learners to flourish, in self-understanding. The educational systems introduced by the philosophers and educationists of recent past, like Rabindranath Tagore, J. Krishnamurti and John Dewey are practical, in making learning effective, encouraging and in creating positive changes in the learners’ lives.

The Crisis

In not understanding our true selves, we are getting away from the core and depth, of learning. Are we ‘living’ the education that we are getting in the educational institutions? Among the many drawbacks in our present – day educational system, we may note, that, we have given great importance to a model, without comprehending the inner spirit and strengths, of a traditional structure. Our concern is to sharpen and deepen, our understanding, of significant philosophical teachings, that underlie an educational system. We need to incorporate teachings

of philosopher, educationist Rabindranath Tagore, who had encouraged and introduced, in Visva Bharati, life centric education, where the child enjoyed and participated, in the guidance of the teachers, not only in the curriculum studies, but in the festivals and the seasonal functions, as well, in which, the learner experiences, a passion for learning, and their learning, is in fulfilment. The learners in the present, are learning in competitiveness, with the result, are partially developing, whereas learning in the various skills of knowledge, is developing in wholeness. Rabindranath Tagore, the poet, educator, had advocated, an education for fullness, of being.

We urgently require tools to accomplish harmony in the system, which will aid to bridge the gap between school and home, at the same time smoothen the relation between parents, pupil and the teaching staff. I find that though the learners are intelligent, better in response and expressions, curious, interested in new vistas of knowledge, and are falling prey to the fear of competitions. We are not giving much importance and encouragement to their imaginative skills. There is requirement of creative programs to enliven their learning minds. The teacher is the guide and director; he steers the boat, but the energy that propels, must come from those who are learning. Currently learners are reckless and restless, and they are requiring 'A Nurturing Methodology'.

Nurturing Methodology includes, freedom, love and discipline, which are related to one another, and are essential, in the journey of experiencing learning. The existing system of education is undergoing a crisis, due to the fear of competition. Faced with competition from the very beginning, learners are facing stress. Exercising freedom in understanding, self-discipline has to be inculcated, as a part of teaching, in the early years of learning. A natural tendency in the exercising of freedom, of thoughts is common to all. Only in knowing how to carry out it in action, is an art. There are certain qualities of a free mind. It is fresh and alert in observing. If our minds be alert in learning, we will experience it in living. Such a mind is an intelligent mind that does not conform, to anything, without self-understanding.

Rabindranath Tagore, who was conscious, about the facts of the surrounding world, mentioned, 'that a cloud was a cloud and a flower a flower. I still remember the very moment one afternoon, when coming back from school I alighted from the carriage and suddenly saw in the sky, behind the upper terrace of our house, an exuberance of deep dark rain – clouds lavishing rich, cool shadows on the atmosphere. The marvel of it, the very generosity of its presence gave me a joy which was freedom, the freedom we feel in the love of our dear friend.'³

I find that with the changes in the social structures, and the changing human relationships, are causing immense impact on the youngsters' minds. The increasing nuclear families and single

parenting, are affecting the young minds, to a large extent. They are becoming introvert and are undergoing psychological problems. When a learning mind faces crisis learning and development is slow.

J. Krishnamurti, philosopher and educationist, had talked about the existence of crisis, in the learners minds, and in his 'Letters to the Schools' mentioned, 'With the very young what is most important is to help them to free from psychological pressures and problems. Now the very young are being taught complicated intellectual problems their studies are becoming more and more technical they are given more and more abstract information; various forms of knowledge are being imposed on their brains, thus conditioning them right from childhood. Whereas what we are concerned, with is to help the very young to have no psychological problems, to be free of fear, anxiety, cruelty, to have care, generosity and affection. This is far more important than the imposition of knowledge on their young minds.'⁴

The effect of the behaviour, of the members of the family, and the learners' relationship with their teachers, have great impacts, on the learners mind, and the philosopher had mentioned, "The bringing up of a child requires, intelligent observation and care. Experts and their knowledge can never replace the parents' love, but most parents corrupt that love by their own fears and ambitions, which condition and distort the outlook of the child. So, few of us are concerned with love, but we are vastly taken up with the appearance of love."⁵ He had also mentioned, 'The influence of the home and that of the school must not be in any way contradictory, so both parents and teachers must re-educate themselves. The contradiction which so often exists between the private life of the individual and his life as a member of the group creates an endless battle within himself and in his relationships.'⁶

Essential modifications are required to liven up the present classroom pattern of teaching. Over a long period of time, we are following a pattern of examinations, tenure of courses, which require revision. With the increasing technological facilities, long hours of teaching can be shortened. Although the learners are intelligent, better in response and expressions, curious and interested in new vistas of knowledge, are falling prey to competitions. We require an imaginative method of teaching, to enliven their learning minds. We also require teachers' training programs, in which the learners' self-inclination and motivation, is given a priority. The state and the central government, need restructuring, the training programs of their teachers.

We have to introduce teaching and learning, in the way as philosopher and educationist, John Dewey had suggested, catering knowledge, in a palatable way, is the job of an educator. To make learning part of life, as he had suggested, that learning along with activities of daily

routine life, will teach the learners, in a practical way. In my opinion, the children in the early years of learning, need friendly cooperation of their teachers. Their creative bent of mind, requires guidance in friendliness, which will aid in their holistic development. Learning in innovation where imagination, will sharpen their mind and keep their mind open to new ideas and thoughts. Their mind being less conditioned exists in freedom. Encouraging them to participate in elective activities, will develop their knowledge, in various skills. Learning with the group mates, increases scope of learning. The psychological pressure of learning is lessened, and learning is less restrictive, and more productive. These years of learning establishes and enhances the learners' leadership qualities.

The learners' natural utilisation of energy, for their thinking capacity, will give rise to 'creativity', which will bring in a 'new mind'. Very often there is dissipation of energy, in conflicts and competitive attitudes. We are in a living in relationship with oneself and others. A non-self-centred being, is able to harness the energy, in a single stream, that will enable to face the problems of living, and serve one's community, with a changed mind. Let the learner's minds awaken from a dormant stage to a dynamic stage, without the fear of competition.

For the overall development of a learner, much depends on whether the education given in the educational institutions, is backed up by the education, given at home. There are many constructive allocations, as well as distractions, in one's daily life. These days increasing distractions, due to the over usages of technology, like the mobile phones, are making the mind, a chattering mind. The learning mind, should be, quiet, to be receptive, to the, available sources, of ideas and opportunities. We have to think of an educational system, in self knowledge and understanding, which will also be self - evaluative.

A New System With A National Background - Methodology Devoid Of Competition

We have had a systematic way of teaching and learning, long before the advent of the British in India. The system in the present is more or less the pattern, introduced by the British. It has been 78 years, of independence, and the real meaning of 'freedom', is not explicit to most of us. To take the nation ahead, we have to awaken ourselves, to a 'living' educational system, which not only requires, more attention to the subject matter, and to the progress in technique, but involves an imaginative vision. Going ahead in the field of education, is not disregarding the past, but accepting all its good, and keeping this in mind, is how an educator plans, for the future. The current system of learning is getting tiring, and we need to reinvent, the age old peaceful and skill based educational system, which was existing, in the 'Gurukuls'. The learners are facing emotional challenges, and that is why we require, a system of learning in

Philosophical perspectives, which will enliven the educational system, giving peacefulness to the learning mind, which otherwise is getting much disturbed, in the current, competitive system of learning . According to the famous philosopher Plato, who had mentioned, in his book ‘Republic’, that, philosophy is the ‘gymnastics’ of the soul, that has to be pursued, as a man gets older.

The teaching methodology, initiated by Rabindranath Tagore, a century back, is essentially required, to be implemented, in the current system of education, as it is both scientific and practical. It will enable the learners to remain healthy, both physically and mentally. The methodology is both, an effective mode, for the teachers as well. The teaching and learning, initiated by the poet philosopher, in the open natural environment, under the trees, within the premises of the school, and the intrinsic incorporation of the various forms of art, in the routine curriculum studies, is an ideal model of learning, which helps the learners, to remain fresh, creatively motivated, in their life and learning. This way of teaching, in the open environment, creates passion, and enthusiasm, in the teachers, to teach as well. Teachers in the current system are getting, too, tired, and are unable to cope with the challenges, that they are facing. We find that there is a meagre bonding, between the teacher and the learner, and the teachers teaching, is becoming robotic.

With the progression of technology, the learners learning in technical knowledge, however necessary, will in no way resolve their inner, psychological problems, as they have acquired knowledge, without understanding its effect on their mind and lives, such that it has become a means of destructions to them, unknowingly. The mind intelligently must free itself from the desire for reward, which breeds fear and conformity. We need to incorporate a visionary system of learning, which will be closer to life, in better student teacher relationship, and to carry out the same, the learners need to prepare projects, based on the various day to day activities, travels and trips and real-life experiences. This way of futuristic learning, will benefit the learners, in life, in a long way. Most of the schools in the country, view school trips, as some sort of break, from the daily humdrum of school life, and children look forward to the trips, as a source of escape, an opportunity of entertainment. The trips can be considered, as pedagogical journeys, which offer opportunities of learning without burden.

The students of J. Krishnamurti schools, go on trips from the early stages of learning. For the junior students, of KFI [Krishnamurti Foundation India], it is two to five days trip, and for the senior students, it is a week to ten days trip. The trips are planned in a way, such that the students, spend time in places of ecological or historical vitality. As most of the schools in the urban sectors, are lacking natural environmental abundances, learning should essentially

include trips and travels, to places of natural environmental abundance. This will keep the learners mind fresh and vibrant, which will leave an impact, in their lives. India a land with cultural diversities, of the various states, the learners, will be much benefitted, if the New Education policy, can compulsorily, introduce and implement trips and traveling, in the routine co curriculum activities, of the schools.

Children are better observers, from the very beginning, and they could be encouraged, by their teachers, to write stories, plays, based on their own life experiences. A time-to-time appraisal, of their creative activities, and preparing an annual report of the same, accordingly, would keep the learners inspired and motivated, towards creativity. Usually the learners are losing self-confidence, which is reflected in their curriculum learning. The learners motivation in creativity, and will aid in their holistic development.

The urban schools, can make arrangements, to invite professional artists, for performing skits, plays, and dance dramas, in the schools. The learners' development in an environment, of the performances of the various forms of arts, will leave an impact, in their minds. In West Bengal, in Visva Bharati, Shantiniketan, philosopher Rabindranath Tagore, had initiated programs, within the campus, with the learners of the institution, celebrating various seasonal festivals, like the 'Festival of Colours, during the Spring Season' and others. To carryout cultural programs, in the educational centres, would aid in the development, of an enriching environment. These days learners love to watch movies and are less interested in watching live performances, on the stages. Much learning can happen unknowingly, by the watching, of the live performances, which also will be a mode of elevation, for both the students and the teachers, as well. The increasing stress among the teachers and the learners, these days, is calling for an incorporation, of joyous atmosphere, within the campus, of the educational institution, which will enliven, the learning system.

The present system of education, should not only, take care of the present, but should be a 'torch light' for the coming generations? Every major philosopher since Plato had recognised, that the primary function of a philosopher, is as John Dewey suggested – 'to shed some light on the path ahead'. We require a visionary educational system, where the learners are made cognisant about their interests and goals, and their minds bubbling with new ideas. We should maximize the organising skills, of a learner, from the very beginning, in order to avoid crisis, in the professional and the personal life, in the later stages of life, thus enabling the learner, to face the inevitable role of competitions, in a constructive manner. The learner's learning in interest, would make the learning process stress free. John Dewey, in his book 'How We Think', mentioned – "There is no greater enemy of effective thinking, than divided interest.

This division unfortunately is often produced in school. A pupil gives an external, perfunctory attention to the teacher and to his books and lessons while his inmost thoughts are concerned with matters more attractive to him.”⁷ The teachers need to motivate the learners, in a way, that they find interest, in the subjects taught. With the online mode of teaching and learning, their curriculum studies, can be planned in innovation. Some learners, take longer time to grasp, which should not be ignored. Special online classes should be arranged for the, slow learners.

Conclusion-

In the present system of education, it is becoming more and more critical in providing, the learners, with skills, in life and in society. We learn from experiences, whether positive or negative. The learners' journey of life and learning, includes experiences, which is stored in one's mind, is carried on into the future, whether one likes it or not. The educators, do not have control, over a student's experiences, but they can try to understand the child, in the context of the dynamic present situation. An educator having good insight, into the effects, of the experiences, which the students bring along with, enables to provide, quality education. Educators can arrange programs, in order to inculcate good habits, which would influence the learners' lives and which would also benefit the society, at large. Learners' contributions towards communal services, in the form of visiting the aged persons, in the old age homes, and spending some time with them, would contribute in adding and inculcating good experiences and fellow feelings. In developing such programs, in the educational institutions, for the different age group of learners, would develop leadership qualities, in them.

We need to incorporate, innovative value-based programs, for the communal services, as compulsory part, of the curriculum, education, in each and every, educational institutions, nationwide. We can find some of the educational institutions, carrying out such programs successfully. For example, S.P. Jain Institute of Management, in Mumbai, is organising a program, ‘Abhyudaya’ as a part of their management course, which is carried out, by the management students, in mentoring children, from the local rural sectors. The management students, of S.P. Jain visit the mentees' homes, in order to, carry out the program. This makes the management learners aware of the hard life style, of those aspiring learners, from the lower income strata, encouraging them, for further studies and general progress, in life and learning. Talking to the management students, it is seen, that they enjoy their participation, in the, program ‘Abhudaya’.

I have personally experienced and enjoyed community services, during my schooling, in St. Xavier's School, Jharkhand and have learnt, how serving the community, enhances in one's

development, by actively participating in the, ‘Teaching Program’ of the ‘Social Service School’. The program was organised, by the authorities of the St. Xavier’s School. This was compulsory part of the school’s activity, a service rendered, for the children, belonging to the weaker section of the society.

We are also looking forward to ‘A Visionary Educational System’, through the internationalisation of the higher education. Our country has been attracting learners, from far and wide countries, from time immemorial. India is a nation enriched in spiritualism, one of the oldest literate civilisations, on the earth, rooted in traditions. We have to incorporate, the traditional teaching methodology, in the present system. We had an ‘International system of learning’, from ancient times, for example the Nalanda University, where students came to study from nations far and wide. We need to up-to-date the same, in the present higher educational system. We have to make a study, of the traditional educational system, which had attracted learners from the outside nations, and improve the current system, in relation to the past. We have to increase the number, as well as frequency, of the teachers, visiting our country to teach, from the outside nations and give opportunity to the teachers, from this country, to visit and teach in the other countries. We have also to facilitate and escalate, the number of senior secondary students, of schools and the students of colleges and Universities, to visit the educational institutions, of the other countries, for projects and research works. This will give a ‘Global Feature’, to the current educational system, and will give the entire educational system a ‘New Vision’.

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