

# CONTEMPORARY EDUCATION - A REVIEW

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The waxing and waning saga of happiness is contemporary history.

Human life on the planet 'Earth' was in close harmony and mostly in tune with Nature till about 17th Century A.D., during which period commenced the quest for unravelling the mysteries of Nature with reference to 'MATTER'. The human mind got profoundly attracted towards matter and the intellect decisively probing it. This is the period of commencement of modern scientific discoveries. The subsequent centuries gained momentum as man started contributing more and more to the sphere of knowledge of Science and Technology, which could progressively make the life of man apparently happy, comfortable, easy and desire-fulfilling. All these efforts were and are mostly in the direction of material sciences, physical sciences and in the field of medicine. Yes, man has become competitive, challenging, aggressive, ambitious, aspiring, elated at his successes and so on and could successfully probe the atom, enter the space, land

on moon, discover DNA, invent computers and gadgets of artificial intelligence, produce electricity and generate power from different sources for mass consumption, successfully prolong the life-span of man and ameliorate physical suffering. The efforts are continuing further and further with renewed vigour and vitality, with enhanced zeal and enthusiasm.

The entire search has been and is in one direction - the matter, at the total negligence of mind and spirit.

The intelligent and accomplishing minds to whom all of us owe our deep sense of appreciation and gratitude for making our life on Earth comfortable and happy failed to stress on the need for the integral development of human individual except a few philosophers, saints and thinkers. Different educational philosophies, methods of teaching have come into being - all directed, in essence for the materialistic well-being of man on Earth.

The ancient wisdom is looked down-upon by our contemporary thinkers and educationists in general. "Education - which is a continuous process of learning by which the full potential of individual is realised and all his faculties are developed so as to function in a balanced

and harmonious fashion" is forgotten or totally neglected. The situation got further worsened with 'Compartmentalisation of knowledge'. The contemporary educationists, though aware of the need for the integral well-being of the individual have somehow failed to stress this aspect. More emphasis is on the body, providing it with all comforts, in its physical well-being and supplying food for the intellect, which is an aspect of mind and not mind in toto and nothing about spirit (How can one separate the body, mind and the spirit). Even, World Health Organisation recognised this and in its definition of health which says as under:

"Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely an absence of disease or infirmity".

The concept of health as defined by WHO is broad and positive in its implications; it sets out the standard, the standard of positive health. Although, another dimension of health the 'spiritual health' was recommended by certain proponents of holistic health into the definition, it is yet to be included, however WHO is seized of this matter So, without any doubt, this unidirectional emphasis has resulted in the modern civilisation of man with pomp, glory and grandeur. It, however, brought with

it perceptible degeneration in the human psyche as evidenced by jealousies, hatred, mutual suspicions, greed, avarice, selfishness, conflicts and many more. In addition it has disturbed the physical environment and ecosystems due to deforestation, automobile and industrial smokes and chemicals being let off into the atmosphere etc. which are a proven source of health hazard. (Bhopal gas tragedy, Chernobyl atomic power plant leakage).

Man, instead of being contented, composed and balanced has become a victim of his own creation, resulting in lack of peace and real happiness, is always restless and fear gripped. Pollution of the physical environment also is causing anxiety. The recently concluded world conference on the environment with the -slogan 'Save the planet Earth' bears testimony to this. Men, in general started seeking solace in temporary transient means to escape from their state of imbalance and disharmony by resorting to drugs, alcohol and the like to further worsen their existing internal problem.

This materialistic approach towards education has generated more and more competitiveness, aggressiveness and stress in the young minds (children and students). Those who succeeded - succeeded. Those,

who failed to stand in this rat-race succumbed, got frustrated, dejected and became despondent. The consequent inferiority complex and the incessant struggle of the ego-consciousness to overcome this has in most cases developed a 'split personality' (schizophrenia) of varying degrees and certain other problems of the mind ranging from anxiety neurosis to frank psychopathies. If the statistics are to speak, the amount of psychiatric morbidity in the developed countries like USA, UK and an overwhelming list of psycho-somatic disorders bears testimony to this fact.

Whom to blame for all this? In the words of H.H. Mahatma Sri Ramchandraj Maharaj of Shahjahanpur (UP) "it is due to the fundamental failure of education". So, any education, which does not develop in an individual a positive health, which is a state of complete physical, mental, social and a spiritual well being needs to be analysed in depth, corrected with suitable and appropriate modifications/amendments, so as to contribute to the integral well-being of an individual, who then would be in harmony within, without, with the environment and world at large, exhibiting a dynamic balance and doing good for the mankind. Such type of education is bound to bring back the balance, keep the atmosphere clean and pure and help the present and future generations live in close harmony with Nature and

derive real happiness.

The intellectuals, academicians and educationists have to review our ancient Indian and vedic literature and bring into the present curriculum all the relevant topics to be taught to students which help the child in moulding his behaviour, thinking and aspirations. The aspect of morality and ethics has to be cultivated in the children from very young age so that it can have deep and lasting roots in their psyche.