

DECLINING ETHICAL VALUES OF ANCIENT INDIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM IN MODERN EDUCATION SYSTEM

Dr. Anupa Singh
Associate Professor
Department of Economics
Deva Nagri College, Meerut

ABSTRACT

Education is a tool for total development of human. Without imparting values and morals in education, human development will be incomplete. So the essential part of education system should emphasize the values and morals with other development. In present scenario, education means how to earn money or job and the aspect of values and morals is completely neglected. This has increased many perpetual problems in Indian education system. Thus, there is greater urgency to think about ancient education system in India. As India progressed, from ancient to medieval and medieval to modern, it's education system deteriorated. This paper discusses various factors which were responsible for the degradation of such an efficient and most ancient education system of the world, short-comings of present or modern education system and causes of ethical deterioration in modern education system. This trend needs to be addressed if India has to survive as a nation and acquire it's due place in the world. Thus there is an urgent need to re-introduce value based education in the curriculum dealing specifically with human values, to redesign the fabric of Indian educational system.

KEYWORDS: Knowledge, Education, Ancient, Modern, Values, Morals

Introduction

Gaining mere knowledge is not the purpose of learning. As Khalil Gibran has said, a little knowledge that acts is worth more than much knowledge that is inactive. Also, one whose knowledge is confined to books can not use his knowledge wealth when the need for them arises. Knowledge, the object of knowledge and application of the knowledge – all the three are equally important for motivating to take a wise action.

Pursuit of material success is super-most objective in the minds of young students. It is making them more and more selfish and intolerant to others. They are drifting almost rudderless without sense of direction. Academic background, career and good earning is important in life for happiness and satisfaction, but more important is living a quality of life, humanity, compassion and self discipline for enjoying life fully.

Education is not simply imparting knowledge in a particular faculty or subject or making one fit for securing jobs or fair well in exams, but at the same time is also a training in logical thinking which helps the coming generations adjust to the ever changing environment. It also means opening the doors of the mind, cleansing the soul and realization of the self (Pabla, 2011). Education should aim at making human life better not only through economic upliftment of individual but also through social, moral and spiritual strengthening.

This will not only improve human life but also realize the “higher truth” i.e. “*Tamaso Ma Jyotirgamaya*” from darkness to light. Thus education is not only a way of earning but it also helps to develop human personality with skills, values, morals and enhancement of different attributes of man. So education is a vital means for the potentialities of a human being to emerge in a positive direction so that a man can live in society with full of dignity (Bordoloi, 2011).

Values are the guiding principles of life that contribute to the all round development of an individual. Values also add a good quality to the life and it should also contribute to the welfare of family, the community and the nation (Pathania, 2011). Education is a tool for total development of human, if any one aspect of human personality is ignored, it can result very adversely. Without imparting values and morals in education, human development will be incomplete. Values and morals are inbuilt in human being and Education should help in the improvement of human character and recognition of their inner purity, so the essential part of education system should emphasize the values and morals with other development.

Discussion

The present education system seems like factories which is producing many literate persons but they are unsuccessful in the struggle of life. In present scenario, education means how to earn money or job and the aspect of values and morals is completely neglected. This attitude has increased many perpetual problems in Indian education system. Today most of the unsocial activities are being committed by well-educated new generation. The relationship between teacher and student lack confidence towards each other. Students lack humanitarian attitude towards other persons, family, society and the nation. Thus, there is greater urgency to think about ancient education system in India.

After independence many commission, committee, policies were set up to improve Indian education system, but the improvement is not satisfactory because the curriculum is based on social and intellectual dimension of education and less weightage is given to values and morals. So the impact of Indian education is not fulfilling its desired needs and aspirations. Indian students are self-centered and their prime target is job security at the first opportunity in the present time. They have scant respect to the sacrifice of Indian freedom fighters; disobey their teachers, never sensitive to social and cultural heritage etc. Students are not compromising in life's responsibility as they found themselves helpless in life's testing circumstances. The

student's knowledge seems to be memorized and sharp but their skills, values, morals and spirituality developments are limited in present education system.

Ancient Indian Education System

Steps

Knowledge was passed on orally from one generation to another in ancient India. Education involved three basic processes, **one**, which included 'Sravana' (stage of acquiring knowledge of 'Shrutis' by listening). **Two**, 'Manana' (meaning pupils to think, analyse themselves about what they heard, assimilate the lessons taught by their teacher and make their own inferences,) and **three** 'Nidhyasana (meaning comprehension of truth and apply/use it into real life).

Education and women

In ancient India women were given equal right to education and teaching. Women seers like 'Gargi', 'Gayetri' or 'Maitreyi' were prominent participants in educational debates and proceedings of 'Parishads' (Assemblies). It was **mostly the Brahmins** followed by Kshatriyas that received education at the gurukuls, while boys from the lower castes learnt their family trade from their fathers.

Educational institutions of repute

Few of most important universities of ancient India were Taxila (being the first university of world established in Seventh century B.C.), Vikramshila University and Nalanda University (built in 4 A.D). Huan Tsang in his records mentioned the university of Taxila to be at par with Nalanda and Vikramshila Universities. These institutions were considered to be the best Universities of its times in the subcontinent and an honour to ancient Indian educational system.

Takshila University was famous for medical studies. Varanasi was famous for religious teachings. In the South, Kanchi was famous for its studies while the Vallabhi University was no less. There was a galaxy of eminent teachers like Panini- well known grammarian, Kautilya- the minister of Chandragupta Maurya and Charaka – a medical teacher of repute.

Nalanda university– Nalanda was supposed to be the highest learning centre not just for India, but also for the entire South Asia. **Students from foreign countries like China, Japan, Korea used to come here for higher studies.** It had eight colleges, one of it having four storied building and around 10,000 students and teachers on its roll cards. It was one of the earliest examples of residential cum learning complex.

No bar

Individuals from humblest origin were highly educated and were respected in Indian society as great achievers. Vashishtha, the principal of conservative school of Brahmanism, was the son of Uravshi, a prostitute. Vishwamitra, the quintessence of Vedic Brahmanism and maker of Gayatri Mantra, was a Kshatriya. Aitreya, after whom sacramental part of Rig-Veda is named as Aitreya Brahamana, was the son from a non-Aryan wife of a Brahman sage. Vyasa of Mahabharata fame was the son of a fish-woman. Balmiki, an untouchable according to present standards and the original author of Ramayana, is highly respected all over India.

“An ocean of knowledge in a jar”

Ancient Indian philosophy and Vedic literature contained “an ocean of knowledge in a jar.” It was supposed to be a magnificent example of scientific division and orderly arrangement of rules, in a few words, in different branches of human knowledge, covering almost all the aspects of life, be it phonetics, arts, literature, medicine, polity, metrics, law, philosophy, astrology or astronomy. It spoke of everything- on staying healthy, social evils, improving concentration and tenets of behavior, which are relevant even today.

‘Rituals’

The substance of the knowledge, learning and research work of Rishis-Munis (sages and saints) was put in the form of rituals for the benefit of common man. Certain practices/guidelines were shaped in the form of rituals by intellectuals and prescribed for the benefit of common man. These rituals and guidelines inspired people to lead a harmonious and healthy life.

Spot out gems

With a rational mind, raising it from ignorance, one can understand the greatness of Vedic literature. A knowledgeable person can spot gems from this ocean of knowledge; pick them up and leave like worthless pebbles the undesired, obsolete elements developed into the system with passage of time.

Revival of ancient knowledge

During second half of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, Swami Vivekanand, Rama Krishna Mission and Theosophical Society of India tried to familiarize the Western World, too, to the charm and graciousness of the ancient gold mine of knowledge, which had inspired not only Indians, but foreigners as

well. **Intellectuals from various countries have translated it in their own languages** and reinterpreted it for a rational mind.

As India progressed from ancient to medieval, its education system deteriorated. Various factors were responsible for the degradation of such an efficient and most ancient education system of the world.

Modern education system

Modern education system was implanted by British rulers. Before the advent of British in India, education system was private one. In 1835, Lord Macauley introduced modern education in India. It was the introduction of Wood's dispatch of 1854, known as Magna Carta of Indian education that laid the foundation of present system of education and changed the scenario. **The main purpose of it was to prepare Indian Clerks for running local administration.** Under it the means of school educations were vernacular languages, while the higher education was granted in English only. British government started giving funds to indigenous schools in need of help and slowly some of the schools became government aided.

Short-comings of present or modern education system

There are some deficiencies in the present Education system, some of which have been inherited from the British. There are many internal as well as external pressures on the system, because of which quality of education suffers.

External pressures– Externally, recent social changes and larger political turmoil have affected adversely the whole atmosphere. Some changes took place in the recent past in the character, role and inter-relationship of the six main constituent of the national elites – the political executive, the legislators, the businessmen, the organised workers, the surplus farmers and the bureaucrats. Narrow loyalties, sectional interests and sub-cultures like – favouritism, nepotism and corruption have fast become an accepted way of life.

Result is that communal, regional and caste conflicts and unhealthy competition between different sections for power and pelf are increasing every day. Powerful lobbies desire to have exclusive hold on scarce resources of the nation. Few persons and groups, who have the power in their hands and who control almost every walk of national life are working to deny justice to common men. The reflection of all these social evils is found in the educational system as well.

Internal pressures– Based on colonised British Grammar School type education has made Indian students crammer, imitators and unfit them for original work and thought. It has not taught them to have pride in their

surroundings. The more they get, the farther they are removed from their surroundings and at the end of their education, they become estranged from their surroundings. They are losing their natural character, because they are getting away from their traditional aspirations and values in preference to the western materialism. Alienation of modern generations from their roots and culture alarmed Gandhiji and he said, “My real education began after I had forgotten all that I had learned at School”.

Erosion of Indian culture— Modern education is **disassociating** Indian people from their traditional way of learning, **classical roots and knowledge**. With it have faded Indian values, philosophies and traditions, which had taught Indians the spirit of tolerance and firm belief in the principle, ‘Live and let live’ has always been the part of Indian ethos. Indians believe in ‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam’ – the whole world is one family.

C. Rajgopalachari had said, “If there is honesty in India today, any hospitality, any charity— any aversion to evil, any love to be good, it is due to whatever remains of the old faith and the old culture”. Tolerance, truth, Ahimsa, peace and non-aggression are the hallmark of Indian culture.

Influence of West

Present education system has given rise to a group of Indian intelligentsia which is influenced in a big way by social, political, economic norms of western world and their way of living. It vehemently denounce culture, character and social value system of India. It regards the culture of the land as indefensible, responsible for creating many discriminatory social values. The number of such people is increasing. The more the number of such persons grows, especially amongst Indian intelligentsia, the more intolerant, people would become.

Influence on modern youth

A drastic change is visible in the values, behavior and etiquette of a new educated neo- rich youth of elitist class, which has emerged especially in Metros. Their life style and value system are being gradually replaced by the Western ones. They want to enjoy pleasures of modern life at any cost without any restriction. They are more conscious of their rights and want to enjoy life fully in any possible way without any bondage. They do not like any restriction/comment on their behavior or way of life. Loosening grip of social bondage and observances have made many of them selfish, self-willed and arrogant. Some of them have become so intolerant and aggressive, that they outrightly discard all social norms and etiquette.

Their thinking and value systems are quite different from the older ones. Most of them generally regard Indian value system as rubbish and its epics as irrelevant. They set their own rules. Their yardstick of smartness

is interest in stock exchanges, glamor, pubs, parties, discos or late night culture, which gives rise to many kinds of social problems. With growing cult of materialism and consumerism, finer values of life are disappearing fast. Lust for material gains, comforts, craze for luxurious and glamorous life style has made them so insensitive that they hardly feel anything about the hardships and agonies of the 'have-nots'. Friendship/relationship prospers only if these are cost-effective, otherwise people do not hesitate in showing their helplessness due to lack of time or energy. The persons, who readily help people in need are considered fools in modern society.

Causes of ethical deterioration in modern Indian education system

Lack of value education in curriculum

In ancient India, the Vedas, the Upanishads, the epics manifested and upheld the values of Indian society. Imparting value education was the main aim of the teachers of the ancient age (Pathania, 2011). The family system in India has a long tradition right from the ancient practice of the Gurukul system. In the ancient time people lived in compound families and elder taught stories to child at home that develops moral values and after that in Gurukul they also primarily taught value education. Therefore, ancient time value education begins at home and it has continued in schools. However, with modern developments and a fast changing role of the parents, it has not been very easy for the parents to impart relevant values in their wards. Today people mostly live in nuclear families and parents are involved in their jobs and they cannot sprout values at home. Present school curriculum lack emphasis on value education. At present value education is not started at home nor taught at schools in India. Although value education is included in the primary education curriculum but at the adolescent or adult stage, which are the most sensitive stages to build the character of the youth, the curriculum finds no space to value education. However the present curriculum makes them perfect money makers, the best politicians, the well-known doctors, the skillful engineers, the greatest musicians, the marvelous actors but fails to make them realize a bit of their identity as human beings (Bala Harish, 2011).

Corruption

The major cause of ethical deterioration in education system is rapidly spreading corruption. There was a time when corruption was only in Government offices, private institutions, police stations etc. But, now a day's corruption has spread its roots in education system also. Corruption in the education sector can be defined as "the systematic use of public office for private benefit, whose impact is significant on the availability and

quality of educational goods and services as a consequence on access, quality or equity in education” (Hallak and Poisson, 2001).

Privatization of educational institutes

Privatization of educational institutes is another major cause for the declining ethical values in education system. Privatization of education has emerged in several forms in the recent decade in India. Government allowed to opens self-financing private institutions with recognition, which may be termed as commercial private education institutions (Singh and Purohit, 2011). With the mushrooming of these private institutes in the modern era, the education has acquired the status of a marketable commodity, where educational institutes are the traders and students are the customers (Garg and Kaur, 2012).

Teacher’s absenteeism

Teachers are the role models of students and in most rural communities, they are the most educated and respected personality. Teachers are the spreader of knowledge who helps developing pupils’ understanding, attitudes, skills, learning, and core values (Patrinos and Ruthkagia, 2007). While simultaneously those teachers are mostly absent from classes providing negative role models for students. Education is now in the grasp of corruption because of high rate of teacher absenteeism. The UNESCO’s International Institute of Educational Planning study on corruption in education state that there is 25% teacher absenteeism in India which is among the highest in the world. Teacher absenteeism is one of the most serious causes of ethical declining of education. It greatly reduces the overall effectiveness of the school, diminishes pupils’ achievements, damages the school’s reputation, and induces pupil absenteeism (Bray, 2003).

Political Interference

There was a time when an entire generation of dedicated teachers was presents in India, who was motivated by ideals and principles that were embedded in the social value system. The number of such teachers has substantially declined. Political interference is considered one of the most important causes for the declining ethical values in education system of India. Favoritism, nepotism and bribes are major types of misconduct in teacher’s appointment, posting and transfer. So the moral and ethical commitment of teachers has gradually decreased over the years due to political interference (Nuland and Khandelwal, 2001).

Conclusion

If the present education system is allowed to continue, it will fast result in suspicious teacher student relationship, increase violence in the society, corruption, crimes, disrespect of the parents, the fabric of joint family will be torn thereby resulting in nuclear families, the sacred institution of marriage is gradually diminishing and which will fast result in live in relationship. Everybody wants to be literate, but no one is thinking about excellence. Our education system has curiously grown in areas like technology sector. In this sector, Indians have proved themselves but in real life, they lack some essential human character. Technical, scientific, astronomical, I.T. and other such education is essential to compete with other developed or developing nations but the element of values and moral based education is also essential so the citizens will be civilized and the country will get its past glory of rich heritage.

India surpasses the west by no small measure on issues of culture. It is one of the oldest living culture in the whole world, despite hit after hit on it in the past during alien rule.

School is the common platform for all children coming from various backgrounds. Therefore, schools should have to conduct various value education activities that meet the rising needs of modern society (Sailaja B, 2001). These activities should concentrate on the development of the children, young adults and teacher while focusing on areas like happiness, humanity, cooperation, honesty, simplicity, love, unity, peace etc.

The declining of ethical values in education system will give rise to unskilled professionals, undisciplined students. This trend needs to be addressed if India has to survive as a nation and acquire its due place in the world. Corruption, privatization, absence of teacher, undue political interference is the probable causes of ethical deterioration of Indian education system. The only way to arrest this deterioration is to provide value-orientation in Indian educational system. Thus there is an urgent need to re-introduce value based education in the curriculum dealing specifically with human values, to redesign the fabric of Indian educational system. In India, it is necessary to increase ethical values, philosophical thinking, study, research and moral development in education system.

For building an ideal structure for education, an amalgamation of eastern culture and western methods, liberal thinking and advancement in science and technology of the West would be the best for future generations.

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