

## Aim and Purpose of Education

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“Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man and writing an exact man”, says Bacon. Reading for drawing out and cultivating excellence must be purposive, conscious probing, provoking and stimulating. Similarly, “conference” should be with those who are intellectual enough to enlighten, elucidate and examine the view point. Writing without a sincere effort will frustrate its purpose. Reading, writing and conference are not isolated activities; they constitute the shades of the total impression which can be called education. Stripped of its ideological and academic trappings, education is quite expensive and embrasive though its purpose basically remains th same. According to Mannhein education means the “fostering of the free development of the personality through the unhampered unfolding of innate qualities”. It helps in the flowering of the creative potentiality, in bringing out the inherent faculty of man. It means the awakening of intelligence and the fostering of an integrated life. Without realising this purpose young men become entities that cannot fit in the structure of society. “Education has many tasks”, says Livingstone “training the intelligence, widening the mind and enlarging its interests, and teaching the technique on which modern civilisation is based.”

Clearly education demands that there should be discipline of reason and discipline of emotions. A person who is guided by emotions and not by reason is nothing more than an animal whereas purely rational person is nothing less than a thinking machine. The judgements of an emotional person will not be balanced and a rational person may distort reason. Mahatma Gandhi goes a step further when he says that there should be the education of intellect, spirit and body. By this he simply means that there should be an integrated development of the whole personality of man. In other words without the development of all aspects of personality the attitude of the individual will not be conducive to the welfare of the society and will not be able to adjust the individual within the framework of democracy. Clearly enough one of the important tasks of education is to produce men integrated with their environment. In fact our moral and creative nature is a unique non-recurring fact and education provides the individual with the language of culture through which he explores himself and the world. In society man's life is governed by the complex pattern of thinking, feeling and action, called a tradition. A tradition is accumulate social experience expressed in the form of choices and education gives the awareness of the tradition. White-Head has pointed out that life is rhythm and the purpose of education is to adjust the rhythm of life and each individual with the rhythm of society. It may be Hegel's rhythm of thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis or White-Head's rhythm of romance and justification. Education makes us aware of the drift in things.

According to Aristotle aim of education is to pass on knowledge as “fixed and unilateral conditions of the soul”. It must train him in the technique of isolating the creative form. Education may not provide any clear cut principles for guidance but it may give us a sort of moral armoury and also a sort of intellectual armoury. While living in society it is necessary that the man should definitely try to adjust himself with the social code. Socially maladjusted people create certain problems for the society as well as for the members of the society. So Plato pointed out, “Types of Government correspond to the types of human nature. States are not made from rocks and trees but from the characters of their citizens which turn the scale and draw everything after them.” None can deny that the evils of the world generally originate from the bad political machinery and will not be cured till human character is improved. According to Livingstone “fundamentally the political problem is a problem of human character”. The struggles, agonies, passions and uncertainties of the time disappear if the character of the people is very high. Similarly there are many determining factors like geography, geology, climate, economic conditions, scientific discoveries in the history of a nation but above all there is, often forgotten element of human nature, that is character. If people do not possess intellectual qualities, wisdom, intelligence, judgement and foresight it is not possible for them to make their country a great success. Man is the real problem, the old and the modern problem. In fact humanity changes its clothes but not its nature that is why till education does not cultivate character it becomes purposeless. According to Ruskin “Education does not mean teaching people to know what they do not know. It means teaching them to behave as they do not behave”. The future civilization depends upon the improvement of human character and conduct and we should devote our energies to the construction of human nature before we make critical machinery. Bolshevism and Nazism are sometimes called new religions. Proper type of education would have definitely done a good service in breaking this superstition about these religions. No doubt, Russell in one of his essays “Functions of a Teacher” points out that a teacher must try and give unbiased ideas to the pupils and should not become a tool in the hands of the politicians.

Livingstone thinks that the primary purpose of education is to improved character. For Plato education is the basis of the State but the ultimate aim and essence of education is the training of character to be achieved by the discipline of the body, will and the intelligence. For training the human character, various steps will have to be taken, though to this suggestion, three objections will be made. One of the objections is that some time the character may be trained in a wrong manner as was the case with Hitler. In reality we are just like the man in Mark Twain’s story who spends sixteen years in jail and then opens the door which has been locked all the time and walks out. We are fettered in the prison of human nature though we can walk out of it if we manage properly. Another objection is that moulding of character is a dangerous operation. The attitude of

this type of critic is like the servants in the Parable of the Talents. It is not possible to educate a child without turning its mind to social needs. Similarly those who say that it is an immense problem are wrong because once it is tackled, it will not seem to be so. None can deny that political problem is a question of human nature rather than of organisation. Hence we need some type of re-education. In some of the countries the schemes for the training of character have been given a subordinate place and we should just take Blake's words as the slogan of our future action-

I will not cease from mental fight,

Nor shall my sword be in my hand,

Till we have built Jerusalem green and peasant land.

The purpose of education for a civilised democracy is somewhat different. In the words of Henry Wallace this is the century of the common man because we have been able to adopt political and economic democracy. Civilisation has been defined as a sense of values and if this sense of value extends to the field of human behavior it becomes a proper type of education. According to Matthew Arnold Athenians used to give proper type of training to the people for making them suitable for the democratic set up. Today we have some type of liberal democracy and so various versions of the democratic set up have been given. Naturally the conditions available in a modern democratic country are somewhat different from the conditions which were available in Athens. So the education which Pericles alludes is somewhat different from what it should be in the modern times. For a civilised democracy education should be of a type that makes the people as active participants in the working of democracy. So it is not only political education but also a sort of moral education. In the modern states various methods of propaganda are utilised for educating the people but unfortunately all of them become the victim of biased opinions and the people in general feel confused instead of getting any guideline for the working. In fact if the political party in power wishes there may be intellectual and even spiritual position but that is always dangerous because ultimately it serves as a boomerang which not only demolishes the institution but harms the party in power also. So here also we need discipline as we need discipline in art.

The culture which education seeks to communicate is not dependent on particular beliefs which are supported by the institutional ethos of society. Socially therefore education seeks to bridge the gulf between power and wisdom. The poor will have to be freed from its domination and would seek to raise wisdom to absolute power. According to Arnoki the main purpose of education is "the harmonious expansion of all the owners which make the beauty and worth of

human nature and is not sustained with the over-development of any one power at the expense of the reest". In our society we just try to educate the rhythm of life with the rise and fall in culture and its consequence is extreme type of frustration. Marx correctly pointed out "Frustration is the psychic price of living in a society which reduces all human worth to exchange value". Education must serve those persons who can rise above these pressures and who have the power to reform the society in one or the other way. Similarly, education in a civilised society must also teach the human beings to adjust themselves with the social order. In this connection Ruskin says in his book *Time and Tide* "cry for education among the lower order is because they think that when once they have got it they must become upper orders". So, education can definitely make the people to rise above the old rut for adjusting themselves with the changing society. Clearly it will achieve a sort of new dimension to their thinking and will definitely serve their basic needs.

Now-a-days many of educationists might think that the purpose of education is to equip a person with the weapons for fighting the forces of darkness and conservatism. If the society is evolving itself, it must, it needs a push and that is always provided by the educational background. If it fails to produce a creative temper it is a bad type of education. The protective armour should not be given to the barbarous people though the cultured must always get some type of armour for protecting their rights and realising their duties. At this time the most important problem for education is to tackle the rebellious attitude of the students. This type of revolt in the minds of the youth is perhaps because of the gap between the social conditions and the conditions available in the educational fields. For example, democracy encourages democratic feeling whereas in educational field there is still authoritarianism. Similarly progress of science has provided a large number of means of recreations and pastimes but education has not been adjusted with them so far. These types of divergent pulls have created imbalance in the minds of the young. So, education will have to remove this imbalance.

It will not be inappropriate to take up the question of sex education in the universities and the colleges. If education is to become a training for the preparation of life it will have to conform to the realities of life. If it ignores the demands of life it will never be able to serve the purpose which it should. This may give an impression that sex education is necessary but this type of education in the younger generation will make the question of morality irrelevant. As a result of it, we will be making human beings only cogs in the machines of life. We will have to treat human beings at different levels and education should provide an ideal training for an ideal life which is free from all types of degenerating influences. We are not merely to live rather we are to live a better type of life and better, to my mind connotes moral life than anything else.

