

QUALITY CONCERNS IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

Amit Kumar Sharma, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, SRK (PG) College, Firozabad

[Email..sharma.amit9988@gmail.com](mailto:sharma.amit9988@gmail.com)

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Abstract

*The first attempt in India to establish an education policy rooted in a document published by Prof. DS Kothari in as early as 1966. It was considered a very well-thought and visionary policy, despite the fact that its implementation was not fully recognized. The second such policy for education was not to be seen until after 20 years, in 1986, led by Rajiv Gandhi. However, it was not followed wholly until 1992, after a gap of 6 years. This policy was in practice for 34 long years until the year 2020, when a new education policy was brought up. If we want to produce Nobel laureates, scientists, great academicians, impartial journalists, great teachers and preachers and great excellent professionals and if we want India to be an educational destination for all and if we want to regain our past glory, we must follow the measures - **qualified teachers, adequate teaching materials, No political interference, adequate research facilities and Good infrastructure.***

Key words: Early Vedic Education, Monetorial System, Adequate Infrastructure, Education Modals.

Research Design: Analytical –Historical, based on Secondary Data.

Discussion and Results: History bears a testimony to the fact that India has been a great seat of learning since times immemorial. We in India had the university of Nalanda and Taxila when even Oxford and Cambridge universities were not founded. The cultural heritage of India has been very rich and from it evolved and developed the Indian system of education. India has the distinction of having produced eminent educationalists, thinkers and philosophers. We are the country who has produced great pioneers in different fields. In the field of Ayurveda Dhanvantari and Charak, in the of Astronomy Bhaskaracharya and Aryabhatta and Kanad who gave the theory of atom for first time and Nagarjuna who made us famlier with the chemical process of changing mercury into gold are a few to name. In the field of education Dr. Radhakrishnan, M. K.Gandhi and in ancient India Dronacharya, Vishwamitra, Mahavir and Gautam Buddha are not names but institutions in themselves.

Needless to say, the nature of education in the early Vedic period was spiritual. Gradually its scope widened and it included society, culture, religion, politics, history and so on. Education came to be regarded as the third eye of man. Nothing gives man such an unfailing insight as knowledge in the spiritual sphere as it leads him to salvation, and in the mundane sphere it leads him to all round progress and prosperity. Knowledge provides illumination which shatters illusion, removes difficulties and enables man to realize the true values in life. A person deprived of the light of learning has been described as blind. Intellect as developed and refined by learning is the real power in the world which increases man's intelligence, efficiency and the will to work. The great postmodernist thinker **Michel Foucault said**, "power is exercised through knowledge."

Educationalists agree that the problems of higher education in India are the problems of Indian society in general. So far the establishment of a society based on the principles of democratic socialism, it is necessary to re-orient the entire educational structure. The university education commission has aptly remarked in this context. **"Education systems are built for the time and not for all time"**. There are not changeless ways of educating human nature." It is through education that democracy may succeed. Dictatorship flourishes on ignorance of people but this is not true about democracy which has to draw its strength from the intelligence and good moral character of general people..

Erasmus said that education means developing real wisdom. But **today we have gained knowledge at the cost of wisdom**. To quote **T S Eliot**, 'Where is the life, we have lost in living, Where is the wisdom, we have lost in knowledge,. Where is the knowledge, we have lost in information.'

The ultimate of education must be wisdom not information. Information is merely a collection of different data. Knowledge without wisdom is a day dream and wisdom without knowledge is a nightmare. And the two cannot be divorced. In this connection it is very shocking to learn that today research has lost its direction and has become simply the collection of information. It is for this reason that plagiarism which is a serious quality concern in the field of research work must be checked with a heavy hammer.

"It is not that they do not see the solution but it is that they do not see the problem itself" - **Charles F. Kettering** "Therefore, we have to first know as to what the term education stands for in the present context. If we are able to deconstruct the term education then we can explain the multi-dimensional nature of education. In the past the objectives of education were ethics, discipline, comprehensiveness, aesthetics, totality, illumination, organisation (of

personality), character making, patriotism and nationalism whereas the objectives of modern education are far removed from these noble objectives.

Now, they are such petty objectives as earning, devoid of moral values, utilitarianism, customisation, alienation, travesty, inaptness, opportunism (achieving mean gains), materialism and Neo-Colonialism (use of economic or political clout by elite to gain domination over commoners). **Darwin's notion of survival of the fittest has been replaced by the survival of the richest.** We may say that these so called modern objectives are the real threats to quality concern in higher education.

. It will be in the fitness of things to mention here that the growing unrest among the students and the waxing magnitude of unemployment speaks volumes about the present education system. **The education being imparted today is neither job oriented nor it cultivates the human or moral values.** Today, **our social, moral and human values are in a melting pot.** It is because of the forces of globalization that have brought with it the concept of marketization. **Marketization and commodification of education have become so pronounced in the present scenario that education, particularly the vocational education, has become a commodity of the privileged few.** Education has become class specific. It has created a chasm between the rich and the poor. Therefore, poor feel themselves alienated from the mainstream of education as it is far beyond their reach.. University, professional and technical education has become costly in India. Fee structure of technical and professional institutes like IIM's is quite high. IIM's charge Rs. 2 lakh per semester for MBA classes. It is beyond the reach of common man. **Privatization of higher education has led to the growth of profit hungry entrepreneurs.** Now a day's higher education is much costly affair.

It goes without saying that **formerly the aim of education was social welfarism.** But in this materialistic age education is only producing self-centred people. Today, education has made us result oriented that is to say we believe in end results without giving a thought to means. We want to achieve success by fair or foul means. This has resulted in **de-synchronisation of means - end relationship.** The Bhagwat Gita also lays emphasis on fairness of means. It considers end secondary.

Therefore, the **remedy for the problem of end orientation lies in the Gita.** End orientation can be seen at four levels teaching, learning, student and owners of academic institutions. Teaching and learning have become examination oriented today. Students want to get their degrees even without going deep into subject matter. This shows that the range and scope of

education has expanded but education today lacks in depth. It does not clearly tell students what the real purpose of their life is. It gives them information of different subjects but does not make them aware of the multi-dimensional nature of life. The aim of the owners of private institutions is to spin money. They have nothing to do with the quality of education being imparted. They mostly recruit low paid, inefficient faculty whereas the government owned institutions generally fail to impart any real education at all.

. Undoubtedly, there is **hierarchiazation of attitude with regard to subjects in the recent past**. People presuppose that certain subjects are good while others are better and still more a few the best. This presupposition is totally wrong. In modern-day context no subject is superior or inferior. Now there is need for change of attitude among students. To get rid of such mind-set, curriculum must be made inter-disciplinary. **NEP** which has been introduced in colleges and Universities, will prove instrumental in this regard. **Education should aim at learning to live rather than living to learn**. Along with theoretical base of learning, enough space must be given to practical base of learning. Education must encourage advancement of all individuals through the process of thought rather than memorisation. The curricula of technical and vocational institutions are narrow and one sided since they include only technical subjects. There is no proper provision for liberal and general education in India. As a result of this, theyouths after receiving technical education remain deficient in knowledge of human relations and social behaviour. Modalior commission has recommended the diversification of curriculum of the secondary education and that the university curricula be made flexible so that it may be made in accordance with changing needs of society. NEP will cater to these needs to a large extent as the curriculum so designed is flexible enough to meet the changing requirements.

Also, when the foundation is laid on sand, how can it withstand tremors or quakes. This is exactly what is happening with our primary and higher secondary education in present time. In the name of government policy students are being provided self centres for examination. It is now anybody's guess what really happens there. If such students go for higher education they will only prove to be an utter failure. If the input is sub-standard how can we expect the output to be good. We have to therefore, follow the **upward filtration theory**. We should percolate the quality from quantity at the pre-higher stage.

. According to UNICEF, the **lack of qualified teachers, inadequate teaching materials, political interference, inadequate research facilities and poor infrastructure** are some of the reasons why many children do not receive a quality education, posing a great

threat to quality concerns in higher education. It is playing havoc. It will not be out of place to mention here that Gresham's Law applies to the sphere of education as well. According to Gresham the bad money drives out good money from circulation. In the same way young, talented, promising and potential prodigies are being treated unfairly. There should be no compromise with quality. Quantity should not be promoted at the cost of merit. This is the reason why mass exodus of talent is taking place in our country. When intelligent, talented and deserving candidates do not get suitable jobs in the country, they prefer to go abroad for seeking jobs. So our country is deprived of good talent. This phenomenon is called '**Brain drain**'.

. They say, teaching is the mother of all professions. A teacher nurtures society like a mother. The role of a teacher is of paramount importance in nation building. The role of a teacher is to hone the innate qualities of the pupils and to make all possible efforts to ensure that the tender pupils do not waste their sweet fragrance in wilderness. Thus a teacher needs to understand the basic principles of educational psychology for the optimum development of his pupils. The personality of a teacher should be such that he should practice what he preaches because actions speak louder than words. Teacher's can be classified under four categories:-

A poor teacher tells

An average teacher explains.

A good teacher demonstrates.

And a great teacher inspires.

A great teacher is an asset to the society. Mostly teachers encourage students to parrot things. They lay emphasis on making them stereotyped rather than encouraging originality. Teacher must be a guide not a strict disciplinarian. **Kothari commission has suggested** that teaching may be improved by providing professional training to lecturers and by organising re-orientation courses for in service lecturers. **According to Mead** there is relation between mind, self and society. Taking inspiration from Mead present education must act for a co-ordinated development of mind, self and society. **Mahatma Gandhi also said-** "Education is all round drawing out of the best."

In the book, *The Education of the Whole Man*, the well-known educationist of the United States, Mr. Ralph Borsodi, has asked us to take a fresh look at the problems of education. All systems of education aim at the education of the whole man, though in practice they lay

undue emphasis on physical efficiency or intellectual alertness or spiritual poise. These are not exclusive of each other. They are essential ingredients of a true system of education.

The Upanishads tell us that we should aim at the play of life, **pranaramam**, the satisfaction of mind, **mana anandam**, and the fullness of tranquillity, **santi samrddham**. The sickness of our society can be traced to one-sided development of education. The students should learn the Upanishad ideals to build the highest form of moral character for social good.

All knowledge is indivisible. Science and technology, literature and art, philosophy and religion are varied manifestations of the spirit of man. They do not contradict one another but complement one another. The spirit in man sits in judgement on nature, discovers its secrets and increases our knowledge of nature. In art and literature the same spirit deals with the moods and passions, the intense experience of the human individual, especially his inner being. The same spirit probes into the mystery of the world, tries to understand a little of it.

Science and technology are a dialogue of the human spirit with nature. Literature and art are a dialogue of the spirit with oneself. Philosophy and religion are a dialogue of the spirit with the supreme mystery which underlies the universe. When people speak of a conflict between science and religion, they do not appreciate the spiritual character of science and the rational character of religion. When properly understood, science and religion help each other.

In the name of science and rationalism many of our societies have broken off their connection with past tradition. Their lives have become rootless. We have to grow our roots again. We have to combine ancient tradition with modern knowledge. If we wish to have an open society, we should have open minds. Gandhi Ji advocated wholistic and universal education. His educational ideas stemmed from our great epics namely Vedas and Upanishads. He emphasised the need of a sweet blending of pragmatism, idealism, naturalism, materialism, spirituality coupled with modernity.

The human being, through a balanced education, should become a work of art capable of quality and beauty of its own apart from any practical purpose to which his skills and powers are put. The development of the human individual makes for the uniqueness of the individual. This uniqueness contributes to the fellowship of human beings. It leads one to the creative realization of the unity of mankind. There is no contradiction between seeing the truth in solitude and engaging in human affairs.

. Following measures along with those given before may prove instrumental to improve the quality of higher education in India. **E-R-V Model** can go a long way in strengthening our resolve for quality Concerns in higher education. True education must develop students from

within that is to enlighten them. Education must be resilient to change and receptive to new challenges. Besides, education should be value- centric . It is men-making education all around that we want in present scenario. Education must develop man of strength, manliness and dynamism. It must also focus on the development of will power and growth from within. This may encourage enrichment of strength of character which is lacking in our curriculum. Needless to say, education that manifests the perfection already in man is to be promoted and furthered.

. Moreover, education must adopt norms of excellence both at the level of institutions as well as students and teachers. Adopting these would enhance the quality of higher education in India. Institutions which do not fulfill these norms must be de-affiliated and teachers must be made accountable for students' performance. Poor performance of students must also be taken account of.

The training by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful is education in the real sense of the term . Essence of education is strengthening the concentration of mind and not the collection of facts . The education which does not help the common mass of people to equip themselves for the struggle of life and does not bring out strength of character and courage of a line is not a true form of education. Real education is that which helps a common citizen of a nation to stand on his own legs.

Education is not the amount of information that is put into the brain and which remains unharnessed and therefore has no relevance for the progress of society. The **LCM model** must be strictly followed if you want to provide education for the Welfare of the society. we must have life building, character making and man making assimilation of ideas in our current curriculum. Moreover, the only service to be done for our lower classes is to give them education to develop their lost individuality.

Undoubtedly, we want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased and the intellect is expanded and by which one can stand on one's own feet. Vedanta says that within man is all knowledge , even in a boy it is so, and it requires only an awakening and that much is the work of a teacher. Contrary to this, our colleges and Universities are merely an examining body and therefore are not able to produce the original thoughts among students. Education must liberate students from the shackles of weakness. Our curriculum must be so designed that it provides something higher and introduces students with their own true nature which has boundless potential.

Last but not the least, a **model of 5 V's** may be visualized for the qualitative improvement in higher education. Education must be vibrant, vocational, vision for future, value based and Vivekananda (that pleases our reason or in a broader sense our aesthetic sense). Also **theoretical base of Vedic education must be retained while broadening its intellectual base**. That is to say incorporating some of the features of Vedic education with certain modifications keeping in view the needs of the present challenges. In modern curriculum the concept of ideal teacher and ideal student must be incorporated. .

If we want to produce Nobel laureates, scientists, great academicians, impartial journalists, great teachers and preachers and great excellent professionals and if we want India to be an educational destination for all and if we want to regain our past glory, we must follow the measures mentioned above.

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