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Educating the Human or Cultivating Humanity? Two Choices in the Information Era for Education

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ABSTRACT:

We all know that proper education enriches a person in many ways – physically, mentally and spiritually. But many of us are not aware of how to integrate that learning within ourselves. Education eradicates illiteracy but the question arises in our mind what do we mean by this illiteracy? Does illiteracy only mean just not knowing the letter of any language? Of course not……it has profound inner significance. We can divide education in three categories – a) Education (proper education), b) illiteracy and c) poor education or improper education. The first two categories are well understood and need not to be discussed here. But the most important and vulnerable category is third category. Why are we moving backwards so fast if we have really got the proper education? In the current situation, we are forced to think so. Is it just mental disorder? I think it is not. The reason for this is the lack of proper education. Now a day, educational institutes become a machine to produce huge number of students. They are interested more in quantity not in quality. As a result, most of them become unemployed. In this paper, the importance of education for people of all backgrounds, cultures, races, and religions is discussed, along with how vital it is to human survival.

Keywords: Education, ancient education, types, Role of Education

Introduction:

Our ancient educational system developed throughout time, starting with the time of the "Rigveda," and was centered on the holistic development of the individual by attending to both the inner and outer self. The method placed a strong emphasis on the intellectual, physical, spiritual, and moral facets of life. It placed a strong focus on virtues including self-reliance, discipline, humility, honesty, and respect for all living things. The harmony between nature and humans was instilled in the students. Teaching and learning encompassed all facets of life and was based on the principles of the Vedas and Upanishads, which included fulfilling obligations to oneself, one's family, and community. The educational system prioritized learning as well as physical growth. To put it another way, the focus was on having a healthy body and mind. As you can see, education in India has a long history of being realistic, attainable, and enriched by life.

The education of the Vedas, Brahmanas, Upanishads and Dharmasutras comprised the ancient educational system. The names of Aryabhata, Panini, Katyayana, and Patanjali must be familiar to you. Among the learning resources were their writings and the medical texts of Sushruta and Charaka. Additionally, a distinction was made between Kavyas (creative and imaginative literature) and Shastras (learned sciences). Diverse fields of study were consulted for information, including history (Itihas), logic (Anviksiki), interpretation (Mimamsa), architecture (Shilpashastra), politics (Arthashastra), agriculture, trade, commerce, and animal husbandry (Varta), and archery (Dhanurvidya).

A significant portion of the curriculum included physical education, where students engaged in a variety of activities such as yogasadhana (mind and body training), dhanurvidya (archery for learning martial arts), vyayamaprakara (exercises), and krida (games and leisure activities). Together, the Gurus and their students diligently studied to master all areas of knowledge.

Learned debates, or shastrartha, were arranged to evaluate students' learning. Higher level students mentored lower level students. Additionally, there was the peer-to-peer learning method, which involved group and peer work.

Both formal and informal educational systems were in place in ancient India. Native American education was given at chatuspadis, gurukuls, pathshalas, tols, temples, and homes. There were adults who helped young children adopt religious lifestyles in households, villages, and temples. Temples served as both educational institutions and hubs for the advancement of information about our prehistoric system. For deeper learning, students traveled to universities and viharas. The most of the time, instruction was given orally, and pupils took notes and gave the material some thought.

Gurukuls, sometimes referred to as ashrams, served as residential educational institutions. A large number of these bore the sages' names. Gurukuls, which used to be surrounded by beautiful forests, were educational institutions where hundreds of students studied together. Even in the early Vedic era,

women had access to education. We come across allusions to a number of notable female Vedic academics, including Maitreyi, Viswambhara, Apala, Gargi, and Lopamudra.

The gurus and their shishyas coexisted at that time, supporting one another in daily life. Realizing one's inner potential, living a disciplined life, and obtaining comprehensive education were the key goals. Before achieving their objectives, students lived together away from home for years. The guru-shishya relationship developed over time in the gurukul as well. The emphasis was placed on developing the inner aspects of the personality as well as the external aspects of the various disciplines they were pursuing, such as history, debate art, law, medicine, etc.

In their pursuit of knowledge, monks and nuns built several monasteries and viharas where they could meditate, engage in discourse, and confer with scholars. Other higher education institutions grew up around these viharas, drawing students from far-off places like China, Korea, Tibet, Burma, Ceylon, Java, Nepal, and so on.

Nowadays, the majority of people in a society lack the resources to pursue a high-quality education that would enable them to try to comprehend and make the best possible contributions to the world in which we live. If the public does not support it, then only the wealthy can afford it and those who are most likely to be capable of fixing problems—99 percent of the population—will not get it. Underfunding prevents any educational system from reaching its full potential, not even for the wealthiest. Furthermore, top-notch teachers, a state-of-the-art infrastructure, enrolled students, and contemporary technology/equipment are all necessary for proper functioning.

Not only do educational institutions need low-level administrative management, but they also need leadership. Although many managers see themselves as leaders, individuals under their supervision are aware that this is much too frequently wishful thinking. People should take accountability when and where it is appropriate, but not beyond that in order to prevent subpar academic achievement brought on by undue constraints and insufficient training.

If mankind wants to overcome the many obstacles that it currently faces and will face in the future, then achieving educational excellence must be our first priority. Highly qualified individuals with advanced degrees in the arts, sciences, medicine, agriculture, engineering, computing, business, and law are needed to address our country's and the world's pressing issues. The most skilled individuals must properly select and use strategies for resolving problems and determining the most suitable technology, or expensive errors may occur. The key to teaching others—including the next generation—how to comprehend the world we live in is an educated human race. Too many people will find themselves in a world they don't understand in its absence. They won't even understand how to study new things and acquire new abilities! They won't be able to sift through the intricate layers of data to get the solutions they require.

What is Education:

Theorists in a variety of disciplines have investigated the definition of education.[1] Most people concur that education is an intentional endeavor with the goal of transferring knowledge, abilities, and character traits. Beyond these broad characteristics, there is a great deal of disagreement about its precise nature. According to one perspective, education is a process that happens during activities like attending classes, giving lessons, and learning. [3] An alternative perspective regards education not as a procedure but rather as the mindsets and character traits that educated individuals acquire as a consequence of this process. [4] The term can also be used to describe the academic discipline that investigates the procedures, systems, and social structures related to teaching and learning. [5] Understanding the meaning of the term clearly is important when attempting to quantify educational success, identify educational phenomena, and enhance educational practices.[6] The Latin words educare, which means "to bring up," and educere, which means "to bring forth," are the source of the English word "education." [7]

Some theorists give exact definitions by pointing out the particular characteristics that are unique to all kinds of education. For example, education theorist R. S. Peters lists three fundamental components of education: students must acquire knowledge and understanding, and this process must be advantageous and carried out in a way that is morally right. [8] These exact definitions are often successful in capturing the characteristics of the most common types of schooling. They are frequently criticized, though, because rarer forms of education can occasionally fall outside of their purview. [9] By providing less exact definitions based on family resemblance, the challenge of handling counter examples not covered by precise definitions can be circumvented. This indicates that while all educational programs are comparable to one another, they do not necessarily have a set of fundamental characteristics. [10] According to Keira Sewell and Stephen Newman, among other education theorists, the definition of "education" varies depending on the context. This suggests that the context in which it is used affects its meaning. [11]

One strategy is to see the more specialized goals as means to an end and concentrate on a single, overarching goal of education.[17] One theory holds that the purpose of education is to prepare students for society. It is accomplished by passing on accumulated knowledge to the following generation. This procedure aids the student in becoming a contributing member of society. [18] Instead, the student's well-being is the main emphasis of more person-centered definitions. They contend that education is a process that aids pupils in leading fulfilling lives or lives that they aspire to lead. [19] Many academics emphasize the need of using critical thinking to discern between indoctrination and education.[20] They claim that education also develops the rational capacity to critically analyze and challenge those beliefs, whereas mere indoctrination only seeks to implant beliefs in students, regardless of the validity of those beliefs.[22] It is not generally acknowledged, nevertheless, that these two phenomena are easily distinguished from one another. This viewpoint is supported, among other things, by the theory that, in the early phases of education, when a child's mental development is still incomplete, certain types of indoctrination may be required. This is relevant for situations like certain safety regulations and good hygiene habits, where young children must learn something without being able to comprehend the underlying causes. [23]

Types of Education:

Education can take many different forms and is the process of imparting knowledge, skills, and character traits. Public schools are examples of complex institutional frameworks in which formal education takes place. Informal education is unstructured learning through everyday experiences, whereas non-formal education is structured but occurs outside of the official schooling system. Early childhood education, primary education, secondary education, and tertiary education are the levels into which formal and non-formal education are separated. Other categories concentrate on the subject matter, such as science education, language education, and physical education, as well as the teaching approach, such as teacher-centered and student-centered education. The mental states and characteristics of educated individuals as well as the academic field that studies educational phenomena can also be referred to by the term "education."

Formal education takes place within a multifaceted institutional setting. These frameworks are organized in a hierarchical and chronological fashion. For example, the contemporary educational system divides students into age- and progress-based classes that run from elementary school through university. The government typically oversees and directs formal education. It's usually required until a particular age. [30]

Informal and non-formal learning occurs outside of the official educational system. A middle ground is non-formal education. Tutoring, fitness classes, and the scouting movement are examples of activities that are structured, methodical, and purpose-driven, much like formal education. [31] Through everyday encounters and environmental exposure, informal education is acquired in an ad hoc manner. There is typically no designated authority figure in charge of teaching, in contrast to formal and non-formal education. 32 Informal education occurs throughout a person's life in a variety of contexts and circumstances, usually on the spur of the moment. Children pick up their first language from their parents in this way, and cooking together teaches people how to prepare food. [33]

Even though most education in prehistoric societies was informal, formal education is essential to modern civilization.[37] This typically indicated that there was no separation between educationally oriented activities and other types of activities. Rather, the majority of adults served as teachers and the entire environment functioned as a kind of school. Informal education is frequently ineffective at imparting vast amounts of knowledge. In order to achieve this, formal instruction and qualified teachers are typically needed. This was one of the factors contributing to the increasing significance of formal education throughout history. Through this process, learning and the subjects covered in class became more abstract and detached from everyday life, with a greater focus on understanding broad patterns and concepts rather than on observing and copying specific behavioral patterns. [38]

Education as a Lifetime Need:

In modern times, the importance of education in human life has grown significantly. In the early stages of civilization, a child's knowledge of essential material tasks was significantly less than what was required for them to lead a productive life. The amount of accumulated experience, knowledge, and information increased enormously with the advancement of human civilization. Better education became more necessary as a result. More education is necessary to prepare today's man to lead a productive adult life.

A human child has limitless potential. It has the potential to grow into a mature, capable adult who is fully formed. It has the capacity to become a teacher, a farmer, a philosopher, or a poet. For their development, these potentialities—physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual—need a supportive environment and nurturing. The nurturing and stimulation required for the actualization of these potentials are supplied by the educational process. A person's education is always focused on helping them develop to the greatest extent possible. Education also bears the burden of finding a balance in the development of these skills, resulting in the creation of a "harmonious personality."

Education develops a person's skills and helps them become more adapted to their natural and sociocultural surroundings. One way to conceptualize education is as the process of empowering a defenseless human child to live a prosperous life. Throughout life, people continue to receive the education necessary to succeed in their particular contexts. Put another way, education becomes a continuous process that lasts a lifetime, and through each experience, people learn more about themselves and their surroundings. One point of view holds that education is not just a means of preparing for life, but life itself.

So, we discover that education is a continuous process that involves teaching survival skills, helping children reach their full potential on all levels—physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual—fitting them for their surroundings, and socializing them.

The Role of Education in Society:

It is believed that education is a subsystem of society. Education occurs in social contexts, and society at large has considerable influence over the process. Any society's education system reflects its core values, needs, aspirations, and goals. Every society utilizes education to further its own goals.

Although society controls education, education also has an impact on society by advancing its objectives. A society's productive energies are mobilized through education because it provides a steady stream of skilled, trained laborers, or human resources. The human resources thus provided aid in the accomplishment of societal objectives. People's intellectual capacities are developed through education, enabling them to examine the composition,

organization, and operations of society as a whole. This guarantees that a society keeps its vitality and advances over time. Therefore, since education is dependent on its surroundings, it "necessarily has an influence on the environmental conditions."

Maintaining, transferring, and generating social values, ideals, beliefs, and culture are the three social functions that education fulfills. It plays a conservative role in upholding culture, values, heritage, and ideals. Second, it passes along the society's values, ideals, beliefs, and culture to every generation that follows. For this reason, education equips the next generation of humans with a wide range of abilities, including social interaction, emotional development, physical awareness, artistic awareness, and spiritual response.

Education contributes to the preservation, upkeep, and perpetuation of society, social order, and social control through its conservative and transmittive functions. Because it is a creative force, education plays a dynamic role in society. It has the capacity to start, spur, and have an impact on social progress. Education plays a creative role in society by utilizing people's minds to promote social responsibility and advance society. "Education makes a people easy to lead, but difficult to drive; easy to govern, but impossible to enslave," as Lord Brougham Henry notes. Education has the power to change people's minds by disseminating novel concepts and information. It can also raise people's awareness of social issues. Individual minds that have received a proper education can then deliberately work to advance society as a whole and strengthen the social structure.

The Education Mould: A Spiritual Transformation

The religious foundation of Indian ethos is essentially where this idea came from. "Education is the realization of the cosmic self," and "Education is that whose end-product is salvation," according to Adikavi Sankaracharya. "Education is the manifestation of divine perfection already existing in man," said Vivekananda. Swami Dayanand believed that education should cultivate in man the noble and divine attributes that allow him to walk the difficult path of truth-seeking. Education ought to uphold the morally upright and continuously work to weaken the influence of the unfair. "In India, education has always been regarded as a source of illumination and power which transforms and ennobles our nature which is essentially good and divine," according to even more recent educationists like A.S. Altekar. Every definition of education that exists today assumes that humans are the products of God, who is all-powerful, all-present, and all-knowing. Therefore, education is the process of realizing that divine macrocosm in oneself by working for the welfare of all those who are a part of it. The human soul is but a part of that totality which is manifested in God.

The Purpose of Education in a Democracy:

The promotion of democratic ideas, the development of an informed and enlightened citizenry to ensure the continuation of a democratic social order, and the enhancement of each person's abilities for their own fulfillment are all undoubtedly goals of education in a democratic setting. Democracy is based on an unwavering belief in human dignity. In a democratic setting, the development of an individual's abilities to the point where they become self-sufficient adults—the "complete human beings"—who "love well, play well, work well, and expect well" naturally takes precedence over other educational goals.

Effective citizens who actively engage in the democratic process are essential to a democratic nation. To maintain a democratic social order, it is imperative that citizens become knowledgeable and enlightened. It is vital for the development of democratic citizenship that citizens receive an education about their fundamental rights and obligations. Education should provide our children with "opportunities to understand their constitutional duties and rights as citizens," according to the National Policy on Education (1986). Additionally, democracies require leaders in a variety of fields. Therefore, preparing kids for leadership roles should be a goal of education.

Like other forms of social order, democracy aims to advance its own principles and values. Among the values aimed at instilling in children and citizens are the beloved democratic ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity. These principles are outlined in the very preamble of the Indian Constitution, along with those of socialism and secularism. It goes without saying that the goal of education in India is to advance these democratic principles.

A democratic society must deal with the rigors of time, just like any other. It must be able to meet the urgent demands of the day. Democracies in the modern era face many difficult issues, and education, as a component of society, should work to empower democracies and their people to effectively address these issues. To achieve this, education needs to promote global understanding, support peace efforts, uphold national unity and integrity, and instill in citizens a rational outlook on issues pertaining to the environment, population, and other urgent concerns.

Conclusion:

Education illuminates the darkness and lifts people out of it. It is unquestionably the hope for a happy life, and because of its enormous significance to humanity, it demands careful consideration. In order to positively impact and advance humanity, our schools must always provide high-quality instruction. An ignorant populace represents the greatest threat to humankind. Above all, governments everywhere must make sure that everyone has access to high-quality education.

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