

SOME ISSUES REALING TO "REVMPING OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION'

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Report of a UNESCO Commission enquiring into the problems of education in the post World War II period, presided over by M.Edgar Faure, Minister of Education (later Prime Minister) of France, in chapter headed ' Towards the Complete Man' says :

'A new man for a new world !

"His knowledge of his own powers spreads to knowledge of his own conscsciousness. Never until now has he stretched to such limits his attempts to elucidate the mystery of the inner world ... "

" For training purposes, one of man's dimensions - that of intellectual cognition - has been arbitrarily chopped into pieces, while others have been forgotten or overlooked, and have been either reduced to an embryonic state or left to develop in archaic fashion. For the supposed needs of scientific research as high level specialization, the full general formation of many young people has been mutilated . . . "

'The physical, intellectual, emotional and ethical integration of the individual into a complete man is the broad definition of the fundamental aim of education

" The truer he is to himself, the more closely he follows the laws of his nature and his own calling, the nearer he comes to humanity's common calling and in addition, the better able he is to communicate with other people."

We have so much literature to unearth form our spiritual treasure for when one reads such reports, one realizes how close

these ideas are to our own inherent heritage and culture.

Look at the paradox !

When changes are taking place the world over, and the country itself is on the verge of a new way of life, a question arises what is education, particularly technical education, doing; and what our academicians are thinking about the changes and what they propose to do to keep our country in the forefront of this new-found dynamism.

Today the country is talking of 'free market economy' , ' restructureing' and a whole host of new terminologies to explain changes taking place in the economic scenario.

Look at the pains of a new birth taking place in industry. The ISO 9000 today has become the key-word-the password to gain entry into the Common Market, into the markets of the world. Without this password, the gates of international market do not open.

Look at education, technical education, which is in poor health at a time when it should be the foundation for all growth in the industrial and economic sectors. What have we done ?

Yes, we hold seminar/conference on 'Revamping of Technical Education' in five star hotels. If we are talking on matters concerning education, should we not base that in an educational setting, so that the conference could at least set up some waves of vibration in that environment. It is like holding a seminar on 'Strategies for

Removal of Poverty in our Villages' in an international hotel in London, Washington, or New York. Such lavish settings cannot espouse the cause for which the seminar is called.

Education is after all the development of man/woman to his/her full potential. Let us look at some basics. Knowledge alone cannot fulfill this need and one needs other qualities too. Even though our own knowledge level may not be commensurate with standards aimed at, the bright and brilliant students can often make good this deficiency through self-study. This may hurt many of us, but truth is truth. And for other students, there are tuition classes to fill up the decrement and provide the students with the knowledge they need to pass out successfully.

It is often not knowledge but information and methods that help the student through. Do we talk about all these in our conference? We close a blind eye - and this is what is causing frustration, loss of faith and then unrest on the campuses.

Look at the responsibilities of the head of an institute. It is he who provides value to nourish such an environment. When he fails to provide these values, when he fails to nourish the environment or at least maintain the environment, nothing can be done. No revamping or any other gimmick will work. It can at most boost the ego of the individual. The institution gets its status through the values it holds and the nourishment it gives to uphold those values.

In explaining the process of development in his essay on "Learning to be free", Carl Rogers says :

"We may have the essential core of a process by which we might facilitate the production, through our education system, of persons who will be adaptive and creative, able to make responsible choices, open to the kaleidoscopic changes in their worlds, worthy citizens of a fantastically expanding universe."

We can build for the future by looking at values associated with Gandhian thought : simplicity, personal growth, human scale, selfdetermination, and ecological awareness.

I think we need simplicity in our educational system. Simplicity is the core of Gandhiji's success.

We should incorporate the principle of material simplicity in our system. The Santiniketan was born on this principle and has attained the status it has by this principle.

Ostentatious display of power and privilege has become the symbol of office, what we need is humility and sense of service.

While defining values, Carl Rogers mentions three, operative values, conceived or conceptualized values, and objective values.

I think the label of value we can attach to the Gandhian principle is 'spiritual value'. Ours was the cradle of spiritual values and it is time we revived those values, and get rid of false front, facade and show. We had many teachers who had these values and we remember them even today.

The next value is personal growth. Isn't this, why students come to educational institutes ? Any so-called revamping must address itself to this and must gear to provide instruction and training to fulfill this need.

Carl Rogers gives it a new terminology. He writes :

"It is simply that in a wide variety of professional work involving relationships with people - whether as a psycho-therapist, teacher, guidance counsellor, social worker, clinical psychologist - it is the QUALITY of the interpersonal encounter which is the most significant element in determining effectiveness."

He defines then attitudinal or experiential elements in the teacher that make a relationship, a growth promoting climate.

1. **Congruence** : The teacher is genuine in his relationship and without a front or facade.
2. **Empathy** : The teacher is experiencing an accurate empathetic understanding of his student and is able to communicate some of the significant fragments of that understanding.
3. **Positive Regard** : Growth and change are more likely to occur when the counsellor, teacher, is experiencing a warm, positive, acceptant attitude toward what is the student. It is the same quality of feeling that a person feels for his child.

The third value is human scale. In the kind of situation we have in institutions which cater to thousands of students with a poor student-teacher ratio, the organization becomes impersonal and cannot hold together the people involved. They break away and cause clusters of small groups trying for power and position. That is why even a good institution like the students association or staff union has come to represent confrontation and conflict.

The next value, self-determination, is sabotaged by the immensity of the organization and absence of values. Individual self-determination becomes non-existent and group rivalries take their place.

We again, again, come to the Principal and Head of the institution whose main duty is to establish relevant values, uphold them, develop a nurturing environment and give the institution an impetus to growth and give the student a meaning.

He has a great role to play in self-determination. Unlike industrial organizations, educational institutions totally rely on this one person. If he is weak and mean, cannot understand human dynamics, interplay of various emotional demands, lacking in communication, is unable to inspire others, the institution is as good as dead.

I suggested choosing the right men and putting them through a gruelling training will make all the difference to institutions. He can pass on his experiences to his colleagues and would be a beacon, the institutions need badly.

What we need is not conferences on 'Revamping of Technical Education' we really need a good school for the heads and the other staff. A staff training institute is what we need most, staffed by dedicated people, with experience and a spiritual frame of mind that can understand the process of growth and decay.

It is time to expose our staff and students to the ecological problems facing the world and our country. Our education is living in total isolation, and the people who participate in the educational process are unaware of environmental degradation, in physical, mental planes. We look down on the deprived, on the unfortunate. We try to blot out these aspects. In fact, many environmental deprivations are caused by technology, and only technology can help in their redressal. I believe this awareness is very important.

Our education must be aimed at improving quality of life of our people and our environment.

Do we discuss this issue?
