



REVALIDATING TRADITION FOR VALUE BASED AND EFFECTIVE EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Teaching, especially language teaching needs to be modified to cater the present demands challenges of the society. Teaching and learning should be made an experience rather than a task to be carried out in a stipulated frame work of time. It Educationalists, psychologists as well as linguists have come up with innovative methods in this regard. It is in this context the teachers should think of redefining the present system teaching by bringing in the ethnic methods like “Gurukula” system existed centuries back in India. The paper focuses on the scope and reach of experimenting new methods of teaching – learning process with the help of tradition.

Key words. Gurukula, deschooling,

Introduction

Teaching, especially language teaching, in India has been following age old methods over many years. Class rooms make the major platforms of teaching. Educationists and linguists come up with innovative theories and methods of teaching and learning. Unfortunately, in real practice, these innovations are not properly tapped for the enhancement of quality education. Most teachers confine to the familiar methods of teaching which have proved to be ineffective and insufficient. It is in this context, this paper considers ideals “Gurukula Ssystem” of the East and the theory of “deschooling” propounded by Ivan Illich of the West. Both the concepts converge on a plane of effective teaching and learning.

Discussion

Effective teaching –learning process takes place only when there is a cordial relationship between the teacher and student. Also learning should be made natural.

The teacher or the “Guru” is the person who understands his student comprehensively. Only then the teacher will be able to enlighten the minds of the student. As a role-model to his student initiating him to the path virtues the teacher should be able the best in the student. Unfortunately with the explosion of knowledge and communication the place of the teacher has considerably come down in the present system of education. Technological devices including e-learning has resulted in creating a situation in which the teacher is forced to take the less important mantle of a facilitator. The need of a teacher is really felt by the students. The so called technological gadgets provide students sufficient study materials on his finger tip.

This has resulted in displacing the teachers from the high pedestal of a “Guru” to the lower position of an assistant. Students feel that they can go ahead even without the presence of the assistant. The teachers in the schools of Kerala were given the less attractive label as assistants. Only recently the government changed the label and gave the teachers the status they deserved. It is a fact that in the present system of education, it is impossible to think of teaching without e-devices. Instead of completely disregarding the scope of modern high-tech system and devices, the teachers should focus on evolving an effective system of education by retaining the values of education of the past. The long lost harmonious student teacher relationship should be recreated. Recent news coming from the holy temples of education is shocking and disappointing. It is reported from that a group of students pasted posters of obituary for their living Principal on the day of her



retirement. Another incident that took place in the very same state which is noted for its high literacy rate is more alarming. Students made grave in the college premises and placed wreaths on the retirement day of their principal. Another Principal of a reputed Government college in Kerala had to witness the heartbreaking experience when the students broke the official chair of the Principal in the cabin. Many such incidents can be cited. The teachers also, at times, fail to observe their ethics when they make objectionable remarks on students. Students of a reputed college in northern Kerala raised their strong voice of protest against their own teacher following an unhappy comment on the dress code of the girl students. All these incidents are pointers to the present undesirable situation prevailing in the campus of the new gen-students. The lacuna existing between teachers and students is to be taken seriously by the educationists and teachers to revive the cordial relationship which was the hall-mark of the past. The psychology of the students in the present age of electronic revolution is to be taken into account to lessen the visible disharmony existing in the academic institutions.

There are various factors that have led to the alarming loss of values in the field of education. Some of the reasons are:

1. Independency of students
2. Lack of commitment on the part of both teachers and students.
3. Lack of role models
4. Loss of educational ethics
5. Campus politics

Independency of students in the domain of knowledge is a major factor that has delinked students from the teaching community. Teachers were the only sources for the students in the past to attain knowledge. They were totally dependent on teachers for knowledge acquisition. Teachers imparted their students knowledge within a frame work designed and decided by the teacher. Time also was a factor then. It was in fact a teacher oriented system of education. Teachers also had possessed comprehensive knowledge at that time. Even kings and emperors took decision only after seeking advice from their "Gurus." Teachers, then, were unquestionable persons of limitless knowledge and wisdom. This status of teachers is gone and cannot be retrieved as knowledge is no more the monopoly of teachers. Students are accessible to knowledge of all discipline with their electronic gadgets. The only way to overcome this situation is that the teacher should make continuous effort to update his knowledge and be able to impart latest knowledge to the students. Teacher equip himself to go ahead of students in the realm of knowledge. Also, the teaching is to be made more attractive and innovative. Teachers can exploit the scope of e-learning especially in the case of language learning to achieve this objective.

Lack of commitment on the part of both teachers and students also results in the deplorable situation existing in the modern education system. Teachers, in the past, considered their work as divine one not thinking of any monetary or other benefits. Sharing of knowledge was considered a noble and virtuous mission of a teacher. Guru received something as reward only at the end of the teaching and that also was done on the fiscal capacity of the disciple. This situation is totally changed and teaching also has come down to the level of other professions, a means to make monetary benefits. As a result the commitment of the teachers is considerably on a low key. The lack of commitment on the part of students also has aggravated now a days. The attitudinal shift of the students to learning is one of the major factors for this situation. Instead of seeing learning an overall development, both spiritual and physical, education has come down to the level of attaining skill in selected area of knowledge. Students go for specialisation in knowledge as it will give them better jobs and monetary benefits. Learning is no more an emotional exercise but a physical exercise to widen the scope of making more monetary returns. This attitude should be changed and the students should be given the feeling that learning is not for material progress alone. More awareness to be imparted too and instilled in



students in this direction. Thus a total shift in focus on the part of both teachers and students can prevent the further deterioration of the student – teacher relationship.

Lack of role models also has made things worse in the field of education. The concept of a teacher has lost its old glitter over centuries. The self discipline and austerity that the teachers kept in the past does not exist now. Society fails to show students any model teachers who are epitome of knowledge, self control, discipline and nobility. All these virtues are being neglected in education. Some of the qualities that the teachers of the past followed should be followed by the teachers to receive the attention and respect of the students. The teachers should be self disciplined and lead a life of simplicity to receive the attention of the students.

Lack of Educational Ethics is another challenge faced by modern educational system. Education actually should envisage some visions are able to mould good citizens. Unfortunately this is objective is not met by the new educational system. Education has, nowadays, become a major area of monitory profit making business, especially in the higher education sector. Higher education is now become accessible only to the rich. The poor are denied of the so called quality education. It seems that Government also is promoting this trend making education a mere commodity. Value based education is substituted by money based education. This system is to be changed and education should be within the reach of all, irrespective of their financial status. Undue importance given to English language teaching at the expense of the mother tongue also has brought in the present educational crisis of the lack of ethical values. Learning of English language is a must, especially in a nation like India where people of different language, culture and belief system prevail. But a child imbibes the cultural values and awareness through its mother tongue. If this is denied, the child will not receive lessons in basic human values which certainly make the foundation of education. The extended importance to English was established and promoted by the colonial masters in Indian as well as in other colonies.

Another major factor of the educational crisis is the uncontrolled **campus politics** present in the campus today. Political parties are using students as their tools to achieve political gains in the society. Campus politics is good as long as it serves as a platform where students can voice their justifiable demands that will render them a better situation of learning. But this objective is missing in the political activities of the students in the campuses. Instead, they are being controlled and managed by the political parties outside. Campus politics should be there to enhance the quality of education as well as to promote the co curricular potential of the students. Learning and political activities should be synchronized to evolve a better educational ambience where students will be able to bring out the best in them.

It is in this context of wide spread loss of value based education, the Gurukula system existed in Oriental nations attain great significance and attention. The concept of *deschooling* also, underscores the importance of making education familiar and friendly. It strongly approves the need of taking education from the four walls of class rooms. *Gurukula* is a type of education widely practised in South Asia till British rule. The word *gurukula* comes out of two Sanskrit words *guru* means teacher and *Kula* denotes extended family. The word itself refers to the necessity of making education friendly and familiar. Education in *gurukula* took place naturally from real life situations. The guru (teacher) taught lessons to his students informally. Observation, not learning, was the key word in *Gurukula*. Students observed their teacher's activities and listened to his words. Thereby they learned many things by themselves. Students experienced life in *gurukula*.

The institutionalised teaching, of course, is out dated and to be replaced to mould a generation of students who develop their skills in a natural and more congenial surroundings. Ivan Illich strongly resists institutionalised system of teaching on the ground that it does not provide students universal education. He opines that neither new attitudes of teachers toward their pupils nor the proliferation of educational hardware or software, nor finally the attempt to expand the pedagogue's responsibility will become fruitful until students receive value based universal education. Gurukula was a culture in the past. Based on Vedas, In Gurukula system of education students imbibed knowledge out of experience and observation. Imparted



Gurukula has existed since the ancient age. Their relationship was intense, intimate and personal. The teacher considered the students as his family member. The student had to stay with the Guru till the end of the course. The course ended only when the student or disciple became perfect in his studies. Money was not a barrier for education. All students wore the same dress. Day scholars were allowed in Gurukula. Listening and speaking skills were given great importance. Students learned to chant Vedic mantras without any text. This helped students to strengthen their cognitive domain, intelligence and memory power. Education was not merely theoretical but practical. Examination were conducted to assess the practical knowledge of the students. Everyone in the society had the opportunity for education. . All castes got education in ancient India. 2. There were more educational institutions in ancient India than British India. 3. Secular education had a vital place in ancient Indian education. 4. Students in ancient India were of both sexes (Dharampal). T. Here is a list of various secular sciences which were practiced in ancient Gurukula system: Āyurveda (Medical science), Dhanurveda (Science of missiles), Gāndharva – (Aesthetic arts like music), Nāḍyaçāstra (Art of dance), Kāñiçāstra (Agriculture), Tarka (Logic), Nyāya (Laws of Nature), Vaiçeñika (Atomic sciences), Çilpaçāstra (Engineering), Arthaçāstra (Economics and commerce), Dharmaçāstra (Ethics, law and order), Çikñā (Phonetics), Vyākaraëa (Science of grammar), Nirukta (Science of etymology), Jyotiña (Astrology and Astronomy) and Sāhitya (Literature). These are all secular studies. Under each and every one there are thousands of texts with additional commentaries, purports and explanations. All such studies were option

It was Ivan Illich, a Croatian - Austrian philosopher who came up with concept of “Deschooling Society” in 1971. Illich strongly dismisses the present system of institutionalised educational system. In the introduction to the book with the same title, Illich says:

“Universal education through schooling is not feasible. It would be no more feasible if it were attempted by means of alternative institutions built on the style of present schools. Neither new attitudes of teachers toward their pupils nor the proliferation of educational hardware or software (in classroom or bedroom), nor finally the attempt to expand the pedagogue's responsibility until it engulfs his pupils' lifetimes will deliver universal education. The current search for new educational funnels must be reversed into the search for their institutional inverse: educational webs which heighten the opportunity for each one to transform each moment of his living into one of learning, sharing, and caring. We hope to contribute concepts needed by those who conduct such counterfoil research on education--and also to those who seek alternatives to other established service industries.” (Illich, 1971).

It was this learning, caring and sharing that was practised in the ancient gurukula system of India. He strongly disagrees with the present day education which actually confuses the students. Students are “schooled” to confuse themselves with learning, grade advancement with education, a diploma with competence and fluency with the ability to say something new. His imagination is "schooled" to accept service in place of value. Medical treatment is mistaken for health care, social work for the improvement of community life, police protection for safety, military poise for national security, the rat race for productive work. Health, learning, dignity, independence, and creative endeavour are defined as little more than the performance of the institutions which claim to serve these ends, and their improvement is made to depend on allocating more resources to the management of hospitals, schools, and other agencies in question.

Conclusion

The afore said views of Illich strongly recommends a re-examination of the present day education system to make it more meaningful and value based. An amalgamation of the old and new educational system can certainly contribute to the promotion of a value based education that will lead to the creation of a better society upholding the basic values of life. The possibilities of the *Gurukula* education can be fruitfully used to evolve a non-institutionalised mode of education where students will experience real life and never become mere scoring machines.



Work cited

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