

EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT: A CRITIQUE

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Abstract:

We are lifeless if life becomes static. Aided or unaided, every human individual develops from the moment of conception until death. But how we develop, in which direction we develop, and what should be the purpose of our development are some of the major issues of education. We all know the various stages of human development, such as - prenatal, infancy, childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. Sometimes we define education as a life-long development: it starts from the moment of conception and ends at death. According to this definition, education is development. The only difference may be that education should be a refined development with a social purpose. We cannot let the individuals develop on their own self. As we live in groups, we have to develop according to group norms. Formal education occupies a substantial period of one's life. In this context, it becomes quite necessary to discuss the idea of education before we inculcate the philosophical foundation and its role in human development. The paper tries to re-evaluate some of the shortcomings of formal education while taking up its role in human development.

Key Words: *Education and Human Development: A Critique on the Role of Formal System.*

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Introduction:

Before coming to the question of what we should do about education in relation with human development, we should analyze what education is doing at present. We shall first see what education is. We interpret education in various ways. It is a very vast concept. Moreover, the concept of education is dynamic; it keeps on changing from time to time and from place to place. It in fact concerns hundreds of thousands of teachers and millions of students of all sorts under different conditions. It is not therefore possible to give a single definition that will apply in all situations for all times. Not all teachers and pupils will have the same objectives. Secondly, the role that formal education plays in society, its effects on values and material development, is not very clear. However, we all agree that formal education exerts an influence on us, both as individuals and as a nation.

National Development:

The nation gets benefit out of formal education. It strengthens the economy because it is an investment in work force. Formal education affects the economy in many ways. It increases the flow of skills. It also assists in acquisition of new techniques. It destroys traditional attitudes that impede progress, and it links knowledge

with production. Industrialization and development in science and technology justify the ever-increasing necessity of formal education. Other forms of education cannot provide scientific and technological knowledge.

Socio-Economic Development:

We have seen the role formal education has played in developing the socio-economic status of the individuals and their families, Parents are taking more interest in their children's education. The reasons are many. Formal education issues some certificates and diplomas that become closely related with employment, socio-economic status, social mobility and so on. It has become the "popular education" amongst its kith and kin like incidental, informal, non-formal education, etc. In the beginning, the parents send their children to school perhaps because their children learn to speak nicely, develop good manners, and gain some kind of knowledge. Later, they develop some sort of enthusiasm for formal education. They start thinking that their children will get a good job. Their children will earn a good income. Their children will help improve social status of the family. As a result, they will move up in the social hierarchy. And they can enjoy modern life.

Individual Development:

From social and national viewpoint, formal education is important. It helps our families, gives us better life, improves the society, and enables the nation to go forward. Not only that, but it also becomes very essential in the changing, scientific and technological age. But the quantity alone is not enough. What also matters is the kind and type of education. It must prepare all the individuals for life as well as for change. The question now is, "Does it prepare all for life and for change?" It is here that it becomes pertinent to examine the role of formal education in individual development. As pointed out already, formal education has benefited the nation. It may keep on benefiting the nation. But how long? When the individuals that form the citizens of the nation are not equally developed, how long will the nation continue developing? This is again a very pertinent question. Let us look into how formal education plays its role in individual development.

Infancy:

The present formal education has no well-defined role to play during prenatal stage of one's development. It takes care of the development during some part of infancy. It seemed to neglect the formative years of one's life, 0-4 years, for quite long. The brain cells develop to the extent of 80% during 0-2 years. Piaget calls this period the sensory-motor period. He even divides this period into 6 stages like stage of reflexes, stage of primary circular reactions, stage of secondary circular reactions, stage of coordination of secondary reactions, stage of tertiary circular reactions, and stage of mental combination. During this period, the child develops the motoric intelligence. The concept formation of the child also starts during this period. After 2 years, the child develops cognitive intelligence. Then, language development starts. Likewise, other developments in affective and psychomotor domains also take place. During 0-4 years, all developments together start forming a solid foundation for further development. During this period, most of the children are entirely in the parental custody. They learn everything in the family in incidental and informal ways. What does formal education do



in this context? Crèches and pre-nursery education are the recent addition. But whether the type of formal education

children receive from them is sufficient to make the foundation more solid? This is another pertinent question.

Childhood and Adolescence:

Formal education takes care of the development during the entire childhood and adolescence periods. When gang leaders command most of the children's activities, what sort of curriculum do we frame to encourage group activities or team works? When the adolescents become the little philosophers, do we have a curriculum to encourage their thinking in the right way? When they cannot cope with sudden physical, mental and emotional changes, they develop stresses. When we are aware that this is the period of stress and storm, do we have a teaching technique to teach them with understanding and sympathy? Does formal education have a method to calm down the frequent emotional eruptions of the adolescents? We have to find answers to these questions.

Adulthood:

Some part of the early adulthood also falls within the purview of formal education. Some avail formal education in the university during their early adulthood. But it has nothing to do with the later part of adulthood. The exit from the formal system does not call for a stop in the individual development. All adults continue to develop. Formal education has nothing to do at this stage. After the exit from the formal system, the adults switch on to other forms of education for further development. We all have learnt that formal education is the preparation for adult life. But some thinkers opine that the real education starts after we finish our formal education. In fact, we all step out of formal system to face the hard realities of life. We have to learn practically how to stand on our own legs. We start playing different roles in life. We become a spouse. We become a parent. We become grandparents too. Though we say that formal education equips us to take up adult roles, nowhere in the formal curriculum do we find a relevant chapter for all in this regard. The question now is whether we are well equipped to face the hard realities of life. Not quite so. The present formal system does not prepare us for this. It trains our head. But it does not train our heart. It does not emphasize the development of our hands and legs. Whereas education should be an all-round development, the formal system is lobe-sided. Let us examine whether formal system takes care of the three domains.

The 3 Domains: Cognitive, Affective, and Psychomotor domains:

We can analyze the role of formal education in human development in relation with the three domains as propounded by Bloom. The domains are cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. We all know cognitive domain is concerned with our mind, intellect, imagination, etc. Affective domain is concerned with our emotion, feeling, sentiment, etc. And psychomotor domain is concerned with our nerves and muscles. Out of these three main domains, the formal education seems to select cognitive domain to lay greater emphasis on it. All curricular activities in the formal system emphasize the development in cognitive domain. Almost all the subjects taught, the teaching methods, teaching aids, teaching techniques, and evaluation system in formal system over-emphatically correlate with cognitive development. No doubt, some co-curricular activities are

included in the formal system. They are supposed to develop the children in other domains. But they are not well organized, they are not made compulsory. Only a handful of children get the benefit. Moreover, they look more like entertainment or amusement programs. They are less educative. There is also a general tendency to discourage participations in co-curricular activities. Parents do not want their children to involve in co-curricular activities. They believe such involvement greatly affects their children's getting good marks in final examinations.

The bitter truth is just the opposite, Research results have shown that those who take interest and participate in well-organized co-curricular activities are most likely to excel in their academic achievement. They are the ones who become more successful in life. They have benefited from the curricular as well as co-curricular activities. They have experienced in wider fields. They have become all-rounder. They have developed in cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Another bitter truth is those children who develop only in cognitive domain cannot go farther in life. They lack endurance. They cannot stand longer while facing the hard realities of life.

Their development is lobe-sided. Though they secure good marks in cognitive area, they miserably fail in affective and psychomotor areas. To achieve anything great in life, EQ (emotional quotient) is more important than IQ (intelligence quotient). If we do not have control over our emotion, our high IQ will not take us quite far in the matters of human relation. Only those persons with high EQ can get along well with people. The formal curriculum has so far not included any learning materials on emotional control. Whatever we learn in this aspect, we learn them in informal ways.

The power of our nerves and muscles is equally important in facing the hard realities of life. Without healthy nerves and muscles, we are always at disadvantages. Though physical education can take care of this domain, it does not cater to the needs of all the students. Besides, what does formal education do seriously about moral and spiritual aspects? Do we want a beautiful car without brakes? Nobody wants it without moral and spiritual development; the formal education is just like the beautiful car without brakes. We should have some moral and spiritual bindings. The point to remember here is that we have to do a sort of balancing in our Development in all aspects.

Human Relationships:

Research results show that among the technical experts, there are cases in which those with low examination grades get more salaries than the gold medalists do, just because the former are expert in human relationships. Every organization comprises people as members or employees. There should be constant interactions amongst the members. Otherwise, the organization will not thrive. Every member has a role to play. He has to communicate effectively with everyone. An organization is a dynamic structure. The roles keep on changing. Those who can deal with people will play roles that are more important and more responsible. Those who play roles that are more important get more salaries. To be able to deal with people, we have to develop effective communication skills. We sometimes define education as the product of interpersonal relationships.

In formal system, the only organized platform for interpersonal relationships is the classroom. Here students and teachers interact in almost like a one-way traffic. Teachers keep on speaking and students keep on listening. There is no formal platform for student-student interactions. Within the formal system, students interact amongst themselves in informal ways. For that matter, within the formal system, students learn many things in informal ways. They develop in many areas in informal ways. In today's world, people are more important. More emphasis is given on human resources. More people mean more works. More people mean more money. More people mean more successes. Without effective communication and human relation skills, it is not possible to utilize human resources. Does formal education teach us about this importance? Does it teach us these skills? There is no known formal curriculum for so important a subject like this one. We learn them in the incidental, informal or non-formal ways.

Development of Character and Personality Characteristics

Let us look at some other developments. These developments seem quite neglected in the formal system of education. But they are so important in one's life that we cannot afford to ignore them. According to Sigmund Freud, everyone wants to be important. According to William James, everyone wants to be great. In fact, everybody wants success in life. To successfully achieve anything in life, we have to equip ourselves with certain qualities. These qualities are the part and parcel of our development. They are related to our character and personality. But there is hardly any formal method or curriculum to develop these qualities in the students in a really practical way. Let us look at them one by one.

1. **Desire:** Desire determines progress. If we have desire, we will progress. All the great personalities the world has seen had a strong desire to do great things in their lives.

How 'desire' is so important a secret to success? Here is a story that will answer this question. Once, a young man went to Socrates. He asked Socrates to teach him the most important secret to success. Socrates agreed. He told the young man to go with him into a river. The young man agreed. Both of them went into the deeper area of the river. The river water covered them up to the neck. All of a sudden, Socrates caught hold of the young man's neck. He immersed the young man's head into water with all his might. The young man struggled hard to escape from Socrates' firm hold but failed. He got suffocated long enough to turn blue. Socrates then pulled his head out of water. The young man gasped. He took in a deep breath. At that very moment Socrates asked him, "What did you want the most when you were under water?" To that the young man replied, "Air." Socrates looked into the eyes of the young man and said, "That's the secret to success. When you want success as intensely as you wanted air under water, then you will have it."

2. **Determination:** We have to develop a firm determination. Only then, it will enable us to make great achievements. His music teacher told Beethoven that he had no talent for music. But he gave the world some of the best pieces of music. Walt Disney was told that he had no talent as a cartoonist. Wright Brothers were questioned by the New York Times on December 10, 1903 on their wisdom in inventing a flying machine, heavier than air. Just a week after that, the two brothers took their historical flight at Kitty



Hawk. Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norguay were determined to scale the Mount Everest. Their determination led them to the top of the mighty Everest in 1953. Thomas Alva Edison carried out around 15,000 experiments before he invented his electric bulb. He was determined up to end. But he had only three months of formal schooling. His mother taught him at home. Determination leads everyone up to the end.

3. **Persistence:** Even if we lack in ability and skills, our persistence will enable us to achieve great things in life. We persist in doing something. We hang on to it long enough to develop our ability and skills. Without persistence, anyone will quit in the middle of everything. All the great personalities of the world were persistent.

If we were to choose just one part of our personality to develop that would virtually guarantee our success, we should place persistence at the top of our list. Persistence is a mental strength, It is a unique strength required to overcome repeated failures and rejections. It is the strength needed to face and win all kinds of obstacles.

4. **Patience:**Patience is the ability to wait for an outcome. We accomplish our greatest achievements over time. If we do not have patience, we cannot just persist. If we have patience, we can wait, but most of us lack this ability. We want instant results, We want instant gratifications. To get instant results or instant gratifications, we willingly sacrifice good reasoning, good judgment, and even integrity. Nothing is instant. Everything takes time. It is a natural law. An egg takes 21 days to hatch. A human embryo takes about 9 months to develop inside the womb before it shows up into the outside world. But we have not been taught to be patient.

5. **Enthusiasm:** Nothing great is ever achieved without enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is a feeling that has to come from inside. We have to be excited about something and express confidence in our ability to handle it. That is all enthusiasm takes. When Mahatma Gandhi went for the Dandi March, he showed the people his real enthusiasm. An aged Gandhi walked so fast that even the energetic youngsters found it difficult to keep pace with him. His goal was to snatch India's freedom from the British. His determination was to achieve it at any cost. So the real enthusiasm developed in him from within. Had somebody instructed him to fight for India's freedom, he would not have developed that much enthusiasm,

6. **Will power:** Will power is important to move a person forward. It moves the person toward achieving great things. Everyone has a will to win but very few have the will to prepare to win. Everybody needs will power to do something. Destiny is not a matter of chance, it is a matter of choice; it is not a thing to be waited for, it is a thing to be achieved. It took thirty-six years out of Noah Webster's life to compile Webster's Dictionary. Milton used to get up every morning at 4 am to write his Paradise Lost. We have to develop strong will power to work harder. We have to develop strong will power to succeed.

7. **Discipline:** We have a choice in life: we can either pay the price of discipline or regret. Without discipline, nothing great can be achieved. Discipline should not be an antithesis to freedom, Disciplining does not mean scolding, beating and punishing every time someone makes a mistake. It means giving

direction. It means making someone move toward a destination. It means keeping someone on a proper track.

Sometimes, disciplining takes a harsh form. Giraffe mother gives birth to her young one standing straight. The baby giraffe has to experience a hard fall on ground. Not only that, the mother gives the newly born baby a hard kick from behind. The baby giraffe stands up. But as its muscles are very weak, it can't stand long enough. So it falls. The mother gives another kick; maybe a little bit harder this time. The baby gets up but falls once again. The mother giraffe keeps on kicking the baby until it gets up, stands, and walks. All this takes only a few minutes after the birth. If the mother giraffe does not do this, the newborn will become the victim of predators. Just to ensure the survival of not only the baby giraffe but also of the whole species, such harsh disciplining becomes necessary.

8. **Honesty:** Honesty is the best policy. It lightens our burden. An honest person is fearless. He goes very far without much opposition. Someone puts it very nicely like this, "Make yourself an honest man and then you may be sure there's one rascal less in the world."
9. **Integrity:** Honesty alone is not enough. Suppose someone is very honest. He readily admits that he steals to make a living. He is honest. But he has no integrity. Here is a story. Three executives are fighting over who will pay the bill for lunch. One says, "I will pay. I can get a tax deduction." The other person says, "I will have it, I will get reimbursement from my company." The third one says, "Let me pay, because I am filing for bankruptcy next week" All the three executives are quite honest in their heart. They are telling the truth. But all of them lack integrity.
10. **Punctuality:** All hard working people are punctual. All great people are punctual. They know the value of time. Punctuality makes a person reliable. It needs a strong character to be punctual. Suppose we are all students, and we are not punctual. Most of the time, we enter the classroom late by 10 or 15 minutes. Imagine the loss we have incurred. We acquired this habit long back during our childhood. This habit has become our way of life. We went to catch a bus we missed it. We went to catch a train we missed it. We had to report for our flight one hour in advance we did not reach the airport. We missed the flight. We went for an interview for a job. When we reached there, our turn was over.
11. **Courage:** Courageous people die only once. But uncourageous people die many times in a single life. Courageous people succeed. Uncourageous people fail, Success involves courage to take risks. A partially deaf four-year old Tommy came back from school one day. His mother found a note in his pocket. The note said, "Your Tommy is too stupid to learn, get him out of the school." His mother answered the note, "My Tommy is not too stupid to learn, I will teach him myself." And that partially deaf little Tommy grew up to be Thomas Alva Edison, one of the greatest inventors. He had only three months of formal schooling. But his mother gathered all the courage to educate her son. How many educated mothers have such courage?
12. **Hard work:** Hard work has no substitute. It needs no special definition. Everybody knows it. All great people knew it. The difference is all great people were hard working. And most of us are not. However,

here is a very pertinent question. Are all hard working people successful? The answer is "No." All great people are hardworking but not all hard-working people are great. The great people plan their works, and then work their plans. This is the right way to success. Without proper planning, hard work alone does not pay at all.

Conclusion:

It cannot be denied that formal education certainly plays its role in human development. However, it can also be pointed out that there are many more things in the life of a human being, which are not given importance in the formal system of education. In the area of human development, the role that formal education plays is far less than the roles of incidental and informal education. The foundation for future development is laid in the family and not in school. The children start learning everything essential in their life in the informal ways. When they step out of formal system, they will start learning new things; acquire new knowledge and skills once again in informal ways. Even during their stay inside the formal system, they have only a limited period in it. Out of 24 hours, if they spend 6 hours in the formal institutions, they spend the remaining 18 hours in the family or neighborhood. Within formal system even, they learn and develop many things in informal ways. It will not be an overstatement that formal education is practically concerned with imparting some specific knowledge and technical skills. It cannot go up higher than the level of training. At present, the role of family is even more important than that of formal institution as far as human development is concerned. If we put together the influences of incidental, informal and non-formal education on human development, their roles far exceed that of formal education. Even in the matter of assessing the development that has taken place within the formal system, the present examination system utterly fails to measure the educational outcome. An unknown person sets the questions. Another unknown person examines the answer scripts. The teachers directly teaching the students have no say in assessing their students.

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