



# Paradigms of Development – Nurturing Leaders

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*Abstract: Every individual is a 'Leader'. In the journey of education, the learners are developing, to lead. Education is not only to prepare us for a good living, but also for the inner liberation, of the individual. The text based education system, is a burden for the learners. Learning in self observation and self knowledge, is important. Self assessment will enable self-development, which will aid one to take right decision, in life and career in a precise way.*

*The restless social constitution, in the urban sectors, is calling for 'A Nurturing Methodology', a system in which, the budding souls, would bloom, with the Mentors' special guidance, in a flourishing system, incorporated with the teachings, of the philosophers, as a compulsory part of curriculum learning.*

**Key Words:** *Competitive, Creativity, Crisis, Develop, Environment, Leader, Mentor, Mind, Nurture, Philosophy, Relationship & Self Knowledge*

## AIMS & OBJECTIVES

To show that life is inseparable from education, since both are there from the early years till the end. The learners are experiencing much stress, in learning and in their personal lives, which has stimulated me in writing, the paper. An attempt to focus equally, on the task of education, to impart the individual the "art of living" in a society, as education is about right living. Instead of direct authoritative way of teaching, there is a method of learning, from experience and observation. To show that mind, which is the main object of education, can be developed and advanced. There are different faculties of the mind, and each individual works from different levels, of the faculties. We need to have a clear idea of the mechanism of our mind. According to the Bhagavad-Gita, the undisciplined mind acts as our enemy, whereas a trained mind acts as our friend. In the process of learning, the mind gets connected with other minds, and more so in the teacher – student relationship. Since minds relate to minds in a significant way, we would like to explore the possibility of how interaction with other minds and nature, can enhance the learning process. The journey in togetherness, where there is no fear, there is freedom and awareness, in observation of facts, co-operation and where knowledge, is not only for the immediate present, but for the future, there is a total development, of the mind of the learner.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

'Educare' is a Latin word and it means "to nourish, to bring up", 'to rise'. This means, educating a child involves nourishing or bringing up the child, according to certain ends or aims. It also means "to lead out" or "to draw out". This means educating a child by drawing out from or leading him out of darkness into light, from ignorance to wisdom. According to Swami Vivekananda "Manifestation of that which is already inherent" should be the motto in educating. He said, "Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divinity within by controlling nature, external and internal". A new faith and vision in the youths will bring about a change in the educational system. There is a manifestation from the lower to the higher. The more we are able to manifest, the human nature, from within, the better do we realize. The more the mind is receptive, to its short comings and limitations, the more will it be able to develop, and disable, the negative habits and tendencies. This occurs to oneself on one's own. Education and personal development, are simply matters of unfolding from within, which will take place, when there is no authority and pressure, so we need to provide, for enabling conditions, for any mind to develop and manifest, its full potentiality as a human being. We need to provide a stimulating environment, for the development of a healthy mind, with confidence in the effectiveness of good values.

In any educational institution there are students from different backgrounds, having different levels of intelligence, having aims in life to achieve. Our mission is to give "fire to their wings" of imaginations such that they can take high flight in education and in life. The former President APJ ABDUL KALAM had said that young ignited minds are powerful source of energy, which is mightier than any resource on the earth, in the sky and under the sea and we must develop and encourage them to bring about revolutionary change and transform developing nation to a developed nation.

## 2. THE CRISIS

What is the crisis in education? Where is education leading us to? Does education make us aware of our identity and existence, not only as a living entity, but also as nature's best creation? In being unable to be in tune, with the outside natural circumstances, an imbalance is created within, bringing in crisis. The crisis, existing at all level is within and not without.

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In not understanding our true selves, we are getting away from the core and depth, of education. The stress that is in the mind of the learners is in relation to the body, the mind and the surrounding circumstances. We grow and develop, actively participating within an environment. We need to be in alignment, with the changing circumstances, which includes all those factors, that comprises our living. Awareness in taking care of our body, in being fit and firm, and understanding our mind, will enable us to cope with the challenges of life.

Our growth is in relation to the changes, occurring not only within, but also without. Our educational system needs redirection from time to time, according to social, cultural, economic and technological changes. Are we 'living' the education that we are getting in the educational institutions? When there is progress in the field of science and technology, why is there so much of confusion and conflict, in the mind of the educated? The fierce nature of competition, at all levels is an alarming situation. Are we ignoring the 'philosophical' aspect of learning? Education is nothing but a Philosophy of life, which means the outlook of life, how we regard things, events, relationships and values. Every branch like science, law, economics, political science, sociology, literature depends for their flowering upon philosophy that provides a vision. Individual and corporate lives need a solid philosophical base of values, if it is to reach its full potential and function harmoniously.

Among the many drawbacks in our present – day educational system, we may note that we have given great importance to a model, without comprehending the inner spirit and strengths, of a traditional structure. We can have a philosophy of education that we can call our own in connection to our cultural ethos, which could answer best to the requirements of the current social realities, as well as our future needs. India is one of the oldest literate civilizations on earth, rooted in traditions, which are quite different and unique. The various languages and dialects spoken in the different states are indicators of diversity in cultures and need to be preserved. The time is ripe to deepen our understanding, of the ideals that underpin Indian civilization, and investigate the setting of a practical educational system. Our concern is to sharpen and deepen, our understanding, of significant philosophical teachings, that underlie an educational system and to investigate several broad topics, relating to educational practices. The youngsters of today are missing companionship, in the increasing nuclear families, where most of them are, a single child, of parents and are lonely. When such learners enter an educational institution, where they spend most part of their day, look forward to companionship, love and compassion. An atmosphere of enthusiasm and enjoyment are vital for the child's healthy growth and development. To coax and goad them to a set pattern of studies would be depriving them from their innocence and simplicity. When we are asking

them to do a certain thing in a disciplinary way we are injecting fear.

Considering the discontentment, that exists in the minds of the younger generation, a new system of education, is required that would be promising, enliven the learners, bringing in peace and contentment. The teaching staffs are over burdened, with the curriculum teaching, and most of them are travelling, long distances, to reach school, which is leaving them tired. Appointment of Mentor Teachers will unburden the teachers, from their routine load. A non formal way of mentoring, aids in the natural development of mind and body. It leaves the mind stress free and fearless two qualities essential, for learning. We need to incorporate teachings of philosopher, educationist Rabindranath Tagore, who had encouraged and introduced, in Visva Bharati, life centric education, where the child enjoyed and participated, in guidance of teachers, not only in curriculum studies, but in festivals and seasonal functions. In this way of learning the learner experiences a passion for learning. Learning is in fulfilment. The learners in competitiveness are partially developing, where as learning in various skills of knowledge, is developing in wholeness.

The poet, educator had advocated, an education for fullness, of being. We urgently require tools to accomplish harmony in the system, which will aid to bridge the gap between school and home, at the same time smoothen the relation between parents, pupil and the teaching staff. Though the learners are intelligent, better in response and expressions, curious and interested in new vistas of knowledge, are falling prey to competitions and the fear of examinations. We are not giving much importance and encouragement to their imaginative skills. Requiring are creative programs to enliven their learning minds. The teacher is the guide and director; he steers the boat, but the energy that propels, it must come from those who are learning. Speaking to the students of various age groups, it is found, that most of them, are above average in their IQ; nevertheless, it is years of habituation that are prohibiting their development. Increasing environmental crisis, social conditionings and peer pressures are hindrances in their development. Although they are curious and interested in new vistas of knowledge, they are giving much importance to career based learning, which is only result oriented. Currently learners are requiring 'A Mentoring Methodology', which will aid, in the development, of their leadership qualities. The present generation's recklessness and restlessness is calling for an educational system embedded in philosophical thoughts, for which required are spiritual retreats in schools and colleges, conducted by the teachers of various religious organizations to deliver lectures in the form of seminars and workshops. This would encourage self competence, in which one improves and develops, which would also imbibe, value education in the process of learning, preparing the learners, to face challenges of life.

Freedom, love and discipline are related to one another. The existing system of education is undergoing a crisis, due to fear of competition. Faced with competition from the very beginning learners are facing stress. Exercising freedom in understanding self discipline has to be inculcated as a part of teaching in the early years of learning. A natural tendency in exercising of freedom of thoughts is common to all. Only in knowing how to carry out it in action is an art. There are certain qualities of a free mind. In the poets words who was conscious about the facts of the surrounding world, 'that a cloud was a cloud and a flower a flower. I still remember the very moment one afternoon, when coming back from school I alighted from the carriage and suddenly saw in the sky, behind the upper terrace of our house, an exuberance of deep dark rain – clouds lavishing rich, cool shadows on the atmosphere. The marvel of it, the very generosity of its presence gave me a joy which was freedom, the freedom we feel in the love of our dear friend.' It is fresh and alert in observing. If our minds be alert in learning, we will experience it in living. Such a mind is an intelligent mind that does not conform to anything without self understanding. The changes in the social structures and the changing human relationships are causing immense impact on the youngsters' mind. They are becoming introvert and are undergoing psychological problems. When a learning mind faces crisis learning and development is slow.

J.Krishnamurti, philosopher and educationist, in his 'Letters to the Schools' mentioned, 'With the very young what is most important is to help them to free themselves from psychological pressures and problems. Now the very young are being taught complicated intellectual problems their studies are becoming more and more technical they are given more and more abstract information; various forms of knowledge are being imposed on their brains, thus conditioning them right from childhood. Whereas what we are concerned, with is to help the very young to have no psychological problems, to be free of fear, anxiety, cruelty, to have care, generosity and affection. This is far more important than the imposition of knowledge on their young minds. This does not mean the child should not learn to read, write and so on, but the emphasis is on psychological freedom instead of the acquisition of knowledge, though that is necessary.' He had mentioned, "The bringing up of a child requires intelligent observation and care. Experts and their knowledge can never replace the parents' love, but most parents corrupt that love by their own fears and ambitions, which condition and distort the outlook of the child. So few of us are concerned with love, but we are vastly taken up with the appearance of love. " He had also mentioned, "The influence of the home and that of the school must not be in any way contradictory, so both parents and teachers must re-educate themselves. The contradiction which so often exists

between the private life of the individual and his life as a member of the group creates an endless battle within himself and in his relationships. "

Each stage has its own requirements. In this context philosopher John Dewey's suggestion is most appropriate and applicable. To make learning part of life as John Dewey had suggested that learning along with activities of daily routine life will teach the learners in a practical way. He had considered that the mind, a process of growth and not a fixed entity, he points out the stages of growth in learning through experiences and doing in the three fold stage of the school periods of life from the psychological points of view.

The children in the age group of five to seven require friendly cooperation of their teachers. Their creative bent of mind requires guidance in friendliness which will aid in their holistic development. Learning in innovation where imagination will sharpen their mind and keep their mind open to new ideas and thoughts. Their mind being less conditioned exists in freedom. Encouraging them to participate in elective activities will develop their knowledge in various skills. Learning with the group mates increases scope of learning. The psychological pressure of learning is lessened, and learning is less restrictive, and more productive. These years of learning establishes and enhances the learners' leadership qualities.

Children in the pre-primary stage are too innocent to appear for interviews and exams in order to get admitted as learning for them is only enjoying, having fun time spent with friends and teachers. They should be introduced to learning very naturally, without fear and their interactions with teachers should be relaxed. Learners of this age group should never be forced to go to school. A non competitive beginning, will keep the budding souls fresh in their later years. As the families in the urban sectors, are shrinking in size a child is victimized, in a conditioned system, in which he survives. He is spending more time with electronic appliances. He is independent, less sharing, and with the result less vibrant and dull minded. They lack confidence in facing a new situation. Though they are intelligent they are not free from anxiety and fear. Why should there be fear in the blooming stage? The increasing electronic modes have taken the place of natural relationships. Learning through direct communication, leaves an impact which media and other electronic modes of learning, can never provide.

A great deal of energy is required in bringing about the changes that we are looking for. A change in the educational system is to be introduced taking into consideration the present social and political scenario. The natural utilization of energy for our thinking capacity will give rise to 'creativity' which will bring in a 'new mind'. Very often there is dissipation of energy in conflicts and competitive attitudes. Conformity also leads to a dogmatic acceptance of beliefs and systems of

learning; we are in a living relationship with oneself and others. A non self-centred being is able to harness the energy in a single stream, which will enable to face the problems of living and serve one's community, with a changed mind. Let the learners minds awaken from a dormant stage to a dynamic stage.

Essential modifications are required to liven up the present classroom pattern of teaching. Over a long period of time we are following a pattern of examinations, tenure of courses, which require revision. With the increasing technological facilities, schooling can be faster and long hours of teaching can be shortened. Though the learners are intelligent, better in response and expressions, curious and interested in new vistas of knowledge, are falling prey to competitions and the fear of examinations. Requiring is imaginative method of teaching, to enliven their learning minds. Speaking to the students of various age groups, I find that most of them are above average in their IQ; nevertheless, it is years of habituation, that are prohibiting their development. Based on changing social scenario, when families are dwindling and parents are in hectic schedules of long working hours, the job of mentors are becoming more and more essential, as they are the torch bearers, for the learners and have to guide and motivate them . We require teachers' training programs, in which the learners' self inclination and motivation, is given a priority. The state and the central government, require restructuring, the roles of their teachers, and train them to teach innovatively. We have to introduce learning in the way as John Dewey had suggested, catering knowledge, in a palatable way, is the job of an educator. The most influential thinker on education in the twentieth century, John Dewey's contribution lies along several fronts. I find his methodology practical for the learners of all times. His attention to experience and reflections, democracy and community and to environments for learning has been seminal. His idea was that children came to school to do things and live in a community which gave them real guided experiences which fostered their capacity to contribute to the society. Mathematics could be learnt via learning proportions in cooking or figuring out how long it would take to get from one place to another by mule. History could be learnt by experiencing how people lived, geography, what the climate was like, and how plants and animals grew, were important subjects. The educator believed that schools should teach students how to be problem solvers by helping students learn 'how to think' rather than simply learning rote lessons about large amounts of information. According to his view schools should focus on judgments rather than knowledge so that the school children become adults who can 'pass judgments pertinently and discriminately on the problems of human living'. He believed that schools should help students learn to live and to work cooperatively with others. He added that students should participate in decisions that affect their learning. I believe that the impulse for educational reform does not come in the first place from any abstract recognition of the

deprivations suffered by the young. It arises from reactions to widespread changes in the conditions of life which affect all age groups. The child brought up in a tenement or an apartment in crowded city, streets has different needs and faces more complex and perplexing problems than the child on a family farm.

John Dewey emphasized on understanding the nature of human experience. His theory is that experience arises from the interaction of two principles - continuity and interaction. A continuity point at each experience a person has which influences his or her future, for better or for worse. Interaction says about the influence of situation. For example the experience of a lesson, will depend on how the teacher arranges and facilitates the lesson as well the learners past experiences of similar lessons and teachers. He said that once there is a theory of experience then as educators one can set about progressively organizing the study material in such a way that it takes accounts of students' past experiences, and then provides them with experiences or cite examples which will help to open up instead of shutting down a person's contribution to society.

The educator had examined his theory of experience in light of practical educational problems, such as how much freedom vs. discipline is to be used. There was a strong emphasis on the subjective quality of a student's experience and the necessity for the teacher in understanding the students' past experiences in order to effectively design a sequence of liberating educational experiences to allow the person to fulfil their potential. He pointed the fact of many who hated school. He said that education must take into account the unique differences between each student. Each has his own memory of experiences. In standard curricula, each student will have a different quality of response. Thus teaching and curriculum must be designed in ways that allow for such individual differences. This I find most relevant in the present context when learners are facing stress in learning. They should keep the mind open to new facts and ideas. Even a small group of students become the instrument of his personal importance if he uses authority as a means of his own release, and if teaching is for him a self-expansive fulfilment.

In highlighting the changes required in the present system in the formative years, what is required is a natural way of getting educated. To understand the child and direct him accordingly, is the work of parents, and the best counselling that a child requires at the early stage of life, is within the family. Learning begins at home. Family thus provides a link between emotions and intellect and passes on values and standards of conduct. In ancient times in India, there was the 'Gurukul' system of education, which included learning in all aspects of life, in the learner's developing years though caste preferences were its shortcomings. We require a general mode and pattern in our

present system. For an overall development much depends on whether the education given in the educational institutions is backed up by the education given at home. There are many constructive allocations as well as distractions in ones daily life. How the mind should accept from the 'buffet' of ideas and opportunities? Are the distractions causing the crisis? We have to think of a self – education system, which will be self - evaluative. The learners are to use their minds in self-knowledge and understanding. If there is discipline, there will be total focus in ones thought, actions and less of confusions.

#### ***A NEW SYSTEM WITH A NATIONAL BACKGROUND –***

#### ***METHODOLOGY DEVOID OF COMPETITION***

We had a systematic way of teaching and learning long before the advent of the British in India. The system in the present is more or less the pattern introduced by the British. It has been 72 years, and the real meaning of 'freedom', is not explicit to most of us. To take the nation ahead, we have to awaken ourselves to a 'living' educational system. New education requires more attention not less to subject matter, and to progress in technique, that also involves an imaginative vision. Going ahead in the field of education, is not disregarding the past, but accepting all its good and keeping this in mind, is how an educator plans.

What is it in the present system, which can be a 'torch light' for the coming generations? Keeping in mind that education is not concerned with the immediate present but a 'vision' for the coming period, every educationist as well as learner has to come up with something, which will be of use in the future. Every major philosopher since Plato has recognized that the primary function as a philosopher is as John Dewey had mentioned – to shed some light on the path ahead. We require a visionary educational system where the learners are made cognizant about their interests and goals. An educational institution should be bubbling with new ideas. We should maximize organizing skills, from the very beginning, in order to avoid crisis, in professional and personal life, thus enabling them to face the inevitable role of competition in a constructive manner.

The choice and combination of subjects should be in accordance with the inclination, as well as the ability of the student. We have had a common syllabus for all students in the classroom pattern of teaching. The present scene is classrooms are crowded with students learning the same combination of subjects in disparity. In order to facilitate learning according to ones individual capacity, each section should be providing different combination of subjects to avoid disparity and dissatisfaction due to lack of interest. For example a section of students interested in mathematics and English may not be interested in history, which may be taught in a different

section. Students should be given an opportunity in choosing combination of subjects. Their learning in interests in their choice of subjects would make the learning process stress free. John Dewey, in his book 'How We Think', mentions – "There is no greater enemy of effective thinking, than divided interest. This division unfortunately is often produced in school. A pupil gives an external, perfunctory attention to the teacher and to his books and lessons while his inmost thoughts are concerned with matters more attractive to him."<sup>4</sup> A close-knit connection between home and school will solve the existing disparity. Children are cognizant about their image. They have to discover their own interests by themselves. As learning is natural to a human mind, a child should consider learning as one takes food, when one feels hungry.

We need to reinvent methods in the educational system to meet the present day challenges, as there seems to be a great dissatisfaction at all levels in the educational system. Education needs to maintain the sensitive balance of originality and habitual responses. One thing that again and again came in the mind of J.Krishnamurti was that the students studying only to pass examination and get a good job fall into the trap which the past generation had created. There is a fear existing at all levels. One is occupied with one's ambition which one worships for success. JKrshnamurti said that learning is constant. Teachers and parents should engage the learners in various jobs in order to inculcate interests in responsibility. Senior school students and college students should involve in the functioning of their institutions. I see that the new generation is exposed to a world full of new discoveries and the job of an educator is crucial. I feel that learning is not only in student teacher relationship but also in relation to the intelligent functioning of the entire system. We need to improve organizational skills in the present educational system at various levels. Education in India emerged from the social organization of the Indo-Aryan society which was very highly organized. I feel that at present, the administrative system of the educational institutions can be effective in using technology in the service of the ideals. Learning in an institution, which has an advanced organized system will develop better effect within the institution and will benefit learners involving them in the functioning of its administrative system, would teach them managerial skills and build harmonious relationships.

In educating a child's deep insight, understanding is required. Education can encourage the child to understand his relationship to people, to things and to nature. If the educator and parents fully understand the true significance of relationship by their attitude, conduct and speech they will surely convey to the child in a few words the meaning of spiritual life without much explanation. In modern times of communal unrest and disharmony teaching the significance and importance of all religions can contribute in developing

respect and tolerance towards other cultures. We need to take care that we may create an appropriate environment for our children. In my interaction with students of different backgrounds belonging to rural and urban sectors I find that learners in very many instances have a different environment at home and at school. Their mentoring requires compassion and suitable conditions. Whether economically rich or poor their growing up in inspiration, will enable them to take flight in life. The increasing technocratic life style is calling for a natural way of living and learning in freedom, love and creativity.

### 3. CONCLUSION

We had a systematic way of teaching and learning long before the advent of the British in India. The system in the present is more or less the pattern introduced by the British. India is a nation enriched in spiritualism, one of the oldest literate civilizations on the earth, rooted in traditions. We have to include the rich past in the present system. Education same as life is in continuation of the past to the present and will be carried over to the future. It is a gradual process occurring in rhythmic continuity in a dynamic and energetic pattern. Education is not only for endurance, but also for better use of leisure time and a better way of living bringing in refinements in one's personal, social and cultural life. In the present system of education, it is becoming more and more critical in providing people with skills in life and society. We learn from experiences whether positive or negative. Thus, every experience in some way influences, all potential future experiences, for an individual. There is a continuity of experiences as each experience stored in one's mind is carried on into future whether one likes it or not. Any situation is different because of unique individual interests and differences, as for example one student might hate school while another might not. The thing important for educators is that although they do not have control over a student's experiences, they can try to understand the child in the context of the dynamic present situation. An educator having good insight into the effects of experiences, which students bring along with them enables to provide quality education, which is relevant and meaningful for the students in the coming years of their lives. In maintaining harmony in the community, learners' contributions towards communal services, in the form of visiting local hospitals and visiting the aged in the old age homes and hospitals would inculcate values and fellow feelings in the learners. In developing such programs in the educational institutions from the very beginning for the different age group of learners, would develop the quality of fellow feeling, which otherwise is diminishing these days. Such programs are being taken up by several educational institutions, including, the management institutes. For

example, S.P.Jain Institute of Management in Mumbai has been organizing a program, as a part of the management course, in mentoring children, from local rural sectors. The Management students are asked to visit the learner's home and teach. This makes the management learners aware, of the hard life style, of those aspiring learners, from the lower income strata, encouraging them for further studies, and general progress in life and learning. There is much to learn through community services, which should be made, a compulsory part of the curriculum, in schools and colleges.

The increasing population of street dwellers is calling for a system which will first and foremost make learning be accessible. We can arrange mobile schools for those street dwellers who cannot afford schooling. There are mobile schools already functioning in some parts of the country for example, the one in Tirupur, in Tamil Nadu by Durai Charitable Trust a voluntary social welfare organization headed by Mr. S. Duraiswamy. CEO of PGC Industries Ltd gives free non formal education to the child labour street children and destitute children with full support of SWITCHERS A.SWITZERLAND headed by Mr. Robin Cornelius the CEO.

Those children who are wasting their day begging for their families, if provided with a day's meal would be interested to join the mobile classes. These programs could be made functional as part of charitable work by the senior students of various private and government schools. Learning is in developing the community of which they are a part. The much effort in learning and the stress experienced is due to lack of development in society at a large. If we are to progress we have to eradicate social imbalance by developing an awareness among our youngsters in consideration and in responsibility towards fellow beings.

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