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THE PRESENT EDUCATION SYSTEM OF INDIA

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"**One child, One teacher, One book and One pen can change the world. Education is the only solution. Education first**".- Malala Yousafzai.

Education is an important activity in society, it gives an opportunity to man to understand the world around him and his place in it In ancient times man was completely at the mercy of nature which was a complete mystery to him.

The dark forces of nature were beyond the comprehension of man and to console himself he had to depend upon the existence of supernatural powers and this led to the growth of religion and superstition.The invention of tools, domestication of animals and growth of agriculture led to organization of society and along with this, developed social sciences.

Thus, in education we combine the study of natural laws with the laws governing the development of society- Knowledge and understanding come to us through the study of natural sciences (chemistry, physics, biology, etc.) and the social sciences (history, political science, etc.).The acquisition, interlinking and the transmission of this knowledge and understanding is the primary function of education.

Ideally speaking, it is through education that members of society, particularly the youth, come to understand the working of society. Education should enable the youth to improve the working of the society.

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Seen in this light, the purpose of education is not just to help students acquire degree and obtain jobs. If the society is not organized properly, jobs become difficult to acquire, degrees lose their meaning and education becomes a national waste as it is happening in many countries in the world today.Education, properly speaking, should develop a spirit of inquiry and rational thinking in the youth so as to enable them to understand the society and change it wherever it is found lacking.

EDUCATION IN INDIA

In ancient times, India had the Gurukula system of education in which anyone who wished to study went to a teacher's (Guru) house and requested to be taught. If accepted as a student by the guru, he would then stay at the guru's place and help in all activities at home. This not only created a strong tie between the teacher and the student, but also taught the student everything about running a house. The guru taught everything the child wanted to learn, from Sanskrit to the holy scriptures and from Mathematics to Metaphysics. The student stayed as long as she wished or until the guru felt that he had taught everything he could teach. All learning was closely linked to nature and to life, and not confined to memorizing some information.

The modern school system was brought to India, including the English language, originally by Lord Thomas Babington Macaulay in the 1830s. The curriculum was confined to “modern” subjects such as science and mathematics, and subjects like metaphysics and philosophy were considered unnecessary. Teaching was confined to classrooms and the link with nature was broken, as also the close relationship between the teacher and the student.Ever since India attained Independence in 1947, we have been following, for inexplicable reasons, Lord Macaulay’s system of education. This system has since lost its relevance to the changed socio-economic scenario in the country.As is well known, Lord Macaulay was an ardent champion of the British Raj. Therefore, it was natural for him to devise an educational system for India which would not foster real awareness and education.

Education in India is provided by the public sector as well as the private sector, with control and funding coming from three levels:central, state, and local. Under various articles of

the Indian Constitution, free and compulsory education is provided as a fundamental right to children between the ages of 6 and 14.

The central and most state boards uniformly follow the "10+2+3" pattern of education. In this pattern, study of 10 years is done in schools and 2 years in Junior colleges, and then 3 years of graduation for a bachelor's degree.The first 10 years is further subdivided into 4 years of primary education, 6 years of High School followed by 2 years of Junior colleges. This pattern originated from the recommendation of the Education Commission of 1964–66.
In India's education system, a significant number of seats are reserved under affirmative action policies for the historically disadvantaged Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes. In universities, colleges, and similar institutions affiliated to the federal government, there is a maximum 50% of reservations applicable to these disadvantaged groups

Article 45, of the Constitution of India originally stated:
The State shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years.

This article was a directive principle of state policy within India, effectively meaning that it was within a set of rules that were meant to be followed in spirit and the government could not be held to court if the actual letter was not followed. However, the enforcement of this directive principle became a matter of debate since this principle held obvious emotive and practical value, and was legally the only directive principle within the Indian constitution to have a time limit.

Following initiatives by the Supreme Court of India during the 1990s the 93rd amendment bill suggested three separate amendments to the Indian constitution:
The constitution of India was amended to include a new article, 21A, which read:
The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in a such manner as the State may, by law, determine.

Article 45 was proposed to be substituted by the article which read:
Provision for early childhood care and education to children below the age of six years: The State shall endeavour to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of sixteen years.

Another article, 51A, was to additionally have the clause:
...a parent or guardian [shall] provide opportunities for education to his child or, as the case may be, [a] ward between the age of six to fourteen years.

The bill was passed unanimously in the *Lok Sabha*, the lower house of the Indian parliament, on 28 November 2001.It was later passed by the upper house—the *Rajya Sabha*—on 14 May 2002. After being signed by the President of India the Indian constitution was amended formally for the eighty sixth time and the bill came into effect.Since then those between the age of 6–14 have a *fundamental right* to education.

Article 46 of the Constitution of India holds that:
The State shall promote, with special care, the education and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and in particular of the Scheduled Castes andScheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of social exploitation'.

Other provisions for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes can be found in Articles 330, 332, 335, 338–342.Both the 5th and the 6th Schedules of the Constitution also make special provisions for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Efforts like the Sarva Shisksha Abhiyan aim at making education and good quality of life for today's children possible by providing community owned school systems. Another indicator of a brighter tomorrow is the Right of Children to free and compulsory education.

Even after the above efforts of the government India is still a developing country .So what is stopping it from being a developed country? I see India's education system as a stumbling block towards its objectives of achieving inclusive growth.

Our education system is still a colonial education system geared towards generating babus and pen-pushers under the newly acquired skin of modernity. We may have the most number of engineering graduates in the world, but that certainly has not translated into much technological innovation here. Rather, we are busy running the call centres of the rest of the world – that is where our engineering skills end.

The goal of our new education system should be to create entrepreneurs, innovators, artists, scientists, thinkers and writers who can establish the foundation of knowledge based economy rather than the low-quality service provider nation that we are turning into.

Creating a few more schools or allowing hundreds of colleges and private universities to mushroom is not going to solve the crisis of education in India. And a crisis it is – we are in a country where people are spending their parent's life savings and borrowed money on education – and even then not getting standard education, and struggling to find employment of their choice. In this country, millions of students are victim of an unrealistic, pointless, mindless rat race. The mind numbing competition and rote learning do not only crush the creativity and originality of millions of Indian students every year, it also drives brilliant students to commit suicide.

Indian education is full of outdated theory with no innovation or any practical work. The eagerly awaited new textbooks have nothing more than colourful cover pages. Moreover no importance is given to co-curricular activities. Even the five year old kid is carrying a bag full of books . Instead of teaching them the practical knowledge they are forcing them boring subjects.

Our education system is geared towards teaching and testing knowledge at every level as opposed to teaching skills. "Give a man a fish and you feed him one day, teach him how to catch fishes and you feed him for a lifetime." I believe that if you teach a man a skill, you enable him for a lifetime. Knowledge is largely forgotten after the semester exam is over. Still, year after year Indian students focus on cramming information. The best crammers are rewarded by the system. This is one of the fundamental flaws of our education system.

Our education system rarely rewards what deserves highest academic accolades. Deviance is discouraged. Risk taking is mocked. Our testing and marking systems need to be built to recognize original contributions, in form of creativity, problem solving, valuable original research and innovation. If we could do this successfully Indian education system would have changed overnight.

Memorising is no learning; the biggest flaw in our education system is perhaps that it incentivizes memorizing above originality.

We need leaders, entrepreneurs in teaching positions, not salaried people trying to hold on to their mantle.

The state of Kerala, a small state in the South Western coast of India, has been different from the rest of the country in many ways for the last few decades. It has, for instance, the highest literacy rate among all states, and was declared the first fully literate state about a decade back. Life expectancy, both male and female, is very high, close to that of the developed world. Other parameters such as fertility rate, infant and child mortality are among the best in the country, if not the best. The total fertility rate has been below the replacement rate of 2.1 for the last two decades. Probably as a side-effect of economic and social development, suicide rates and alcoholism are also very high. Government policies also have been very different from the rest of the country, leading to the development model followed in Kerala, with high expenditure in education and welfare, coming to be known as the “Kerala Model“ among economists.

Kerala has also always shown interest in trying out ways of improving its school education system. Every time the NCERT came up with new ideas, it was Kerala that tried it out first. The state experimented with the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) with gusto, though there was opposition to it from various quarters, and even took it beyond primary classes. The state was the first in the country to move from the traditional behaviorist way of teaching to a social constructivist paradigm. It was mentioned in the National Curriculum Framework of NCERT in the year 2000, and Kerala started trying it out the next year. The transaction in the classroom and the evaluation methodology were changed. Instead of direct questions that could

be answered only through memorizing the lessons, indirect questions and open ended questions were included so that the student needed to think before answering, and the answers could be subjective to some extent. This meant that the students had to digest what they studied and had to be able to use their knowledge in a specific situation to answer the questions. At the same time, the new method took away a lot of pressure and the children began to find examinations interesting and enjoyable instead of being stressful. A Comprehensive and Continuous Evaluation (CCE) system was introduced along with this, which took into consideration the overall personality of the student and reduced the dependence on a single final examination for deciding promotion to the next class. At present, the CBSE also has implemented CCE, but in a more flexible manner.

Kerala was also the first state in the country to introduce Information Technology as a subject of study at the High School level. It was started in class 8 with the textbook introducing Microsoft Windows and Microsoft Office. But within one year the government was forced to include Free Software also in the curriculum by protests from Free Software enthusiasts and a favorable stance taken by a school teachers association that had the majority of government teachers as its members. Eventually, from the year 2007, only GNU/Linux was taught in the schools, and all computers in schools had only GNU/Linux installed. At that time, perhaps even today, this was the largest installation of GNU/Linux in schools, and made headlines even in other countries. Every year, from 2007 onwards, about 500,000 children pass out of the schools learning the concepts behind Free Software and the GNU/Linux operating system and applications. The state is now moving towards IT Enabled Education. Eventually, IT will not be taught as a separate subject. Instead, all subjects will be taught with the help of IT so that the children will, on the one hand, learn IT skills and, on the other, make use of educational applications (such as those mentioned below) and resources in the Internet (such as textual material from sites like Wikipedia, images, animations and videos) to study their subjects and to do exercises. Teachers and students have already started using applications such as Dr. Geo, GeoGebra, and KtechLab for studying geometry and electronics. Applications like Sunclock, Kalziumand Ghemical are also popular among teachers and students.

The initiative taken by Kerala is now influencing other states and even the policies of the Government of India. States like Karnataka and Gujarat are now planning to introduce Free Software in their schools, and some other states like Maharashtra are examining the option. The new education policy of the Government of India speaks about constructivism, IT enabled education, Free Software and sharing educational resources. Once a few of the larger states successfully migrate to Free Software, it is hoped that the entire country would follow suit in a relatively short time. When that happens, India could have the largest user base of GNU/Linux and Free Software in general.

We must do away with the drawbacks of the examination system. We should give it entirely a new orientation. Teachers and impartial observers submit their opinion about students concerned. Not only their academic application but also their external activities are weighed upon before they are awarded success. Let us also make an experiment with this system so as to evolve a creative educational standard among our rising generation.