TOWARDS AN EDUCATED INDIA:

PICTURE FOR REPRESENTATIONAL PURPOSE ONLY

Higher Education Forum

Young India - Boon or Bane?

They say, "Change is the only constant." While some changes are desirable, there are some others that are surely not. For instance, the changes in climate and environment have led to catastrophic outcomes in recent past. We are undergoing a major change that is threatening to wipe out not only our rich heritage but more importantly raising questions on tomorrow's leaders who will drive India towards becoming a superpower. These are the youth of today who are poised to lead this country in days to come.

There have been several instances of the youth making it to the headlines for wrong reasons. The recent riots in the UK just go to prove that all is not well. Whether it be the infamous rave parties or incidents of suicides, the trend is pointing to the situation going from bad to worse. India has a sizeable young population that is to lead this great country from the front and play a major role in its development and its endeavour to becoming a great prosperous nation. However, for this to happen, the drivers of tomorrow need to have a great vision, leadership qualities, perseverance, drive, and finally commitment and passion.

Today's youth is actually much more empowered. Technological advancements have ensured that there is lot of information available and the world has shrunk to being a global village. Communication has become faster and perhaps much more effective. Having various sources of information and the information itself is not enough. What is required is the intelligence to choose the right information and also to put it to the right use which is lacking.

Today's youth is energetic, impatient, fast and highly ambitious. They wish to be successful in everything that they do. The issue is that many of them are not willing to put in efforts to be successful. Everybody likes to take a shortcut to success. Moreover success is being interpreted more materialistically. This has given rise to a rat race for achieving all possible material pleasures in least possible time and with fewer efforts. Failure results in frustration and in some cases ,depression leading to extreme steps like suicide.

It is not, however, fair to blame Gen-next alone for this sorry state. Most of them grew up in a protective environment and mostly in nuclear families. Typically, with parents working on most days, the child was left with a maid or a day care centre. The child grew up in an environment of abundance contrary to most of us who grew up in an environment of paucity and hence became demanding. Most of the times, parents would force their unfulfilled ambitions on their child.

The interaction between the child and the parents is relatively limited. Children spend more time watching television and browsing the Internet or playing games. The greatest disadvantage is that the children do not have grandparents available to counsel and guide them as regards the issues pertaining to values, morals, principles and ethics.

The education system is equally responsible for not inculcating the right values. While today's youth is undoubtedly more intelligent as the system focuses only on delivering intellectual content, they seriously lack the emotional stability and strength of mind and character. This has many repercussions not only in their personal and professional lives but also on the development of our nation as a whole.

Several organisations and researches have concluded that a very small percentage of today's graduates are actually 'employable'. What makes them more employable? The education system is making them intelligent. What else is required? Quite a few of these organisations have felt the need for having a person with good attitude and moral character. They want people who are creative, innovative, and self driven, committed and passionate about their work. Unfortunately, none of these attributes are either taught or developed in prevailing system of education. One research, in fact, stated that 85 per cent of the times, a person is employed because of his attitude and only 15 per cent of the times because of his skills, knowledge, or intelligence.

> **"85 PER CENT OF THE TIME A PERSON IS HIRED FOR HIS ATTITUDE AND 15 PER CENT OF THE TIME FOR HIS SKILLS**

Extreme pressure and expectations from peers, family, etc is leading to early burnouts amongst the youth. The great Indian wisdom is fast eroding. Youth are falling prey to unwanted and undesirable temptations, chronic ailments, etc. Divorce rates have increased multifold. Educational institutions, under the guise of spreading literacy, are churning out students by thousands. An important and worrying factor in this context is also the drop out rate in higher education. The youth is resorting to violence and other acts to vent out their anger and frustration.

In view of the above, there is a serious need for an all comprehensive education system that focuses on the three important aspects of an individual's development- intellectual, emotional, and spiritual. This alone would enable them to fly to much greater heights and take our country to an enviable position of economic, intellectual and spiritual prosperity! The time has come to do this. It is now or never!

Authored by Prof Parag Amin, Associate Professor, SIES College of Management Studies, Mumbai and coordinator of Youth Wing of Higher Education Forum (HEF)

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