

Education & Existence

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Abstract: -The entire existence on the earth is undergoing crisis and human beings are no exception. The environmental nature is suffering due to pollution and over population. The global warming, ever changing environmental conditions, more and more felling of trees and increase in the construction and development of the urban and the rural in the form of modernisation is affecting the human mind body system. The ideal harmonious existence in the nature is being disturbed and human relationships are also undergoing crisis in this ever increasing imbalances in the entire system. The changing social and family structure is calling for an innovative educational system, in which the learners need to learn much in association with the nature for healthy functioning of their mind body system. Nature provides an inspiration for creativity and an opportunity to explore. In nurturing the nature and the natural beings, ones' natural sensitivity gets expression. The mind experiences freedom, is thoughtful and productive. This article is illustrating the immediate requirement of planning a system of learning, in harmony with the environment, which would not only aid in keeping the learners, associated with the nature, explore nature but also develop sensitivity, reducing persisting tension in the learners.

Keywords: -Crisis, Education, Environment, Existence & New Methodology.

I. INTRODUCTION

What is the crisis in education? Where is education leading us to? Does education make us aware of our identity and existence, not only as a living entity but also as nature's best creation? In being unable, to be in tune with the outside circumstances, an imbalance within is bringing in crisis. It is seen that the crisis existing at all levels is within. In not understanding our true selves, we are getting away from the core and depth of knowledge. The stress in the mind of the learners is in relation to the body, the mind and the surrounding circumstances. We are developing in which the surrounding environment is actively participating. We need to be in alignment with the changing circumstances which would include all those factors, which comprise our living. Awareness towards our lifestyle, taking care of our body and mind, in being fit and firm, will make us stress free and will enable us to cope with the challenges. We are ignoring in every policy making, the effect of the same on learning and living. The government is ignoring the learners' health in the decision making of the exam schedule and other entrance examinations. Our country being tropically located is facing intense global problems and the young learners are undergoing health problems all the more. The learning period in the life of a person is not only developing academically but evolving existentially. Learning in the previous generation in natural abundances aided the learners develop naturally in proximity with any other living being. Now days we are using more and more machines like the computer and learning and living is more mechanical which is easing learning but is harmful for both mind and body. We are heading for a future, when each individual will be loners, with only gadgets and machines in their personal and professional lives.

II. PHILOSOPHY & EDUCATION

Samkhya school is considered one of the oldest Hindu system of philosophy and its origin is attributed to Saint Kapila. Every being under Prakriti is made up of the Trigunas in its core psyche. Trigunas is part of Samkhya Philosophy which is part of six orthodox systems of Hinduism, having allegiance to *vedic* knowledge. According to the ancient Vedic sciences of Ayurveda the three *Gunas*, as they pertain to the human physiology are called *Doshas*- *Kapha*, *Pitta*, and *Vata*. The balance or imbalance of these *Doshas* defines the *Prakriti* or the nature of one's body. Each individual has a unique *Prakriti*, just like each of us has a unique finger print. The deviation from *Prakriti* is called *Vikriti*. The farther a person's *Vikriti* from his or her *Prakriti*, the more prone to illness they are. *Prakriti* is never static. *Prakriti* which is the material cause of the world is dynamic. Its dynamism is attributed to its constituent '*Gunas*'. Even before the evolution, the *Gunas* are relentlessly changing and balancing each other. They are the essence of *Prakriti*, and are always changing, rendering a dynamic character to *Prakriti*. The Homogenous changes do not affect the state of equilibrium in the *Prakriti*. As a result worldly objects are not produced. The heterogeneous changes involve radical interaction among the three *Gunas*. They disturb the state of equilibrium and evolution occurs. As a result, *Prakriti* and all the physical

objects that are affected or produced by *Prakriti* are also in a state of constant change and transformation. These changes are responsible for the changes in the thinking and living. In the present context, when the learners are suffering from ailments from an early stage of life, we need to make them aware of their mind body constituencies. Aiding them in developing habits according to their inclinations due to the persisting *Gun*as and *Dosh*asis necessary, which will support in their healthy upbringing. Considering the discontentment that exists in the minds of the younger generation a new system of education is required in relation to the environmental nature that would enliven and strengthen the learners. The surroundings, in which the child is budding is affecting his learning and development. The natural environment is interacting with the learning mind. Environment includes atmosphere at home, social environment - his relationship to others in the society and the physical environment –with hills, plains, trees, gardens, and lake as well as roads and flyovers. In the present the changing environmental conditions of our surroundings in terms of urban spaces and changing nature of the family and social structure are affecting the learners. We live in an environment that is constantly interacting with our interests, minds and character. We are part of the universe having the capacity to get cosmic energy, to enliven ourselves. Every individual is subjected to a constant interaction with his or her environment, which will affect the person's constitution. The body tries to maintain a dynamic equilibrium or balance with the outside environment. Similarly, changes are occurring to the mind and body constantly. Different persons have different thinking capacities and abilities. Small children have inborn love for nature and they love to nurture nature. They love water, soil, trees, birds and animals. They are curious about everything in nature and find happiness in its proximity. They draw energy and develop from the surroundings which are reflected in their activities more than the adults, whose minds are too conditioned. Children have more interest in birds, their feathers, and nests, their sounds, the clouds, rainbow, the Sun, the hills and the mountains. They like to play in the nature more than in closed compartments. In this way, their body minds remain naturally vibrant and healthy. Entire existence surroundings on the earth are facing deterioration and few species are getting extinct. Human beings are facing ailments both physically and mentally. Learning is focusing in achievements. The energy within is in becoming. We are trying to become this or that.

The role of education in this era has a definite role in which philosophy of education has a major role. Why are learned men and women suffering? Are we not understanding our true selves, the priorities of life and living? What are the ingredients of life? Philosopher and educationist of recent past, J. Krishnamurti, Rabindranath Tagore and John Dewey, who have made an immense contribution in the field of education, were nature lovers. They had depicted nature's contribution, influence and significance in learning. J.Krishnamurti said, "To bring about a good society, human beings have to change. You and I must find the energy; the impetus the vitality to bring about this radical transformation of the mind, and that is not possible, if we do not have enough energy. We need a great deal of energy to bring about a change within ourselves, but we waste our energy through conformity, through acceptance, through obedience. It is a waste of energy when we are trying to conform to a pattern. To conserve energy, we must be aware of ourselves, how we dissipate energy. If we become aware of this indolence, this deep-rooted laziness, and try to quicken the mind, and the heart the intensity of it again becomes a conflict, which is also a waste of energy. Our problem, one of the many that we have, is how to conserve energy, the energy that is necessary for an explosion to take place in consciousness: an explosion that is not contrived, that is not put together by thought, but an explosion that occurs naturally when this energy is not wasted. Conflict in any form, at any level, at any depth of our being, is a waste of energy."¹ Only a mind that is in silence can draw energy from the cosmos.

Too much of distractions in day to day life especially in the urban sectors are distorting the learning minds wasting the energy. We have to be watchful about not wasting our energy as whatever that is happening outside affects directly or indirectly to our thinking processes. In education, it is the thoughts in the learners' mind that is playing a vital role, and one has to be aware, of the inherent source of energy. What sort of thoughts would lead to restoration of energy? Our thoughts distorted for very many reasons are a waste of energy. Our growth is in relation to the changes occurring not only within but also without. How the thought, which arises in one's mind, is due to the various factors. One of the vital factors is the surroundings. An amicable environment is appropriate for healthy thoughts which would propel creative learning. Learning in the present is only to gather knowledge, in order to qualify examinations, develop career and get a job without knowing its application in the routine life. Are we 'living' the education that we are getting in the educational institutions? It was Rabindranath Tagore, who had pointed the lack of contact between education and life, as one of the basic causes of India's political, economic and social backwardness. The philosopher said 'The educational institution, therefore, which I have in mind has primarily for its object the constant pursuit of truth, from which the imparting of truth naturally follows. It must not be a dead cage in which living minds are fed with food artificially prepared. It should be an open house in which students and teachers are at one. They must live their

complete life together, dominated by a common aspiration for truth and a need of sharing all delights of culture.’²

In education, are we really understanding how learning is affecting us. Are the learners understanding the truth of learning? Philosopher of recent past S. Radhakrishnan pointed, ‘What is a University for? It is for the transmission of ideas and ideals of skills and techniques. These have to be transmitted from one generation to another and the ideals and ideas may be the same but the skills and the techniques have been changing from age to age and unless we are able to reckon with modern challenges we will be left behind.’³ The learners’ health requires special consideration in the present time. ‘If we neglect their physical health, if we neglect their nutritional needs, we will be responsible for holding up the progress of the nation.’⁴

III. 111. A NEW SYSTEM

Educational policies require changes from time to time keeping pace with the changes occurring in the society and times. As we are experiencing environmental challenges leading to health disorders both physically and mentally, we require to be more careful in policy making such that the learners do not suffer the consequences. This is calling for an innovative educational system which will benefit the learners not only academically but would enable them to live a healthy life. We belong to this earth and the changes occurring in the nature and atmosphere is affecting our lives and living. The innumerable diseases spreading fast in the atmosphere is a challenge to life and living. This is calling for leading a life style which will allow us to survive healthily. There is immense contribution of nature which we are ignoring. The urban population living in a polluted atmosphere are suffering ailments more than the rural population. In the present, we require to implement a new methodology, which would cater to the learners’ healthy existence. This requires research work on framing the curriculum at all level. Teaching and learning pattern in ancient India was holistic. The atmospheric conditions were affable, which made teaching and learning very natural and motivating. The quality of teaching imparted in Ancient India was unique which attracted learners from far and wide to Indian Universities. Amir Khusrau mentions that scholars have come from different parts of the world to study in India. Indian scholars were in great demand abroad. Caliphs like Al Mansur and Harun Al Rashid [754-809A.D] sent ambassadors to India to procure Indian scholars. As a home of knowledge and wisdom ancient India produced scores of scholars on various subjects like Budha and Shankara – Philosophy, Kautilya -Political Science and Administration, Sushruta-Surgery, Charaka -Medicine, Kanada – Physicist, profounder of atomic theory, Nagarjuna -Chemistry, Aryabhata and Varahamihira – Astronomy, Baudhyana and Brahmagupta – Mathematics and Pantanjali – Yoga to name a few. The knowledge of ancient Indians in the field of metallurgy was extraordinary as it is evidenced by the Iron pillar at Delhi which till now has not rusted through exposed to elements since hundreds of years[1600yrs]. How such a huge column was casted is still a mystery to scientists. The lofty temples found in Karnataka, Tamilnadu, Odisha and Khajuraho to name a few shows the expertise which ancient Indians had in structural engineering. As the whole world knows the concept of Zero was contribution of ancient Indians.

Education is nothing but a philosophy of life which means how we regard things, events, relationships and values. Every branch of learning for example, science, law, economics, political science, sociology and literature depend for their flowering on philosophy that provides a vision, a *darshana*. We need organizing skills in relationship with the surrounding atmosphere from the very beginning in order to avoid crisis and face the inevitable role of competition in a constructive manner. The present crisis of unemployment of youths is due to the lack of self-confidence which in most cases is due to unawareness in maintaining a balanced and healthy mind body system. They have to take care of themselves, realizing the importance of self-confidence and develop strong character in relation to nation building. We need a new pattern, which would take care of all branches of learning catering to all levels of students in the rural and the urban sides. Alternative form of education would build ‘world citizen’ in order to take the country ahead maintaining peaceful relationship with the other nations. The recent crisis in the world, the disorder in the society, the fear of terrorism draws our attention towards peaceful coexistence. This is calling for a holistic form of education, an educational system which will keep us united. Only when we understand the universal relationship with the entire humanity, will it enable us to connect us with the other nations heartily in friendly relationships. Our thoughts are related. Education exists in relationship and not in isolation. We learn in relation to one another and come to realize that we share the same one life in the world. We are citizens of our nation and members of the entire humanity. When there is progression in the field of science and technology, why is there so much of confusion and conflict in the mind of the educated? Our educational system needs redirection from time to time in accordance to the social, cultural, economic and technological changes. The fierce of competition at all level is an alarming situation. In the present situation we have to carry out a teaching pattern in a philosophical perspective which would boost learning, leaving the minds creative. Rabindranath Tagore said, ‘We do not want nowadays temples of worship and outward rites and ceremonies. What we really want is an Ashram. We want a place where the

beauty of nature and noblest pursuits of man are in a sweet harmony. Our temple of worship is there where outward nature and human soul meet in union.’⁵

IV. CONCLUSION

A natural compassion for learning is overshadowed by compulsory curriculum. Although mother earth is much stressed due to over population and pollution, we need to train the learners to cope with the existential challenges. An optimum number of hours, of teaching and learning are necessary in a classroom pattern of teaching. A few hours of teaching in an abundance of natural environment is vital. Routine school schedule, in all the educational institutions, should essentially include practices like yoga and meditation. We need to develop the teachers training programs according to the changing circumstances and requirements. If the teachers’ teaching methodology be innovative, teaching will be effective. The policy makers are not taking care about the learners’ requirements in the true sense. The scheduling of examination requires much study and planning, as they are affecting the learners both physically and mentally. Are the learners enjoying learning? Learners in the present hardly learn for themselves, most of the time it is the peer pressure. Usually children are attending schools even though they are not fit, ignoring health and attending classes with health disorders. They are panicked. Their erratic lifestyle has given rise to ailments from an early stage of life and this is calling for awareness in living a healthy disciplined life. Many ailments are not detected in the early stage. If detected, they can be cured with ease such that their treatment would be, less time consuming and less painful. Ailments like cancer are on the rise. We have never considered a natural way of treatment of diseases with the Ayurveda. We have considered several factors in educational policy making but never considered nature’s effect on the learning mind, how nature can make an immense contribution, a major tool for personal development and curing of diseases. We have nature clubs and others who explore nature, for pleasure. What is urgently required in the present is understanding the usefulness of nature in one’s hectic, stressful routine life. The love for nature passionately as one loves ones near and dear one, would contribute positive feelings towards other creatures too. Introducing workshops and creative activities of art and others in the natural environment would boost learning in a healthy pattern.

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