

IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON ACADEMIA- CHALLENGES. SOLUTIONS TO PONDER AND PRACTICE (INDIAN WAY)

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Abstract—“Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man. Each nation has a message to deliver, a mission to fulfill. Indian destiny is to spiritualize the world.” Swami Vivekananda

I. INTRODUCTION

India a land known for its spirituality is strongly rooted in the principle of “VASUDAIVA KUTUMBAKAM”, meaning the whole universe is a family. The transformation of Indian education system from the ancient Gurukul system to virtual learning today is a strong reflection of the changing social and cultural context. The strong interplay between democratization of education, globalization and emergence of knowledge, society has greatly influenced the process of this transformation in education in the world including India.

Alvin Toffler opined that education will no longer be a closed, protected, heavily subsidized system in future. The potential impact of globalization of higher education provides both opportunities and challenges depending on priorities, policies, resources, strengths and weaknesses of countries. While developing countries have been exposed to competition, marginalization, penury and impoverishment, there has been unequal gain for developed countries. This is in particular with reference to India. Since globalization is inevitable, the challenge is to harness the beneficial aspects of globalization and learn from them and adopt the best practices.

The recent phenomenon of globalization has affected our country and all its system with education as no exception. The inclusion of education as a tradable service within the G.A.T.S. of WTO has led to tremendous change on every component of higher education namely the Universities, the Colleges, teachers, students, parents, funding agencies and potential employers in society as a whole. The field of

education has undergone phenomenal changes with respect all its stake holders.

The free flow of knowledge, information and other resource across national boundaries is a great challenge to

Indian educational leadership at both the micro and macro levels. In the sphere of teaching one notices that there is a serious departure from liberal intellectual tradition where education is about learning across the entire spectrum of disciplines. Students and parents display strong preferences to demand higher education that makes young people employable. Universities introduce new courses for which there is more demand in the market. Thus there is a rapid commercialization of higher educational institutions leading to unethical practices. This is both good and appreciated but has potential threat to the value system.

One sees a disturbing trend of deterioration of democratic and secular values among the educated youth. Today's youth is more interested in material comforts and low on creation of an egalitarian society in India. It is very sad to observe that the best products of institutes of technology and the Indian Institute of management have overdeveloped minds and underdeveloped hearts. Steven Mullar, President, John Hopkins University pointed out “Universities are turning out highly skilled barbarians because we don't provide a framework of values to young people who more and more are searching for it”

UNESCO in one of its publication “Key to the 21st century (2004) has identified four challenges of the present century which include: the challenge of peace, the challenge of poverty and exclusion, the challenge of sustainable development and the challenge of governance. Only an education system that is sound in quality and values can help the youth face these challenges. The importance of education as a value building activity should be emphasized where value integration in academic programmes, institutional management practices and in the general working of an institution must take place.

The essential and enduring part of a nation is not its economies, commerce, ecology or policies which form only

its outer body but its insight, culture and ethos which are the fine expression of its mind and soul. Just as the outer material and economic progress of a nation depends on scientific preservation and harnessing of the material and biological resources of its ecological heritage, the inner evolution and progress of a nation depends on the enlightened preservation and harnessing of its human and cultural heritage. Fortunately in India, we have the immense potential of our insight and culture for motivating, managing and leading our abundant human resources.

Indian tradition and philosophy is about values that have come down through generations automatically. The texts, literature and other works composed by many seers have been pregnant with meaning. One can unearth such aphorisms not only from scriptures but also from the work of seers and poets. Their composition has been an outcome of their meditation and reflection on philosophical and spiritual ideas. One can pick any from innumerable collection of sayings which are worth imbibing in today's scenario. The education in ancient India stood justified by its results. Traditional learning was considered sacred.

A. *Wisdom from sages*

Rig Veda the ancient Indian text indicates that "it contains all the knowledge from the earth to the absolute truth." (Rig VI-164-39). Thus ancient people obtained knowledge in matters both mundane and spiritual. Truly enhanced values such as love, compassion is not limited to any one religion or culture. It is open to all people irrespective of their nationality, gender, religion, cast, creed or other identities that separate us. The importance of ancient education system in imbibing and fostering the values in the family, society and community should be revisited in order to be peaceful and joyous. Values such as tolerance, human concern and sharing are all the more vital today as we are basking in the glory of globalization.

If the traditional Indian philosophy as a framework for quality focusing on inputs and processes is integrated with the framework of modern educational institutions focusing on outcome, then higher education will truly serve the purpose of society and all the stakeholders. "There is no end to education. It is not that you read a book, pass an examination, and finish with education. The whole of life, from the moment you are born to the moment you die, is a process of learning." Says Jiddu Krishnamurti

Though people are familiar with words like values, morals, ethics they seldom believe that there can be systematic study of the subject which can be designated as science in the sense in which physics, chemistry are understood to be sources. They are thus unable to imagine how simple matters like priority of duty, wisdom, harmony, unity etc. can promote the great and wise thinkers to the extent of establishing schools of ethics. On the critical

examination of these various schools they tend to think of values a subject of controversy and wish not to inquire into the nature of such issues.

There is another danger of simplifying such concepts for eg. What are values? An understanding of these lands us in the domains of philosophy, sociology, psychology, economics, political science, religion. A layman for eg. might think that pleasure is good or prosperity of a nation is good without knowing that these answers imply psychological and economic interpretations of "good" respectively. The gravity of the problem arises when pleasure is equated with good as is seen today. Values like truth, honesty, and tolerance have special connotations in the Indian system and they lose their significance without special reference to their metaphysical background. Hence it is essential to study the problem of values in a systematic and scientific manner.

Many scholars subscribe to this view and believe only experience alone can enrich the ethical aspect of the human mind and no amount of theoretical knowledge can raise man's ethical stand. However in reality it is essential to study objectively the theoretical aspect of values. If man does not have the knowledge of values and the power of discrimination between right and wrong, good and evil then his behavior will be on same level or worst than that of animals as is seen today.

Western analysis laying emphasis on material progress has brought about a disparity between theory and practice of philosophy and science kept apart from religion and metaphysics from ethics. But the ethical ideas laid down by Indian sages thousands of years ago are universal standards that can be followed at all times. These ideals were accepted and adopted and individual and society developed in a harmonious manner.

B. *Our Concerns*

Today due to some unforeseen and unavoidable historical vicissitudes, there is a gap between theory and practice of the values which need to be highlighted. The hurdles that come in the way of following the values need to be not only identified but the ways to reduce the gap need to be pondered over by the stakeholders of education on a war footing. A scientific approach therefore lends more credibility to work on the practical mode rather than resigning to the fact by merely mouthing the need to voice for values.

Globalization has brought about sweeping changes across the world; Global exchanges in the economic, educational and cultural domains continue to be unequal. Uncritical acceptance of Globalization as a positive force

needs rethinking. Education is increasingly treated as a business. It is highly imperative that educators in developing countries like India need to examine the forces of globalization and how it affects higher education. There is also the fear that globalization would lead to the end of plurality of historic cultures embodied for centuries in the world's greatest civilizations.

As there is no alternative but to stay under the umbrella of GATS it is imperative that the teachers, educators, students, educational administrators of the present day and future use their intellect, skills and Indian values to revitalize the Indian conscience so that they can act to have a meaningful existence. As teachers, who are kingpins of any education system, should guide students to acquire such knowledge of heart and head that will help in building up a character education thus reviving the glory of an ancient education system. Many masters from India have echoed this idea and relevance of value based education in a prolific manner.

Swami Vivekananda stated that education is a manifestation of perfection already in man and we must have life building, man making and character building education. Swami Dayananda stressed the importance of education as formation of character. Aurobindo laid great emphasis on the building of the powers of human mind and spirit. In Tagore's philosophy of education, the aesthetic development of the senses was as important as the intellectual—if not more so—and music, literature, art, dance and drama were given great prominence in the daily life of the school. This was particularly so after the first decade of the school. Rabindranath tried to create an atmosphere in which the arts would become instinctive. One of the first areas to be emphasized was music. His vision of education interpreted in the creation of Shantiniketan which stood for his philosophy of making life in harmony with existence and the relevance of a value oriented content taught in congenial atmosphere.

Values mean different things to different people. It is regarded by some as a norm or a standard by which human beings are influenced in their choice of alternative courses of action or alternative modes. The concept of values has emerged from sociology, political science, education, social psychology and anthropology and it also has a secure place in historical analysis, philosophy and religion."(Yogesh Kumar Singh and Ruchika Wath 2005). There is a debate centered not only on the determination of the meaning of values but also on the following four issues of relevance of values in education. There is a view that since values are relative and subjective, educationists should confine only to those domains where objective knowledge is determinable. According to some, since value systems stem from religious beliefs and these beliefs are in conflict with the demand of reason and hence

no place in education. According to some educationists values cannot be taught and hence there is no rationale for value oriented education at schools and universities.

Rokeach's enquiry into the nature of human values reveals that concept of value has special place in cognitive theory because values are central, dynamic and economical units influencing a person's attitudes and behavior. There are, in every age, new errors to be rectified, blunders to be corrected and new prejudices to be opposed. This paper is just a gentle reminder to the academicians to rethink, recognize, rediscover, revisit and reflect on the immortal values hidden in our ancient texts and bring forth its relevance today. Challenges will certainly bounce again but we can hold the majestic glory of true and meaningful education high through the lens of values.

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