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EDUCATION FOR VALUES IN POST-INDEPENDENCE INDIA : A CRITICAL REVIEW



Prof. Bidyut K. Sarkar



Bharat (i.e. India), 'Mother of all that is noble'¹ is 'bearing the responsibility'² to 'spiritualize the human race...with... Yoga and Vedānta for its banners...'³ and 'education of sympathy (and) harmony'⁴ for its method.

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Education for Values in Post-Independence India: A Critical Review

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FOREWORD

Being in late eighties, it appears to me from my long experience, that the crisis of present civilization is essentially a crisis of human values. The diverse problems that we see all around us are various manifestations of this deeper malaise. Therefore there is an increasing urgency to focus on education for values.

With this realization, the iconic Management Centre for Human Values (MCHV) was established in IIM Calcutta in early 1990's with our support and great efforts of Professor Shitangshu Kumar Chakraborty (1940-2018), who withdrew from the material World of Finance to propagate the role of Human Values in Management. To pay our humble tribute to Prof Chakraborty's Mission, we (his family and friends) have formed this Trust for research and education in this area for a better World.

After 75 years of India's independence, keeping in mind this general objective and the turbulent situation of the world, carrying out a critical review of the overall scenario of value/s education in the nation has become the need of the hour. So this work of the author, whom I know for long as the most ardent torch-bearer of Prof. Chakraborty's legacy and deeply inspired to carry forward his work with missionary zeal for the sake of the nation and the humanity, is very timely and appropriate.

In this scholarly work, the readers may expect a general review of the development of thoughts in this regard at the national academic level. The author, based on his long and direct experience of working in this area with Prof. Chakraborty, presents a classified critical appraisal of these thoughts and then offers a detailed presentation on a vedantic approach to this very important issue, in line with Prof. Chakraborty's school of thought, which, as an

interesting eye-opener, will enrich the reader's understanding of the subject.

We hope the readers in general and the academic community in particular, will be benefitted from this work, which is a product of author's genuine labour of love.

The Trust seeks support and blessings from all well-wishers.

Dr. Subir Chowdhury
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PREFACE

After 75 years of India's independence, 150 years of Sri Aurobindo's birth, 125 years of establishment of The Ramakrishna Mission by Swami Vivekananda and many more such milestones, the world in general and India in particular, are still facing 'values-crisis'. The root-cause analysis of most of the problems around us leads to some kind of corruption (taking the widest possible connotation of the term, including its monetary and non-monetary dimensions).

It is said, education is the panacea to all ills. It is also understood that many a great mind has put in lot of efforts towards the education in values in post-independence India. Despite this, if we are facing such a predicament, then it is but natural for any discerning mind or sensible heart to critically examine the various aspects of the education system. Therefore an effort is made to go through the literature regarding value/s education in post-independence India to find out what is done and what is yet to be done to arrive at some kind of an agreeable state.

After scanning 26 relatively recent documents published by various central government agencies of India, we have selected 16 for an extensive survey. The qualitative survey has been classified into five sections in terms of evolution of thoughts, philosophy, policies, activities and teacher education; a section-wise critical appreciation follows with the presentation of our thoughts based on the experiences of conducting more than hundred executive, student and teacher development programmes on human values based leadership and mental stress prevention & management in the last about 12 years. A sincere attempt is made to look at the whole issue from the viewpoints of our indigenous thinkers and realizers, which are in consonance with that of the contemporary international thinkers. It is also noted that the National Education Policy 2020 has generated great enthusiasm among the various stakeholders; we sent a note of humble suggestions while its draft was being prepared

and are happy to note its reflection in the final document. We sincerely hope and pray that some of the concerns raised here are addressed through such well-meaning efforts.

I acknowledge with deep gratitude the moral support of Dr. Subir Chowdhury. I am also thankful to Shri Debasish Chakraborty, a former PG student of ours and a torch-bearer of Prof. S K Chakraborty's philosophy, who took the special initiative to organize an online teacher development programme at the national level on this topic.

I am thankful to my beloved students and respected MDP participants for their thoughtful queries which stimulated my thinking and also thoughtlessness of my mind.

I am deeply indebted to the *Rishi(s)* (sages) of India, both contemporary and ancient, and that of the world at large, for introducing me to the light of wisdom. Acknowledgement is also due to all the great authors whose works I have referred here for their vast knowledge.

Lastly I express my gratitude towards my parents for their support as well as to the Nature and her sub-human children for giving me joy and inspiration to write.

This small work is placed at the feet of the Lord with the hope and prayer—let many more souls get attracted to these lofty thoughts and derive profound inspiration from them. Peace to all.

15th August, 2022

Prof. Bidyut K Sarkar

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Introduction

Education lays the foundation for human development. Comprehensive development implies positive growth in all dimensions of human personality viz. physical, vital, mental, ethico-moral, and spiritual. Great minds and hearts throughout human history have contemplated on the question - What is education? or What it should be? Some of the famous thoughts in this regard, from the East and the West may be presented here:

(A)

- ‘The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence...In India we have the inheritance of this treasure of spiritual wisdom. Let the object of our education be to open it out before us and to give us the power to make the use of it in our life, and offer it to the rest of the world when the time comes, as our contribution to its eternal welfare.’¹—Rabindranath Tagore
- ‘Education is the manifestation of perfection already in man... What is perfection? That which is beyond time, space and causation—that is perfect.’²—Swami Vivekananda
- ‘...the only true education will be that which will be an instrument for the real working of the spirit in the mind and body of the individual and the nation...The only way for him to train himself

morally is to habituate himself to right emotions...’³—Sri Aurobindo

- ‘A teaching university would but half perform its function if it does not seek to develop the heart-power of its scholars with the same solicitude with which it develops their brain-power. Hence it is that the proposed university has placed formation of character in youth as one of its principal objects. It will seek not merely to turn out man as engineers, scientist, doctors, merchants, theologians, but also as men of high character, probity and honour, whose conduct through life would show that they bear the hallmark of a great university’⁴ -Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya
- ‘Education is not limited to the imparting of information or training of skills. It has to give the educated a proper sense of values’⁵ -- Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan
- ‘The right kind of education on moral values will upgrade the society and the country’⁶-- A P J Abdul Kalam

(B)

- ‘Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all.’⁷—Aristotle
- ‘I hold that the goal of education ought to be religious, not mercenary. Education ought to be a search for an understanding of the meaning and purpose of life and for discovering the right (spiritual) way of life.’⁸-- Arnold J Toynbee
- ‘Intelligence plus character, that is the goal of true education’⁹—Martin Luther King, Jr.
- ‘In ancient India there were four “ends” of life; pleasure, wealth, duty and liberation. The modern world recognize the first three but has lost sight of the last; yet without this goal of final liberation, of ultimate transcendence, all the other goals lead to frustration.’¹⁰—Bede Griffiths
- ‘The problems of education are merely reflections of the deeper problems of our age...We are suffering from a metaphysical

disease, and the cure must therefore be metaphysical.’¹¹—E F Schumacher

- ‘Unless we train the feelings and the choice, our man is not educated...Therefore in every piece of information that is imparted to a child we must convey an appeal to the heart.’¹²—Margaret Noble (Sister Nivedita)

If we deeply ponder upon the remarks of the above two sections, we get the insight that, effective and meaningful education is a process to ensure two-fold objective- (i) earning a living and (ii) leading a life. While both are important, leading a meaningful life has been given more importance throughout all ages by the discerning and wise people, particularly so in our nation.

In terms of success the above two dimensions may be restated in a slightly different way. It is understood that we all want to be successful. But what do we mean by success? Name, fame, money and the things that money can buy...material gain; within a certain limit, without harming others, it is acceptable but there is another gain which is more important at times. Imagine, suddenly one day one gets an information of death of one's most loved one, one's mind becomes highly depressed and restless, nothing material will possibly help in this difficult situation. These kinds of issues are called existential problems—the very fact that we exist as human beings is the source of such problems. Overcoming them is what we call existential gain. So true success is a combination of these two gains - material and existential. Material gain is for earning a living and existential gain is for leading a meaningful life. More we gain existentially, less will be our hankering after material gain and we will gradually move from a Life of Desire to a Life of Purpose. In Indian terminology they are termed as *Preya* and *Shreya*. One may refer to the famous dialogue between Yama, the lord of death and Nachiketa, the brilliant young boy enquiring about Life & Death, in Katha Upanishad to get a good understanding of these lofty concepts. Human Values help to achieve both, but particularly

existential gain which is more difficult to achieve between the two.

What is education? What are values? What is the relative importance of values in education? What is value/s education? Or is it value/s education? Why values at all? How shall the value/s education be for the teachers? How shall it be for the students? Who is eligible to impart such an education? Who is eligible to receive such an education? What should be the basis of such an education? How should we manage such an education i.e. carry out the planning, organizing, directing, coordinating and controlling aspects of it?

Before we proceed to discuss on these issues and present some answers, we must acquaint ourselves with the thoughts already generated in post-independence India by a large number of well-meaning organizations and individuals. (To make it brief and specific we have chosen few important documents dealing with such topics published in recent times by the central organisations in India entrusted with the duty to develop the education policies and framework for all sections of the society and for all stages of human life. Some relevant highlights from these documents classified under certain thematic heads are presented here in chronological order of their year of publication).

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