

EDUCATION MUST IMPART VALUES

Albert Einstein, the world renowned physicist, who discovered the power of the atom, according to historical accounts, deeply regretted at one stage his discovery out of great apprehension that the same could be utilized for causing too great destructions of human societies instead of achieving human welfare. This fear of the very eminent scientist expressed the great paradox of knowledge.

Knowledge of things or learning can be used both for the good and the bad and the utility of learning therefore depends on the nature of its application. In other words, all learning processes must necessarily be tempered with a set of values so that the knowledge derived is directed to achieve something good and positive both for the individual and for the society.

What things should knowledge really promote? If acquisition of specialized knowledge and skills help in the creation of a small minority class of self seekers who take advantage of their education and know-how only to set themselves up as masters of society and start monopolizing all the material benefits of society for themselves as a consequence, can we in those circumstances take satisfaction that the goals of education have been really attained? In all fairness, the answer should be a very loud 'no'. The sort of education which fosters a small band of self-centred, avaricious, greedy and totally materialistic persons who behave as if their only duty to society or country is to live off its fattest fruits and deny the same to the rest of the populations, cannot be at all desirable from the point of view of society's overall needs.

Any society wishing to develop all round and sustain that development, has to first formulate a broad philosophy of education. This broad philosophy must address the actual needs and aspirations of the greatest number in society and ways to their fulfillment. At any rate, this philosophy must be so geared as to produce sensitive educated men and women who would feel morally obliged at every phase in their lives to look beyond their individual physical gratifications and do something constructive selflessly within their immediate environs.

This is the only way to make a country and society anywhere more and more stronger and resourceful.

The education system we have is quite imperfect in the sense that we have not been able to ingrain a set of values in our various education processes. Our national goals, short and long term national objectives, expected moral standards, etc. are not found reflected in the syllabi or curricula of our schools, colleges and universities or are reflected very inadequately.

It is precisely lack of moral education and values which prompt hundreds of our medical, engineering and other technical graduates—who receive highly subsidized education at the expense of the State or tax-payers—to devote their skills without a conscience in the interest of alien societies.

The corruption and self serving in the civil services can be attributed in the same manner to inadequate moral teachings received by our civil servants during their student lives. If a flourishing businessman is not duly paying taxes which he can afford to pay or if a so called entrepreneur seeks a short cut to a fortune by misappropriating bank loans, the reasons for such criminal behaviour can be traced to insufficient moral education received in early life. It is possible to produce a seemingly endless list of ills which spring from not having moral education or values.

But doing that is neither possible nor our outlook within the confines of this column. We would consider our purpose well served if realization comes from reading this piece that our society continues to pay an atrocious price due to our education systems not giving appropriate attention to moral requirements.

Our educational institutions must impart values. The absence of this urge for values is creating so called educated people with hardly any positive social commitments or in some cases even worthy commitments to members of their own families. It is high time that we take reformative steps to cure this prevalent system of education which is largely devoid of morals. We badly need creation of educational systems where education is not just looked upon as a commodity to be bought and sold, where both teachers and pupils value education as having a higher purpose for self and society and educational institutions which ensure the ultimate rearing up of refined persons fired with patriotism and full integrity of character as understood in the religious sense.