

# School Education - with a glimpse in to Future

a g rao

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To understand School Education with all the problems it has at present and the hopes it generates for the Future, we need to look at education

- A. As an Intrinsic Value Generator for the Society.
- B. As a Creative Matrix to solve the problems of Society.

Education has been an indicator for the cultural and spiritual levels of any Society. We have a great tradition where organized education had reached University levels like in Nalanda. But Education had remained elitist in its nature in East and West, till the Industrial Revolution brought a new requirement: disciplined workers in a Factory. Need to harness human beings who could do boring, repetitive, fragmented jobs led to the 'schooling system' in West. It spread to the Colonies soon. Knowledge acquisition of Science, Maths and Technology in varying degrees was no doubt part of schooling.

Visionaries like Tagore, Gandhiji, J. Krishnamurthy, Rudolf Steiner, and Makiguchi realized the importance of Education for a change in the 'Consciousness' of human beings. Gandhiji with his concept of Nai Talim and Makiguchi with his concept of Value creation, brought Education into a Social Context. Attributes of 'Right Education' have been articulated by these visionaries at a fundamental level. Education is seen as an instrument to Individual and collective well being. Western thinkers and professional Educationists, Philosophers and Psychologists like John Dewey, Piaget, Vygotsky, Cole, Gardner etc have been bringing insights into articulation of 'Right Education'.

Unfortunately recent enactment of 'Right to Education' in India still remains a *right to 'wrong education'* for majority of Population

Some of the drawbacks in present School education in the Country

- It can only give beneficial returns if children who go for higher education. School Education has been conceived as an initial ( fragmented) step for higher and Professional education. This vision is reinforced by top scientists of the country, who are by and large insulated from the ground realities of rural majority.
- Today's schooling has alienated the rural youth from the crafts and trades their parents were pursuing. Country has been effectively producing unemployable educated youth, indirectly contributing to the cause of social and political unrest in the country.
- Quality of education in Govt and Municipal schools has come down significantly due to the poor quality of teachers and non-availability of qualified teachers especially in

villages. Importance of Teacher at primary and secondary school education has been totally ignored. Teacher selection has been left to Market Mechanisms, which puts weaker segments in the Society at a disadvantage.

- Education has been a bad investment for a poor man. A typical craftsman like a potter, weaver or a fisherman engages his/her child in his/her trade as an apprentice.

A 10 years old boy or girl could easily earn Rs. 40/- per day when they work.

A monthly salary of Rs. 1000/- is possible.

A year's income of Rs. 12000/- if saved in a Bank at an interest rate of 10% can yield up to Rs1.8Lakhs in 11 years.

This means at 21 the person could get an income of Rs. 1500/- per month (at 10% interest of Rs. 1.8 lakhs) without working. It seems strange that Govt. makes a law which fines Rs. 10,000/- the parents for not sending his son or daughter to school when the child after passing 10<sup>th</sup> standard is not assured of an earning or job.

- Lack of Experiential Education.

Current school education has become more and more bookish devoid of 'experience' related to the subjects taught in the school, with the result children are unable to connect and apply 'Maths and Science' learnt in the class rooms to real life problems.

Creating a frame work to abstract Maths and Science principles from actual life experience is still not happening in the current school education.

### **Future Trends**

The world is fast moving towards communication through 'digital Media'. Internet (Google Search) and You-tube are already influencing all modes of life. One can safely be assured that 'Knowledge resources' will be reachable by all in Future.

Internet and mobile communication give direct access to information for people in remote Places. It will make knowledge accessible without barriers wherever one is situated and whatever Language one speaks.

More and more emphasis will be in Personality development, Conceptual learning, and Creative problem solving.

'Experiential learning' will be the key for Future living.

### **What can be done ?**

- Re-look at the visionary approaches to bring basic, self sustaining changes in the school education.

- Development of Innovative methodologies through Research and Application.
- Restructuring School education through progressive Action plans.
- Net working with like minded groups actively engaged in bringing the change in the school education.

I will explore few basic themes which need action.

**1. Restructuring School : *Introduction of Crafts in school –Half a day physical engagement with earning in the school.***

The vision of relevant education was propounded by Gandhiji in his articulation of Nai-Talim. In the National Educational Conference at Wardha a resolution was passed on primary education which says, *‘that the process of education through out this period should centre around some form of manual and productive work, and all other activities to be developed and training to be given, should as far as possible be integrally related to the Central Handicraft, chosen with due regard to the environment of the child, that the product of the Handicraft should gradually be able to cover the remuneration of teachers.’*

This resolution passed in 1937 seem to have a great relevance today. Some how due to various reasons these ideas have not spread to all schools in India.

Similar to this Makiguchi a Japanese educator articulated the ideal of ‘ Value creation’ in education. Makiguchi felt that basic value creation should be there in Education He advocated half a day school where rest of half the day children will be doing Productive work. Makiguchi’s ideas developed in forties are very applicable even today.

Introduction of craft as a subject is already being done in some I.B. schools. Crafts are desirable to develop creativity in children. Ironically crafts have disappeared from village schools.

*All traditional village Crafts persons need to be declared as resource teachers for village schools.*

Most of Maths and Science content learnt in Primary and Secondary schools can be connected to crafts. This needs further development through projects and research to make kits, work books and training material available to schools.

Schools can start a craft cum production unit in which organized production by children and training assistants from alumni can take place. Such Study cum work schools can also make educational toys and educational aids in wood, bamboo, paper, metal etc. and market them to other schools or sell them in the organized market.

School children can learn finance, entrepreneurship, book keeping, engineering etc experientially through the production activity. Farm work can be incorporated as per the seasonal demand.

(Bambu Studio has initiated the concept of Mini Bambu Studio, for schools through a M. Des Project done by a student, A. Phd. Student is working on the topic of Connecting Bamboo Craft to Math learning in an experiential way).

Half a day school half a day work was being implemented by one experimental school called 'Kanavu' in Kerala by Mr. & Mrs. Baby John. School drop outs belonging to poor local tribals do half a day Farming and half a day Learning in the school. Their living expenditures are covered by the Farming activity.

*More introductions of this concept in selected model schools are necessary for the idea to spread and gather Momentum.*

Children studying in half a day schools need to be examined differently and given 10<sup>th</sup> Certificates equivalent to normal 10<sup>th</sup> class certificate. They may further go to Vocational training to seek further professional specialization, where they get 12<sup>th</sup> Certificate, This would enable them to enter programmes in Craft Design, Craft Entrepreneurship and Design in National and Private Institutes.

## **2. Energising the Teachers.**

In the process of Economic Growth we have neglected 'School Teachers'. Makiguchi talked about neglect of school teacher, their importance, moral strength etc in 1930 to 40. Our degradation of teachers in India has happened in the last 30 to 40 years. In the 50s. one could see a high standard in teachers in small places in spite of low salaries.. Teachers had high pride and commanded social respect. But with the increased opportunities in other jobs with higher earnings, talent has moved out of small places gradually. A village teacher in the school no more has the pride and self confidence or authority in the Society.

Revival of Teachers' standard should be top priority for the Society as he/she is building the foundation. Teacher is the symbol of moral standard and authority in the society. Many social evils we see to day like corruption, molestations, rapes, killing of old people ill treatment of the disadvantaged, greed, lack of generosity etc., are all rooted in education at Home and in School.

There is an urgent need to train the teachers in being **creative**. Teachers need to be sent to Workshops and seminars to centers of excellence and reputed National Institutions. This needs to be treated as National priority. Though some short term training programmes are going on in K.V.Is, the sensitivity and quality are inadequate. Often the village primary and secondary teachers are not included in these trainings. Experiments like Ekalavya in M.P. had some impact, but could not withstand the forces of erosion.

Teacher Training methodologies are inadequate. Sufficient input in 'Creative personality Development', Techniques of creativity, project- mode trainings where teachers need to come up with new teaching methods using narratives, dramatics, 3-D models, digital facilities are still lacking.

In a recent workshop conducted at IDC called 'INNOMATH' for KVI Math teachers, the participants started opening up by the end of the week long work shop. Not only They enjoyed, they wanted more of such workshops with longer duration. A keen interest to do another workshop combing Math and Art teachers was expressed. Alas no initiative came up from the Delhi dependent Training Institute. Teachers participating in the workshop came up with several creative responses. They thoroughly enjoyed the studio mode of learning.

There is an urgent need to do high quality intense creative workshops with different subject Teachers. The video documentations of such workshops need to be televised for the generative effect. Films by Amir Khan like Tare Jamine Par and 3 Idiots have created enormous impact on the consciousness of Public.

It is important to nurture teacher enthusiasm till a sufficient momentum to generate its Own energy is built. Net working teacher- groups, Creating platforms where they can get appreciation of their creative efforts is essential. India still lacks Teacher networks common in developed countries.

It is significant to note what happened after teachers were trained in Nai Talim

To quote from a report by Marjorie Sykes:

*The real problems began after they had returned to their own states. It was one thing for a Department of Education to depute a few men and women for a year's training; it was another matter to modify established custom in order to employ their new skills effectively when they returned. There was a great deal of human wastage; young men and women, eager to practice what they had learned, were sent back to conventional High school jobs and expected to Merge in to the old pattern. Those who were assigned to training schools often found themselves in junior posts under seniors who were firmly attached to the old ways, and were not prepared to make any changes. Some of the senior men were luckier, because of their seniority they were put in charge of training schools, and were able to put their ideas into practice; they showed how much could be done and how much more might have been done if administrative lethargy had not been allowed to stand in their way.*

### **3. Bringing Parents Participation**

Parental participation and training of parents is essential to change the educational Scene. Many parents go by the 'Societal modes and ambitions.' There is a prevailing insecurity and undue fear- complex resulting in aggressive behavior of middle class parents. Parents need inputs in educating their children ' Creatively and in the right direction.'

If parents are not privileged special inputs need to be given to them. Mother of a deaf child learnt to read and write to help her child in a special school.

### **4. Generating Creative Pedagogic Material.**

Once we accept that **education needs to be fun and children should enjoy the schooling,**

We need lot of innovative material to engage children effectively and economically. Already lot of digital bombardment of educational material is taking place. Some are mere imitation of bookish material told through cartoon characters. Lot of digital material available freely on net for lower classes is good and usable.

Considerable development is needed on T.L.Ps “ Teaching Learning Platforms”. These will have Materials like educational aids as well as games, narratives, songs, animations theatrical plays etc on specific subject topics. TLPs will create a format for experiencing the content in the Topics to abstract and learn. Supporting work books, digital material can consolidate the learning process. Multiple intelligences need to be taken into account.

In one of bamboo craft workshops a fraction game was made by children with bamboo pieces, when they played the game which they made they enjoyed learning fraction indirectly.

A resource bank of already available material need to be collected. Some new design of mass-manufacturable kits can take place. Lot of base material need to be designed to enable the teachers to create new material themselves from the base material.

In Innomath Workshop KVI Teachers came out with many innovative math challenges using Tangram , Folk Toy, etc, In a Pomegranate workshop conducted by me, along with my team Golden Proportion was elucidated through observation in Nature, Narratives, making golden Spiral based Ram mask, visiting Fibonacci caves to defeat number monster etc. Children got so excited that parents were forced to read and learn golden proportion.

## **5.Teaching ‘Learning to Learn’.**

In the coming future knowledge access will change leaps and bounds, Internet access will be available to each person and enormous learning material will be accessible through internet even in remote places T.V. and Radio also will bring in lot of learning material.

Methodologies to teach ‘Learning to learn’ will be crucial. New models of ‘Learner-Facilitator- Information Access’ need to be explored. Teacher / Facilitators will have the role of Catalyst. Short term ‘Interactive workshop modes will become crucial learning initiators. Interactions among learners will reduce or eliminate the need for presence of principal facilitators.

Teaching assistants like Research Scholars, Senior Students will be engaged for secondary facilitation. Such frame work can be thought right from the primary school levels. Parent volunteers, college student volunteers, other elders with different knowledge can become learning facilitators. New inputs required for 'Management of Education' with right values will play a key role in this endeavor.

Such new models, experimented and consolidated, can take us to a new Future!

Some pictures from a workshops on 'Art and Science of golden Proportion' and 'Castle Making'



Making is more fun when it becomes a mask to wear!



You have to stand on one leg to generate Cosmic energy to start back a 'time machine'



We don't have to make castles in the air!

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