

National Character Building : Need of the Hour

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Abstract

Educationists have always considered shaping of national character as one of the important objectives of education. Past few days people of Punjab have suffered the cases of sacrilege and emotional turmoil .Shaping of national character is of utmost importance in the present scenario of inter twined cultures. The ancient Indian and Greek systems of education emphasised ethical character as the ultimate goal of education. In ancient India, Gurus taught their pupils to show reverence for all that is noble and to strive for truth and purity of thought and deeds. It is the need of the hour to conduct trysts for shaping national character. If character is taken in a wider sense as to include all the best and noble qualities that a man can ever imagine to cultivate, it is surely the best and highest aim which education can set its heart upon. Only a man of good national character can rise above narrow mindedness, individual benefit, anger, fear and miserliness .Moral qualities like tolerance, truthfulness, honesty, sincerity, justice, fellow feeling, freedom, temperance, self control and forgiveness promote the social efficiency of the individual. Formation of national character should be the focus of all education. Educationists have an important role to play in this direction.

KEYWORDS: Education, National character, Shaping national character

INTRODUCTION

The present era is aiming to unite the whole world, here comes the need of strong national character building which has the capacity to imbibe the values from all directions of the globe with respect. Educational trysts can thus play an important role in shaping the national character. **According to Rabindranath Tagore**, “Education means enabling the mind to find out that ultimate truth which emancipate us from the bondage of the dust and gives us the wealth ,not of things but of inner light, not of power but of love, making the truth its own and giving expression to it.”

In other words, to Tagore education is that which makes one’s life in harmony with all existence.

In the words of **Mahatma Gandhi**, “By education I mean an all round drawing out of the best in child and man – body,mind and spirit.

All round development means physical, mental, intellectual, aesthetic, social, moral and spiritual development. True education is that which draws out and stimulates the spiritual, intellectual and physical faculties of children. Education should develop all the capacities of the child so that he becomes a complete human being. Complete human being means full development of body, mind, heart and soul of the child. Thus education should develop the child’s individuality fully and harmoniously so that he is able to realize the ultimate aim of life which is truth or God.

SHAPING NATIONAL CHARACTER

Educationists have always considered shaping of national character as one of the important objectives of education. Shaping of national character is of utmost importance in the present scenario of inter twined cultures. The ancient Indian and Greek systems of education emphasised ethical character as the ultimate goal of education. In ancient India, Gurus taught their pupils to show reverence for all that is noble and to strive for truth and purity of thought and deeds. If character is taken in a wider sense as to include all the best and noble qualities that a man can ever imagine to cultivate, it is surely the best and highest aim which education can set its heart upon. Only a man of good national character can rise above narrow mindedness, individual benefit, anger, fear and miserliness. Moral qualities like tolerance, truthfulness, honesty, sincerity, justice, fellow feeling, freedom, temperance, self control and forgiveness promote the social efficiency of the individual. Thus morality is a very comprehensive term which includes aim of education like the intellectual, the aesthetic and the social. Formation of national character should be the focus of all education. The teacher has an important role to play in this direction.

According to **John Dewey**: Establishing of character is a comprehensive aim of school instruction and discipline.

Character building is the aim in education. I would try to develop courage, strength, virtue, the ability to forget oneself in working towards great aims. I should feel that if we succeed in building the character of the individual, society will take care of itself. **(M.K.Gandhi)**

According to **Walter B. Kolesnik**,” Character is acquired component of personality which inhibits impulses of an immoral or unsocial nature and disposes an individual to act in accordance with relative principles.”

In the words of **Shri Radhakrishnan**, the troubles of the whole world including India are due to the fact that education has become a mere intellectual exercise and not the acquisition of moral and spiritual values. At present when moral and social values are disintegrating, when the religion is losing its hold, when power and knowledge are being misused for vested interests, when nations do not trust one another, when indiscipline, violence are fast spreading, it is essential that education for character or morality should be imparted. In the month of October,2015 Punjab has recently witnessed the sacrilege of the holy book Shri Guru Granth Sahib. Values have degraded so much that instead of following the path shown by the gurus and saints the culprits have started committing sacrilege. The political tension at the present time is mainly due to the fact that knowledge has increased but morality has lagged behind. Morality in the form of truth, righteousness and non violence is the only measure which can heal the wounds of humanity. It is educational trusts for morality or national character which would impel man to utilize energy for the betterment of humanity rather than for its destruction. It is the task of education to preach and practice morality as a faith and ideal as morality is the greatest unifying force in life.

TRUSTS FOR SHAPING THE NATIONAL CHARACTER

These educational trusts can be a stepping stone towards shaping national character. Purposeful meetings can play an important role in shaping the national character.

Development of morality: The aim of education is not only the mental, physical and social development of the individual but also his religious and moral development, that is why modern educationist have stressed the importance of moral education for the country. Morality helps man in his progress, raises him to high level and assists him in making human. Moral virtues like honesty, loyalty, truthfulness, justice, tolerance, fellow feeling, temperance and self control promote the social efficiency of an individual. Success in every sphere be it family, the neighbourhood, society at large depends very much on the possession of moral qualities and obedience of moral laws. The importance of moral values is even more evident in the modern world since the unprecedented improvement in the means of communications and remarkable power of destruction possessed by modern nuclear weapons. In the absence of ethical values there would be little to prevent the world and from being destroyed in catastrophic wars. In Indian culture great importance has been attached to morality. No education is complete without moral education and this morality is the foundation of man's future and therefore the seed of moral education must be sown in these educational trysts.

Development of character: Character is another ethical base of education. Education finds its real meaning and value when its aim is character building. Philosophers of education have considered character development as one of the most important objectives of education. Constructive trysts can lead to national character building by developing courage, strength, virtue, the ability to forget oneself in working towards great aims and considering national benefit before individual benefit. Trysts can help the individual in refining intellectual, ethical, moral and social aspects of personality by digging deep into accumulated best experiences of individuals.

Socialisation: An individual needs to be aware of the traditions and values of society. Trysts provide for exchange of opinions thereby resulting in shaping the national character. Trysts are helpful in understanding and improving society as they provide for purposeful education. Trysts are helpful in making social adjustments as they provide opportunities for socialisation. Socialisation reduces selfish choice and thus help in development of national character.

To maintain peace and harmony : It fosters in the citizens sense of devotion, sense of duty, sense of service, sense of discipline and sense of sacrifice for the cause of national honour. It instils in them a sense of oneness, unity and dynamism which develops the nation morally, socially, culturally, economically and politically.

To bring about national unity: The rich and stimulating environment where discussions with examples occur, moral ideals are presented, examples of great national heroes quoted, biographies of great men discussed can form a strong base for national character. It can lead to national unity as eminent scholars from all the corners of the globe gather. It is a cooperative activity and nourishes the soul with strengthening the national bond. It is helpful for survival of the nation as educational trysts can provide for the shaping of national character thus leading to development of the nation.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The aim of education is not only the mental, physical and social development of the individual but also his religious and moral development, that is why modern educationist have stressed the importance of moral education for the country. Morality

helps man in his progress, raises him to high level and assists him in making human. Character is another ethical base of education. Education finds its real meaning and value when its aim is character building. Philosophers of education have considered character development as one of the most important objectives of education. The rich and stimulating environment where discussions with examples occur, moral ideals are presented, examples of great national heroes quoted, biographies of great men discussed can form a strong base for national character. Discussions should be a regular part of the school practicum. Shaping strong national character in the classrooms can result in an enriched society with high moral values and national unity and international understanding.

CONCLUSION

Shaping of national character is of utmost importance in the present scenario of inter twined cultures. The ancient Indian and Greek systems of education emphasised ethical character as the ultimate goal of education. Moral virtues like honesty, loyalty, truthfulness, justice, tolerance, fellow feeling, temperance and self control promote the social efficiency of an individual. Success in every sphere be it family, the neighbourhood, society at large depends very much on the possession of moral qualities and obedience of moral laws

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