EDUCATION FOR
INCLUSIVE THINKING AND HARMONIOUS LIVING

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INTRODUCTION

What is the end result of education? Could it be anything other than making human beings who are equipped to think in an inclusive manner and empowered to live harmoniously with one another? Informing the students is only a beginning. Knowledge is for fostering understanding. Facilitating them to think critically, to think large as a human society, to know themselves, to grow and blossom up as humane beings defines the process of education. In other words, education promotes, and has to promote, holistic learning that will ensure the making of good human beings and good citizens, who are finely tuned to ethical and spiritual values, especially in the uniquely multi-faceted context of India.

1.   INDIA A LAND OF UNLIMITED DIVERSITIES

1.1.   India's projected identity

India is a country where its people are extremely conscious of its identity and image. Therefore, various self-appreciative slogans are in the popular use. A few of them are – 'saare jahan se achha', 'meraa bhaarat mahaan', 'India shining' and 'incredible India'. Such phrases do not seem to exist in at least most of the countries. The brilliant but inflated self-consciousness seems to have its roots in the perspective 'Aham Brahmaasmi' and it is well reflected on the shores of the cultural boat ride that is displayed in the prestigious Alkhardhaam temple in Delhi. Without a doubt, there are several strengths that make the country only one of its kind in the world. But, to be frank, it smacks of a superiority-feeling that is grounded in a sense of inferiority in certain fundamental areas of human life, especially in the social aspect.

1.2.   India's informal and accommodative mindset

The mindset of the Indians is highly informal. Within the limit, it is exceptionally a positive quality of life. But, it goes to the point of accommodating anything and everything, even the worst of the negative drives in life. No single standard works in India. Inefficiency, corruption, chaos, etc also are almost in the inner construct of the life of the country. Accommodating with the most blatant contradiction is also pat of the life of the people in this land. In other words, 'everything is possible in India'. 'Nothing can be taken for granted in India', as well. This elasticity of life makes it possible that there are 'many 'Indias' in India'. These Indias tend to conflict with each other, too. That is how the estimable traits of being informal and accommodative become, off and on, negative and counter values.

1.3.   Is India a Hindu Country?

India is popularly known as a Hindu country. 2011 census of India shows that Hindus compose 80% of the population in India. The popular slogan 'Hindu, Hindi and Hindustan' affirms the idea, too. Besides, though imaginary and unrealistic, there has been a jingle of 'Hindu-raashtra' in the air since some time, pioneered by certain fundamentalist factions of the country. Yet, the question still stands whether India is a Hindu country or not.

Does the word 'Hindu' sustain the idea of the so called Hindu majority? The word 'Hindu' is almost a misnomer. The word doesn't appear in any of the scriptures of the country. The word 'Hindu' emerges

from the word 'Sindhu' river and the word 'India', from the 'Indus' valley civilization, that too, so named by the invaders from outside India. Even then, the word does not refer to any particular community. It was only a geographical and cultural notion, which includes all the inhabitants of the country. Besides, the Constitution of India affirms the 'secular' character of the state. Therefore, India cannot be called a Hindu country, in the real sense of the word, and the word does not define the national identity of the country.

1.4. Does 'Hindi' language give a national identity?

Hindi is the national language of the country. Hindi is spoken or understood by the majority of the people in India. Even then, Hindi does not hold all the people of the country together. There are regional languages as well as English that are in use in smaller and larger circles. Hindi has various styles and shades also, on account of the influence by the respective local dialect. There is Sanskrit-based and Urdu-based Hindi, too. The latter style seems to take the upper hand as the popular choice. In spite of the national status and its role as the largest link language among the masses, Hindi does not give a shared identity to a considerable portion of the people in the country.

1.5. Is ethnicity the basis of a united identity?

Unlike many other countries, where there are people of only one ethnic origin, India has enormous varieties of ethnic groups. The ethnic traits of the people of India, like colour, face cut, size and other features, are so different from each other that some groups have more similarities with people outside India than those inside. The tribal groups look very different from those of caste traditions. Tribal and caste groups are at noteworthy variance with other groups of tribes or castes, as well. For that reason, ethnicity is not the basis of 'Indian-ness', either.

1.6. Does Hindu religious identity unite people?

In the original sense of the word, the word 'Hindu' has hardly anything to do with religion as well as language, ideology, caste, etc. The original inhabitants of the country had no organized religion and the religious sense of the Indus valley civilization was also not distinctly religious. The religious connotation of the Hindu community is significantly a contribution of the twentieth century and it emerged in the context of the religious communities that came from outside as specifically religious communities, like Muslims and Christians.

Even when the religion of the majority community is supposedly Hindu, the Hindu religious faith is not a single faith, but a collection of various religious and even non-religious traditions. Dualistic and non-dualistic as well as theistic and non-theistic perspectives find their due space in the Hindu spectrum of faith. Moreover, when Raj Thakaray of MNS opposes Biharis and the Hindi-speaking people, or Tamils and Keralites, he is opposing mostly those who are affiliated to the same Hindu faith. As a matter of fact, Hindu faith is a rare phenomenon. It has no single head, no single scripture and no hierarchy or unity, either. That amounts to say, even faith in India is not any reason for being united as a people.

1.7. India a Land of Diversities

India is noted for its enormous diversities. There are 6 national and some 60 state political parties. There are 2 traditions of classical music, 8 styles of classical dances and hundreds of styles of folk music and folk dance styles. There are 2 contact languages at the national level, 15 Indian languages inscribed on the national currency, 18 languages recognized by the Constitution of India, some 35 to 67 languages ranging from 65,000 to millions of speakers and some 22,000 dialects. India has almost all climatic conditions on earth. There are also thousands of varieties of food and dress habits, diverse ideologies, social customs and mores, both Indian and non-Indian. Besides, there are tribal and caste compositions of people,

immense number of caste divisions and almost all the major and minor religious traditions of the world as well as non-theistic perspectives.

Justice Markanday Katju, Chairman, Press Council of India, in his 'What is India' states, 'because India is a country of immigrants -- over 92 per cent of them came to the country over the past 10,000 years.[1] There is tremendous diversity in India, so many religions, castes, languages, ethic groups, etc. The characteristic watchwords of the Indian culture 'unity in diversity' and 'vasudhaivkutumbakam' make sense only in the context of the colossal diversity. Diversity is in fact a divine gift to the country, in order to be shared and celebrated, in view of social cohesion. This 'diversity' is the most fundamental identity of the country, too.

1.8.   A colloquium of religious traditions

India brims forth with 'religious aura'. According to Justice Markanday Katju 'the original inhabitants of India, the pre-Dravidian people, called the Adivasis or Scheduled Tribes'[2] had their primordial belief systems, like animism, totemic perception and nature worship. India has the most ancient religious Scripture of the world in the form of Vedas, which presented the religio-cultural civilization that is presently called the 'Hindu way of life'. India has also mothered three other religious streams, the Jain between the sixth and ninth century BC, the Buddhist between the sixth and forth century BC and the Sikh in the fifteenth century AD.

Besides, India has cradled the Jewish tradition from the fifth century BC, the Christian tradition from the first century, the Muslim tradition from the seventh century, the Zoroastrian tradition from the eleventh century and the Baha'i tradition from the nineteenth century. India has also welcomed the Confucian, Shinto and Tao ideologies as they came, in whatever form. India has also been accepting the new religious movements that keep mushrooming from all traditions, but profusely from the Hindu traditions. Thus, the religious presence in India is highly vibrant in a large colloquium of living diversities.

1.9.   India a nation of minorities

All the peoples that came in bought their own cultures and characteristics to India. The sub-cultures that are mushrooming off and on add to the largeness of diversity, too. No doubt, those that were the original inhabitants had their cultural genius. At a close look at the diverse groups, there is no majority in India. The diversity and its richness cannot be bypassed even at the smallest gauge but be accepted whole-heartedly. Sooner or later, every Indian has to realize and accept that 'India is a nation of minorities' – ethnic, religious, linguistic, cultural, social, regional, ideological, etc. But, the tragic fact is that the magnitude of the Indian diversity is neither understood nor honoured enough in India. The wide variety of minorities is a God-given and golden opportunity for the country to be to get immensely enriched by mutual interaction and to set an unparalleled example to the entire world.

1.10.   India a land of multiple identities

'Multiple identities' is the fundamental cultural characteristic of India. The idea of India as a nation is inevitably pluralistic. Many identities co-exist and they have to exist together. They are not contradictory, but they complement each other. India is a multi-dimensional country. It is multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-religious, multi-cultural, multi-ideological, etc in its social texture. 'Imbibing the spirit of all traditions' as well as sharing in various identities is the way to be pluralistic and multi-dimensional. Having multiple identities is, in no way, contradictory concept. It is a basic human experience. One can very well be a son, a brother or a sister, a father, a teacher, a linguist, a writer, a social reformer, a Hindu or a Christian at the same time. Human being is a multi-faceted being. India has perhaps the largest number of options for being so, as well.

1.12. India a land of composite culture

Having received independence from the British, India is created as a nation. But, Indians are yet to be created. 'The quality of being an Indian' is still in the process. Devagauda, as the then Prime Minister of India, made a speech in Hindi that was transliterated in Kannada on the 49th Independence Day. Jesudas sings in many Indian languages. Many film actors and actresses act in films of different languages. Kerala is a state of female-majority. People born in one region migrate to other regions for diverse reason and settle down there. People, while having their own mother tongue, learn languages of other regions and interact with them. By virtue of the caste system and other characteristics, the Hindu community has various dissimilar communities. Political affiliation sharply divides people even with animosity, in order to win votes. All the same, the only definition that does justice to India is 'India is a composite culture'.

1.13. India is a community of communities

All the social strata are ultimately to be understood as different communities. Individuals form families and families form communities. India is a round table of communities. The Aryans, Mughals and the English who came from outside have contributed immensely to the making of what India is today. India has the unique potentiality of living the ideal of 'vasudhaivkutumbakam' by becoming a national 'community of communities'. Pluralistic Indian identity is like a 'thaalee' that has several food items as part of the same meal. A balanced diet requires all these items. Diversity is to be celebrated. Differences are to be welcomed and benefited from.

But, this ideal is still far from being a reality. There are misplaced Indians in India. Internal misplacement is more tragic a predicament. Lot of people are still living in camps and children are born in camps, too. They need to be re-instated. Those who are pushed to the margins are to be brought to the main stream of the country. Discrimination and harassment on various grounds betray the nationality and the ancient heritage, even now. India as a nation has to rectify these aberrations. Being a land of unlimited diversities is the foundational character of India. It is in the hands of the citizens of Indian to constantly strive, amid odds, towards making it 'communion of communities'. One needs to be educated and socially awakened, in order to perform such a responsible job.

2. EDUCATION FOR NATIONAL SOLIDARITY

2.1. What is the national character of the country?

Nation is a concept of belonging and solidarity. The collective consciousness of being an Indian defines India and that is the Indian sensibility as a nation. 'Indian-ness' is the 'soul that hides within India'. On the one hand, there is a rich culture and tradition that upholds an all-encompassing umbrella of sentiments and value systems, like family ties, hospitality and a feeling of neighbourliness as well as a colloquium of faith traditions. On the other side, there are tendencies and drives that violate the relational network and develop into communal disturbances and tragedies.

Besides, while there is an increasing population that is well off in economy, education and life amenities, there is a harsh side of India that is composed of the villages, slums, etc. and all the unending struggles that go with them. All the same, there are common factors that are shared by all Indians, along with sharp contradictions and complications. All these realities have a place in what India is. India has a strange type of composite culture and a multi-faceted national identity. The national character of the country is an all-inclusive phenomenon and the sense of being a nation together emerges from such a phenomenal perspective of India.

2.2.   India of the villages

There is a major aspect of national solidarity that emerges from the rural India. Mahatma Gandhi observed, 'India lives in its villages'. Going by statistics today India comprises of more than 5,50,000 villages and 200 towns and cities whereby more than 70% of India lives in its villages. In spite of the ever-increasing urban population, India is still dominated by villages. India is for the most part an agricultural country, too. Agriculture contributes 23% to its annual GDP. The regional languages, dialects, folklores, folk music and dance, the simple beliefs and traditions, etc form the mainstream of the land. The culture of the country is mostly a rural culture.

In spite of the fact that the vast majority of those living in the urban setting also have various rural qualities in their mindset, a large part of the urban population seems to pretend to have nothing to do with the villages. The urban population cannot in any way be detached from an active sensibility towards the folk culture of the land. Therefore, education, to be realistic, has to inculcate the pulse of the rural India in all students. This is a vital area of solidarity at the national level.

2.3.   India of the slums

A sizable portion of India is dwelling in the slums of the cities. Although they belong to the urban population and avail themselves of many facilities of the city, the life lived by most of them is much more miserable than of the villages. The sight of the destitute scavenging for food in dust-bins, struggling for rag-picking, using the public space for basic needs, begging for the mercy of others for survival, etc. is sickening as well as pathetic. All sorts of problems are found in the slums, even what could not be imagined in villages. The life in the slums literally shatters the pride of the country. This is often the favourite picture the West has of India, too.

Are the slums part of India? Would anyone feel solidarity with this part of India? Are the educated and the getting educated aware that there exists such an India also? What is the response of the educated to the hundreds of millions of people in the slums and to their problems? Till the educated and the elite own these part of India and respond to their problems, unity and integrity of the country will be incomplete and education will not make sense, as well.

2.4.   The National Pledge

The National Pledge is an oath of allegiance to the Republic of India. It is commonly recited by Indians in unison at public events, especially in schools, and during the Independence Day and Republic Day Celebrations. It is commonly found printed in the opening pages of school textbooks.

The pledge was originally composed in Telugu language by Pydimarri Venkata Subba Rao, a noted author in Telugu and a bureaucrat, in 1962. It was first read out in a school in Visakhapatnam in 1963 and was subsequently translated into various regional languages. The Central Advisory Board on Education meeting in 1964 in Bangalore, under its chairman MC Chagla, directed that the pledge be read in schools and that this practice be introduced by 26 January 1965, the next Republic Day.

'India is my country and *all Indians* are my *brothers and sisters*. I love my country and I am proud of its *rich and varied heritage*. I shall always strive to be worthy of it. I shall give my parents, teachers and all elders respect and *treat everyone with courtesy*. To my country and my people, I *pledge my devotion*. In their well being and prosperity alone, lies my *happiness*.'

Well, here is a complete pledge. It radiates a high element of human and spiritual excellence. It overflows a sublime degree of being purposeful, inclusive and other-oriented. Conceiving one's country as a family

is the way of establishing solidarity at the national level, and even much beyond. Paying the regard that is due to the great givers of life is the elevating strength for committing oneself to the good and wellbeing of all. Sharing the pedestal of a multi-faceted cultural fabric is the basis of a composite culture. Making a network of brotherly and sisterly relationships is the express way towards tolerance, open interaction, peaceful co-existence, harmonious living and national regeneration.

It requires no mention that this national pledge presents in a nutshell the best of the fruits of education. But, what is the degree of commitment to this pledge teachers and students display? Has not this pledge become part of the daily routine and become tasteless like a ritual? 'If the salt loses its saltiness, it is not longer worth anything'. In fact, this pledge is foundational to a meaningful education. It needs to be reinstated in its original spirit. But, mindless habit seems to have made this pledge fruitless. What is a way out?

2.5. The National Symbols of India

The national symbols of the country have much to do with fostering a spirit of integrity and solidarity. Some of the noted national symbols are -- National Flag (Indian Tricolour), National Emblem (Lion Capital of Ashoka), National Motto (Satyamev Jayate), National Calendar (Saka calendar), National Anthem (Jana Gana Mana), National Song (Vande Mataram), National Flower (Indian lotus), National Fruit (Mango), National River (Ganga), National Tree (Indian Banyan), National Animal (Royal Bengal Tiger), National Aquatic Animal (Gangetic Dolphin) and National Bird (Indian Peacock). There are also national days, national festivals, national holidays, national slogans, national ideas, etc.

Education ought to include inculcating an awareness and knowledge about the implications of the national symbols. It should also awaken a commitment to the objectives of those symbols in favour of social cohesion at the national level. Does education do justice to the above national symbols, in view of strengthening solidarity at the national level?

2.6. The Constitution of India as the Sacred Book of the country

Every institution or an entity has a manuscript that stands for its core objectives and values. They are necessarily considered sacred and are a source of motivation. Such a charter is greatly beneficial for any community in terms of its sense of direction and unity. All religious communities have either a sacred scripture or something that is equivalent to it. The national community of citizens in India has its 'Constitution', which is basic to the identity of the nation. And it spontaneously follows that the most effective way to foster a national solidarity is to accept the 'Constitution' as the 'Sacred Scripture of the country' by all citizens. All have to honour it fully by reading, understanding and living its values.

Manifestly, placing the Constitution in the central focus will promote national consciousness and a sense of belonging to the country together as well as belonging to each other as communities. It will accelerate the commitment to the unity and integrity of the country. All communities have to join hands with each other for the national cause of unity as citizens. Accepting the Constitution as sacred and its values as guidelines will certainly strengthen the national ethos of the nation.

But, what is the status of the Indian Constitution in the consciousness of the people of the country? What is its scope in the sector of education? Does education instruct the students on the fundamental rights and fundamental duties that are enshrined in the Constitution? What could be some of the measures to bring the Constitution to the limelight of the educational syllabus and endeavour?

2.7. Special focus on the Preamble of the Constitution

WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC and to secure to all its citizens: JUSTICE, social, economic and political; LIBERTY, of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; EQUALITY of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation; IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949, DO HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.

The values that are underlined in the preamble of the Constitution are the Constitutional values in summary form. The preamble is the sum and substance of all religious traditions, too. The human and spiritual values required for harmonious living are completely reflected in it. But, how much space it has got in the educational syllabus? How much importance is given to these values even outside the syllabus? Without placing the preamble and its values in the central focus of education responsible citizens cannot emerge. The educational system has to re-consider its syllabus and its teaching endeavour in the light of the preamble in special.

2.8.   Secular Perspective of the Constitution

The Constitution of India stands strongly for the 'secular perspective'. This is in fact the core perspective of the Constitution and the country. Secularism is perhaps the most abused word, especially in India. In the west it means absence of all religions. In India it means, and it should mean, presence and inclusion of all religions and communities. 'Secular' is a broadened understanding of the 'sacred', as well. It is a de-centralized perspective in life. It means non-attachment to one tradition or community. It stresses on an all-inclusive approach to the colloquium of religious persuasions and social affiliations. It affirms equality of all entities including faith.

Secularism also means that the State respects and imbibes, and it has to do so, the values of all ethnic traits, languages, ideologies, faiths, social traditions and cultures. All are and should be equal before law and there is no privileged place for anyone. Secularism is a multi-religious outlook. The ideology of 'Hinduraashtra', as the politics of the street, has been downplaying this national identity. All the same, in the words of Justice Markanday Katju, 'the only policy that will work in India is the policy of secularism and giving respect to all communities'.[3]

In this context, what does education do to expose the politically motivated and fundamentalist factions of the society that disturb the equilibrium of social life? What are the measures the educational system takes in order to make sure that teachers rise above the communally polluted mindset? What steps do the class rooms take in order to eliminate divisive thinking from the minds of the young citizens? How does the educational system envisage and create more secular citizens for tomorrow in the class rooms?

2.9.   The Spirit of Democracy

India is acclaimed as the largest democracy of the world. But, it has a strange type of democracy. An effective democracy needs a set of fairly enlightened and empowered people. India is highly under the grip of illiteracy, poverty, selfishness, discrimination and inequality. Being a country of tropical climate, India has a high dose of emotionality, slavish thinking, personality cult, manipulative character, especially in the higher ups. Amidst such a social mindset and situation, democracy cannot be what it is supposed to be. Much of the Indian democracy is a failed democracy.

All the same, education is that process that can awaken and lead people towards the superb ideal of democracy. Education has to inculcate and foster democratic values in the students. A special focus has to be placed on the ideals of thinking for the other, balancing rights and duties, respecting the other, spirit of

sharing, serving the needy, being socially responsible, etc. Education has to make the students democratic-minded. Where do the educational institutions stand in terms of fostering the quality and values of democracy in India?

2.10. Universal outlook

The spirit of nationalism should not be allowed to degenerate into an obsession with one's community or nation, as in the case of 'Hinduraashtra'. The national solidarity ought not to be the attitude of the frog in the well. Nation is not an isolated entity. It is not like an island that is cut off from other islands. Nations are not supposed to be like parallel lines that do not meet, like the iron bars that make the rail track. In the era of globalization, as that of ours, a global understanding of the country needs to be developed. Obviously, nationality is an essential part of the human identity as well as the human society. All the same, one has to think global while being national. There has to be better understanding, collaboration and cordial relations among nations. Inter-country, inter-civilization, inter-cultural and inter-community interaction will enrich the human society in all dimensions of life. An inter-connected and collaborative perspective among nations will definitely usher in an age of social harmony as well as enhance the quality of self-understanding as nations.

Nationality has to reflect a universal perspective. Universal perspective goes even beyond the international outlook. The slogan of Mahatma Gandhi, 'Sarvoday', i.e., 'the rise of all' or the 'the progress of all' elaborates this universal attitude to a great extent. It also means consciousness of being together as well as a benevolent stance of intending the uplift of all. 'Sarve bhavantu sukhinah' (let all be happy), 'vasudhaiv kutumbalkam' (the entire earth is but one family), 'sarv jan hitaay' (for the good of all), etc. describe this vision further and affirm the universal welfare of the human society. The ideal 'satyamevjayate' reflects 'desire for truth' or 'commitment to truth', which is beyond the borders of all entities and is universal. 'Satyaagrah' of Mahatma Gandhi was his 'experiments with truth', as a value beyond borders. The universal perception leads one to securing real freedom. Nationalism has to be universal in its concerns.

Education has to foster such larger points of view. Only then, the road to social harmony will be clear and travelable. But, as a matter of fact, education, to a great extent, doesn't seem to be much concerned about such larger ideals and concerns. When is education in India going to be realistic and up-to-date for the increasingly globalizing world of the twenty-first century?

3. EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

3.1. Educational Institutions to be cultural laboratories

Schools, colleges and universities are establishments of the highest stature. They are powerhouses of the educated, enlightened and the cultured. They are laboratories of human culturing at different levels. They are nurseries of brilliance. They are temples of universal thinking, thinking beyond the boundaries. They stand as living promises of a brighter future for the humankind. They are supposed to research and suggest a way out from the complex problems of social life. They shoulder the noble mission of leading the world to superior heights as well as advancing the human culture. Hence, educational institutions have to be cultural laboratories.

3.2. Education for critical thinking

Hindi film 'three idiots' challenges the parrot-like passive approach to education. Martin Luther King Jr, in his essay 'The Purpose of Education' exhorts, 'the function of education, therefore, is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically'.[4] Scholarship has not to be bookish. Applied scholarship is scholarship

proper. Capacity to discern and evaluate requires creative thinking. An effective musical concert calls for improvisations, while it is based on classical items. Tasty cooking requires new compositions, as well.

What Kabeer said about a religious person perfectly applies to an educated person, too -- 'sadhoo aisaa chaahiye, jaise soop swabhaaw, saar saar ko gahi rahe, thotha deyee uday', i.e., capacity to hold on to the essentials and throw away the non-essentials is the sign of a saint, and of an enlightened person, as well. Innovative ways in life is the fruit of a critical approach to learning. Thinking has to be socially applied and in line with the ground realities of the country and the society.

Education in our country is too much bookish and theoretical. Exams are every much a memory test. Digestion and assessment of the information and ideas are hardly stressed. Overloading the minds of the students with information does not help. Applying the knowledge to the context and developing innovative solutions to the problems of the country is more important.

3.3. Education for making value-based human beings and good citizens

The ultimate objective of education is making good human beings. The Hindi film 'taare zameen par' analyzes the shortcomings of the present system of education and suggests stress on the person of the student. Education is not merely career-building or facilitating a means of livelihood. Martin Luther King Jr cautions, 'we must remember that intelligence is not enough. Intelligence plus character -- that is the goal of true education'.[5] Education has to focus on nurturing humane qualities of the students. The end result has to be the making of good human beings and good citizens. Character-building and human culturing are vital components for making value-based social beings. The sentiments of the teacher have to be that of the stone-cutter who said 'I am making a temple'. Making a good human being, and as a result, good citizens of the country and the society, is the final outcome of education.

Kothari Commission affirms, 'Destiny of India is being shaped in her classrooms'.[6] Moulding the students as citizens who are grounded in human and spiritual values is fundamental to education. What is the use of that education that produces people who are highly selfish, communal and indifferent to other communities? Is not education destructive when the educated scrupulously tell lies, manipulate and discriminate? How can education be beneficial when it does not sharpen the sense of value and integrity in social life? If education does not culture human beings and not sharpen the value-consciousness in students, is it not like the salt that has lost its saltiness?

3.4. Education for addressing social problems

Amir Khan stands different for his value-based perspective of life and for involved social engagement as well as commitment to perfection in whatever role he performs. He is acclaimed worldwide, especially in India, for his commendably masterminded Television (debut) talk show serial in Hindi 'Satymevjayate' (Truth Alone Prevails). It was aired on various channels within Star Network along with Doordarshan's DD National, premiered on 6 May 2012 and was dubbed and simulcast in other Indian languages, such as Bengali, Malayalam, Marathi, Tamil and Telugu.

The show highlighted sensitive social issues prevalent in India such as female foeticides, child sexual abuse, dowry, medical malpractice, honor killings, insensitivity towards the physically disabled, domestic violence, overuse of pesticides leading to pesticide poisoning, alcoholism, unsociability, plight of senior citizens and water crisis. The research, format, presentation and content were qualitative and several film and television personalities, politicians and social activists as well as critics and public appreciated the same.

The role of education is to make the students aware of the social problems and think in terms of addressing them. Their research and knowledge should enable them to suggest and try new ways of solving them. It appears that most of the educated people become indifferent as well as deaf and dumb in terms of the crucial social problems around them. When education does not help the larger society, is it not sterile and disoriented?

3.5. To be educated is to be socially responsible

Is social responsibility a value and a lesson at the hands of a teacher at school? The Bollywood icon, Amir Khan, who has been a film actor and film maker of his own right, has the answer. He remarks in the context of the staring social problems, 'the solution has to start with me, with every individual. After all, if these terrible things are happening in my society, then I have a share of the blame, because I have done nothing to stop them. A solution can only begin to appear once I accept it's partly my fault, and then you accept that it's partly your fault, and a third person (does that) and a fourth person'.[7]

Social quality is one of the most fundamental characteristic in human beings. As social beings, the humans have to think and act in a social fashion. 'Thinking for the other' is basic to human beings. Feeling responsible for others is the sign of a grown up human being. One has to necessarily be concerned about the needs of others, may it be in the family, neighbourhood, institution, community, country or the society. Sharing one's life with the other and sharing in the lives of the other is the way of being responsible. Education has to sharpen the sense of being socially responsible. The ultimate role of education is training in social responsibility. Along with the dictum of the philosophy of the Jain tradition 'Jeeo, Jeene Do', 'Jeene kee madad Karo' has to be added as the ultimate motto in social living. That education is no education at all when it ignores or does not create socially responsible citizens.

3.6. Education for uplifting the masses

Justice Markanday is an all-out advocate of an education that is oriented to uplifting the masses. He says, 'the purpose of education is to help raise the standard of living of the masses'.[8] He feels very concerned that there is hardly any relation between education and the life of the commons. He continues, 'the huge amount of money spent on higher education in India is not raising the standard of living of the Indian masses because of over 75 per cent of Indians live in dire poverty'[9]. He categorically suggests a reform of the educational system in favour of the masses. 'The educational system in India has to be made more beneficial to the masses'.[10]

There are lot of schemes that could be adopted for making education oriented to the wellbeing of the masses. The present educational system considerably fails to perform this fundamental duty. The getting-educated students could be guided to involve themselves in helping the rural and the illiterate people become literate and enlightened. Thickening the creamy layer and the oppressive class of the society is the topsy-turvy and tragedy of education. A serious introspection is called for.

3.7. Education for social transformation

Education is indeed the basis of human development and social transformation. It is also the basis of national integration and reconstruction. Orientation towards social awakening is the central outcome of education. Narrow definitions of education emerge from fragmented minds. A larger outlook is the foundation of real education. Ignorance is the enemy of the human society and illiteracy is the root cause of several unsolved problems. Caste, class, creed, race, language, and the like are secondary concerns, if not misnomers, in education. The primary concern is learning. Being human is the common denominator. Knowledge is the key. But knowledge without insight is not much of an advantage. The educational data has to be turned into insight, insight into action and action into tangible results, both for oneself and for

the society. That is the way to performance in social transformation, change in oneself and change in the social life.

Amir Khan played single-handedly a multi-faceted role, which even noted educationists, religious heads and social activists failed to play. He shook the Indian society by highlighting the vital and symptomatic problems of the Indian society and remains a standing invitation to people of good will and commitment from all communities for an all out engagement towards social makeover.

Now my question is 'do the teachers and their educational framework have anything to do with the concerns raised by Amir Khan? Do they have a world beyond the confines of the syllabus? Is education oriented to facilitating social change at all, in the class rooms and outside? Doesn't the teacher have to be a social reformer in his or her class room? What is the percentage of teachers who are on the right track of leading a social awakening? If teachers fail to be social reformers, at least in some respects, do they have anything to teach?

3.8.   Education for multi-faceted human civilization

A responsible educational system has to inculcate the spirit of solidarity as Indians in the increasingly broadened diversities of the country and the society. It has to strengthen the consciousness of human life in a circle of all religious, social and cultural streams of life. Therefore, especially in the specific context of India, to be religious is to be multi-religious, to be cultural is to be multi-cultural, to be lingual is to be multi-lingual, to be ideological is to be multi-ideological, to be national is to be multi-national and to be human is to be multi-human. Education has to be, all the more, all-inclusive of the values and ideals of the country and the society. It has to be an agent of a multi-faceted human civilization, which is the spirit of the modern times.

3.9.   Education for leadership

To lead is to take ahead, to instil confidence and hope, to awaken and to lead them to new horizons. Leadership would mean awakening, motivating, inspiring, empowering, transforming and leading people. Awakening oneself is the basis of awakening the society. Education has to nurture leaders for social transformation. Leadership implies doing the right thing at the right time, especially when no body else does it. Leadership is basically oriented to social awakening and transformation.

Awakening leadership qualities in the youth is the optimum result of education. They need to be sensitive to the social situation around them. They need to get provoked by the social ills and problems and be committed to respond to them. The younger generation has to be agents of social change. They need to develop innovative ways of networking the society. Change has to be focussed on better fellowship among the diverse communities and social groups. They have to be facilitated to form task forces for combating communal elements and misguided forces. They need to evolve processes for conflict resolution and conflict transformation. Social transformation has to be oriented to social harmony. Students have to be learners by doing. They have to learn not only from books but from life experiences, so that they become capable of leading the society towards further heights. The younger generation is the future of the society as well as the country. Unfortunately though, it appears that the system of education is lagging highly behind in building up leadership qualities in the students. In this sad predicament, do we see a brighter future for tomorrow?

3.10.   Education for civic behaviour

Civic consciousness is fundamental to being a citizen. Only a civilized member of the country is a citizen, in the proper sense of the word. Citizens have to perform their duties as citizens. Religious and marriage

processions on the road creates nuisance to the public and have to be avoided. High profile movements and demonstrations on the road should not disturb the traffic and public movements. Places of worship that are on the road side and thus cause inconvenience for the public need to be shifted elsewhere or demolished. There has to be more discipline in public life. Lawful behaviour, work culture, responsible behaviour in public places, concern for the other, respect for the public and private property, cleanliness in public places, etc. are basic expressions of civic sense. Civic behaviour is the key to social order. More often than otherwise, educated people are seen responsible for or involved in such uncivil ways.

No doubt, it is the duty of education to inculcate or train students for good conduct in public life. The religious sector in India, in general, is highly deaf and dumb in this matter. It is part of the problem and not of the solution. The magnitude of religious ideals and discourses, the high propensity of religious engagement by way of rituals, fasts, pilgrimages, etc. do not seem to awaken social values in the minds of the people. Therefore, the educational sector has an extra duty to culture the students towards values of life. Producing citizens with responsible and civilized behaviour is the over all outcome of education.

3.11. Education for inclusive thinking

Education has to facilitate inclusive thinking. Inclusive thinking marks maturity of thinking. It is the sign of growing up as human beings. Every individual, institution, group, community and nation has to think for others. Mutually inclusive thinking will lead to holistic perspectives. Rather than seeing the reality of life from one particular window, everyone has to see the world from the other's angle, as well. A spirit of complementariness will ensure a sense of completion and perfection in life. Inter-cultural thinking is the spice of life. One who knows only one thing knows nothing. He or she is illiterate. One needs to know the language, faith, ideology and culture of the other, in order to live meaningfully as a social being. Education has to train students in all-inclusive thinking. Such a perception of life will enable one to reach out to other components of life in the natural process of life. Only such an approach can pave the way for interaction with others and ultimately for harmonious living.

3.12. Education for a culture of interaction

All living beings and especially human beings are social beings. Individual is born from the society and society is formed by individuals. There is unlimited number of human units in the society, too. This fundamental social character necessitates interaction between individual and society, individuals and individuals and between social units. Diversity is the basis of interaction. Diversity implies not only many in number but also difference in each unit of the many. Difference is a positive quality and is an enriching factor. Therefore, all-inclusive interaction is the central dynamics of a meaningful human life.

Amidst diversities, one needs to tolerate one another. But, tolerance is not a positive value. One has to exist side by side with the other. This co-existence has to be peaceful, too. But, peaceful co-existence is not enough. One has to go beyond peaceful co-existence and has to interact with the other. Interaction would mean dialogue or exchange of ideas, views, experiences, etc. Interaction is the means to get to know the other. Mutual information and knowledge will lead to a shared experience of life and such a sharing will ensure enrichment and a joint journey of life. Interaction is a culture by itself.

Education has to foster a culture of interaction. The process of learning and teaching also has to be interactive. This has to be initiated in the entire process of education. Interaction has not to be within a close circuit. It has to go beyond the boundaries of ethnic origin, caste, class, creed, ideology, culture, profession, religion, food tastes, dress patterns, social habits and customs. Interaction has no borders. It has to be open and all-inclusive. Education has to equip and empower the students for creative and qualitative interaction with the diverse individuals, sections and units of the society. Education has to initiate the students to go beyond divisive tendencies and fanatic obsessions, as well. But, to what degree

is our educational system interactive? To what per cent does the education produce citizens capable of healthy and fruitful interaction? Are there measures in schools to foster serious interaction among students, among the teachers and between the teachers and the students?

3.13. Education for harmonious living

Harmonious living is the ultimate social goal of education as well as of life. Recognizing the common origin and common destiny is the basic to harmonious living. Shared existence is the way to achieve the common destiny. All diversities in the society are the gift of the same creative power. They are not to be divided among the groups. They ought not to be monopolized by any group or community, either. They are the common cultural heritage of the human society. Mutual understanding and sharing is the fundamental value that fosters harmony in social life.

In order to achieve the objective of harmonious living, information and knowledge of all religious traditions and social ideologies have to be included in the syllabus. The universal values of all faith traditions as well as secular values are to be taught in class rooms. Awareness has to be fostered among the younger generation as regards the need of maintaining harmonious relations with people of all communities. They need to be empowered and equipped with motivation and commitment to promoting good will, understanding, friendly relations and collaboration among the different and social groups. The educated people have to be inspiring models for making a harmonious society. 'The spirit of togetherness' has to be inculcated as the driving force for harmonious living. But, as a matter of fact, the system of Indian education needs to go miles and miles before it copes up with larger perspectives and goals that make a meaningful human and social life!

CONCLUSION

Think for oneself and think for the other – that is the way of growing up as responsible human beings. Think creatively and think in an applied manner – that summarizes the process of getting educated. Think larger and think inclusive – that is the sign of an equipped and refined human being. Act in a value-conscious and civilized fashion – that is the mark of a seasoned and enlightened academic. Interact with all, get enriched and celebrate diversities – that is the style of fully fledged, positive and spiritually tuned human persons. Live in harmony with all individuals and communities -- that is the way to a meaningful human life. Lead and transform the country and the larger society to broader horizons and harmonious living – that is the esteemed paradise of human life. Education is the builder, the engineer and the artist who makes such a journey of life possible for the little humans in the making, for today, tomorrow and for all the days to come. Will the stakeholders of education wake up and act conscientiously to this effect?

End Notes

1.   Justice Markanday Katju, 'What is India', Frontline, 10 February 2012, p. 91
2.   Justice Markanday Katju, 'What is India', Frontline, 10 February 2012, p. 91
3.   Justice Markanday Katju, 'What is India', Frontline, 10 February 2012, p. 95
4.   Martin Luther King Jr, 'The Purpose of Education', Morehouse College Student Paper, The Maroon Tiger, in 1947
5.   Martin Luther King Jr, 'The Purpose of Education', Morehouse College Student Paper, The Maroon Tiger, in 1947
6.   Kothari Commission, 1964
7.   Amir Khan, quoted by Bobby Ghosh, 'Star Power', Time, 10 September 2012, p.37-38
8.   Justice Markanday Katju, 'Professor teach thyself', The Hindu, 03 September 2012, p.9
9.   Justice Markanday Katju, 'Professor teach thyself', The Hindu, 03 September 2012, p.9
10.   Justice Markanday Katju, 'Professor teach thyself', The Hindu, 03 September 2012, p.9

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