Ethics in Education – An Indian Perspective

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Abstract :

From times immemorial it has become very important to critically understand the relevance of the Education System. Education in the truest spirit has to produce original thinkers. Indian education has vested its basis on learning and understanding. The Sanatana Dharma which is the basic foundation for individuals to respect man and nature has stemmed from vedas, upanishads, puranas, dharmashastra, chanakya niti and many more important itihasas and puranas including our two great epics Ramayana and Mahabharata. Learning's from these perspectives have led to total development of mind, body and consciousness. The article gives a brief overview of ethical learning in the Indian Educational System.

Key words: Ancient, holistic, total personality, Vedas, Puranas, Ethics.

Introduction:

The basic aim of sound education is to create responsible citizens with sound character and mind. Mere scholarship and bookish knowledge would not benefit the society. A famous saying explains. The knowledge in a book and money in others hands are of no use as they don't help during adversity. Therefore it is very important to impart and receive education which is holistic and imbibes social and moral values. Such knowledge prescribed by our ancient system is termed as "Adhyatma Vidya" or the knowledge imparted by a preceptor to the student seated near him. The vedic traditions which were oral imparted this kind of education which had the goal of self-realization, completeness, different traits, rich tradition, economic and political influences, total configuration of ideals, spiritual values and Dharma. The ultimate outcome of such education is creation of social capital to the society.

Indian Education and Ethics:

Indian Education has always believed in imparting Ethical knowledge to the learners. While it considered imparting the knowledge of physical sciences related to the materialistic

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world, spiritual knowledge purified the character of the learner. The gurukula system of education was innovative, cultural and spiritual. Experiential learning enables character building and man making. Education included study of scriptures, philosophy, literature, warfare, statecraft, medicine, astrology, social sciences and vocational training. Kautilya's arthashastra describes in the chapter " Vinayadhikarana" the need to understand vedas in the right perspective. He says that after attaining the stage of completion of Upanayana learning should commence in the right ambience under the supervision of an Acharya. The tradition of Upanishads involved learning in three stages, namely Shravana, manana, Nidhyasana. In today's educational scenario these stages hold absolute relevance. Ethical learning should definitely complement listening, understanding and recapitulating. Speaking about the Right to Education if the system follows the course of equal opportunity to all then inclusive Education Policy is the need of the hour. Learning is the right of all seekers of knowledge. The best examples are seen in Brahmavadinis like Gargi, Maitreyi, Sulabha, Savitri and many more who were clever disputants capable of questioning the arrogance of leaders and the scholarship of scholars. The Rigveda has shown the human wisdom, Yajurveda teaches one to be pious, Sama makes a man connoisseur and Atharva gives an insight to medicinal sciences. Knowledge at various stages should be a complement to society. Creation of human assets for societal benefit should be the primary aim of education. Transformational education as an imperative aspect should lead to lifelong learning. The interest, aptitude and the enthusiasm of the learner should be

kept intact and along with textual knowledge the learner should be introduced to other responsibilities towards the society. In this context we should pay reverence to our systems of learning which introduced stages like upanayana, celibacy, alms system, status and service of the preceptor, practicality and many more. This system enabled personality development, skill development, capacity to face challenges, adapt to changes and transform oneself, gain knowledge, develop leadership qualities, eliminate negative thoughts, and adjust to the environment. India has seen visionary poets like Kalidasa, Bhartrihari, Bhasa, Vyasa, Valmiki and many more who have shown how education can be taken to a transcendental level. The thoughts of these visionaries were ably supported by vedas, upanishads, epics, puranas, shastras and many texts. The belief in experiential learning made the system complete. It is famously told in Mahabharata that ***"A student learns one quarter through the preceptor, the next in the company of classmates, the next by applying his mind and the fourth through experience"*** The fundamentals of ethical learning should aim at development of holistic personality, giving primary importance to teaching-learning, paying individual attention to the learner, inculcating civic responsibilities and social values and respecting elders. The concept of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" sprung from this thought of considering all as equal. With Pride we can declare that the ethical education in India was supplemented with the establishment of excellent seats of learning like Nalanda, Takshashila, Vallabhi, Vikramshila, Ujjain, Varanasi to name a few. These seats of learning gave equal opportunity to all learners, using innovative methods,

critical analysis, introspection, storytelling, Q and A sessions and many constructive methods of student engagement. They created the most suitable platform to the learner. Further, the system had different departments of learning like gurukula, parishad, sammelana, ghosti, ashrama, vidyapeeta, ghatikas, agraharas engaging in varied cocurricular activities. It is this system which created great scientists and preceptors in varied fields like Varahamihira, Aryabhata, Bodhayana, Bhaskaracharya, Charaka, Sushruta and various other pioneers of knowledge.

Indian Higher Education:

Education forms the backbone of a progressive economy. The last decade has seen a thorough transition in this scenario. Higher education institutions have sought the collaboration of their main stakeholders to restructure their practices as a result of which more number of ethical principles are inculcated. This has also resulted in a stronger bondage with the Alma Mater. World Bank Indicators have also shown that education enrollment is a significant parameter to determine the quality of education. Success is determined by the participation of all the critical stakeholders. Industry interface, faculty interactions, updated programmes, curriculum development, premium placements, quality in all academic engagements would play a significant role in strengthening higher education. Government policies like RUSA have contributed to progressive changes to strengthen higher education.

Ethics in Higher Education:

India's aspiration to become a super power in knowledge economy in the global scenario is driven by its ethical quotient in pursuit of excellence. Information, knowledge and wisdom are entwined in each other and they come in sequence to recognize human skills and capabilities, Words like ethics, morality, duty, virtue and many more co-exist with each other. Although they at times become relative terms in general, they promote value oriented thoughts and lead to a systematic way of thinking. Within their profession and chosen domains students should be encouraged to recognize and involve in social responsibilities. Transparent and Inclusive education helps to set principles for regulatory bodies and also leads to implementation of policies which are quality driven. This leads to expansion of knowledge base, excellence in knowledge sharing and equity in knowledge distribution. The ambassadors of an institution are their Alumni. Their involvement and participation in varied engagements would pave the way to inculcate values and direct the future generation in pursuit of quality and excellence. Faculties are primarily responsible to build an Institution of ethical excellence. Competency of faculty and their pursuit to build excellent models is the key to ethical foundation of education in a country like India where diverse cultures converge on a common platform. Indian Education is ably complemented by the ancient intellectual knowledge and tradition which is chiefly responsible in instilling ethical values in all walks of life. Ethics in Indian context is not responsibility which arises in crisis but a continuous backdrop of the Institution which sets various benchmarks to initiate, sustain and enhance the quality as a holistic and essential parameter. Our country's growth is largely

determined by the ethical functioning of our Education Sector. The Apex Body ably guided by MHRD is striving hard to set core values to inculcate ethical principles in teaching, learning, research and all other domains of education. The effort is seen in the changing scenario of higher education in India in the last decade. With the progression of time there is no doubt that Indian Educational Scenario would set an example for Ethical Education.

Teacher as an agent of change:

Ethical teaching is the need of the hour. The famous poet Kalidasa said *"Assimilation of knowledge is a special skill of some; Transfer of knowledge is a special skill of some others; He who assimilates and transfers knowledge should be placed foremost among teachers"* **Malavikagnimitram by Kalidasa.**

A good teacher can make a world of difference in a student's life, impacting everything from classroom learning to long term success. Research shows that good teachers are the single most important factor to contribute to student achievement more than any other resource. Teacher quality makes a positive impact on students' life and learning. Good teachers are strong and effective communicators. "Communication is the best tool for overcoming fear". Efficient teachers are good listeners too. This quality opens the door for a fruitful long term relationship. The key to the success of a good teacher is the ability to collaborate. This instills understanding and sympathy. Educators connect and learn from each other. Effective teachers have to work in constantly evolving environment and adapt themselves to give their best with available resources, changing curriculum, practices and

requirements. They have to be able to adapt to dynamic situations and understand the pulse of the audience. The student community have to be kept abreast with changing paradigms for which the teachers have to be creative and efficiently bring learning to the real world. Empathy and understanding creates a positive attitude in both the teacher and the taught. Patience while managing the classroom behaviour, working with the colleagues or communicating with student issues and progress is very important for a progressive teaching career. While bringing student learning to the real world the teacher has to bring his own learning to the real world. The teachers should have willingness to share knowledge and experiences, be transparent and ever enthusiastic to share their best practices as education is a very hands-on field and often requires experimentation. Above all a good teacher is a lifelong learner who chisels the student like a sculptor does to a stone. "Though harsh listening to the words of advice of a teacher a student attains excellence, like how a diamond though invaluable when excavated adorns the coronet of a king after undergoing whetting and polishing"

Conclusion:

India has been the land of Spiritual gurus and icons like Swami Vivekananda. These spiritual gurus for some and youth icons for many were forward looking, modern thinking, and rational individuals. They have created impact on masses for decades irrespective of caste, creed, religion, ethnicity, race and the like. Youth have seen in their remarkable personality role models, a mesmerizing personalities and daring thinkers. Their way of life and visionary thinking are more relevant in the current context. For them

truth ranked foremost and fear was the most horrible thing in this world. "They Dreamed to dare and dared to dream" Challenging the caste system vehemently they valiantly put forth their arguments at a time when caste was a common social denominator. This was their distinctiveness in a society discursively dominated by religious leaders and monks. Their connection with people was instantaneous. The Secular outlook and not being conservative made them youth icons. The critical thinking and constant inquiry qualifies them as eternal role models. Taking a leaf out of their books the current system should bring in changes needed to make the system robust, ethical and distinct in the global scenario.

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TOUGHNESS

Winning your goal is not the toughest Victory

Winning your patience to achieve the goal

is the toughest.