

The percentage syndrome

My friend Rajiv did not attend office for three days without any information, I thought he might fall sick and so I went to his residence to inquire about his health. When I reached his home, there was an unnatural calm in his residence which I otherwise never observed. I pressed the bell and Rajiv opened the door with a dim smile. What happened to the man who was always cheerful and energetic? “Are you O.K.? Is your family O.K.?” I asked him. He replied that he is O.K. but all not well with the family. When I inquired what is the matter, he replied that his son could not do well in the higher secondary examination and could manage only 50% marks. As everybody in the family had high expectation, now whole family could not recover from the shock and he also see darkness ahead for his only son. I tried to console Rajiv, his wife Neeta and his son. But it was a difficult task.

Coming back home, when I opened the newspaper, I got news items where it was written that one young boy and two young girls committed suicide due to poor performance in the higher secondary examination. I was very much disappointed to know that three young people lost their lives due to a system, which we have encouraged and propagated without any rational. Of late we are propagating a culture or system through which we measure a young man’s potential, lifeline only on a 100-point scale. If a student or young man is 90% plus we branded him as good and if a student is 50% minus we branded him or her as bad. (Let God help those who failed in the examination). We don’t consider other factors at all or we simply forget all those while branding a young man good or bad. Though the student with 50% minus is an honest young man with good moral character who helps his neighbour, respect his teacher and elders, helps parents in household activities, his proficiency in art and craft all becomes irrelevant. We simply branded him as bad student. But his friend, who was unruly, intolerant, misbehaved with seniors, do eve teasing suddenly became very good. We brand him as good student. Because he got 90% plus in the examination.

Is life a measure of 100-point scale? We all know it is not. Life is a much bigger domain. Life is a mission, character, integrity, sincerity, empathy, sense of duty, commitment, love and respect for human values. Life simply can’t be measured on a 100-point scale. It is nice to get 90% plus in the exam, but it does not mean that 50% minus is the end of life, end of family, end of world. I feel sorry for my friend, but he is not the only one suffering from 100-point syndrome or *percentage syndrome*. There are thousands such young man and families who are victim of percentage syndrome. It is the time we as a parent, we as a society start to do rating of young people on the basis of values—honesty, commitment, courtesy, dignity....., not merely on a single 100-point scale.

All human being is gifted with some strengths/talents and of course with some weaknesses. We should allow our children to develop and improve their natural potential and talent, instead of a mad rush for 90% plus marks in the examination. No one in the life will ever be remembered or recognized on the basis of how much percentage or marks he/she got in his 10th or (10+2) examination, but on the basis of his work, contribution to society, perfection in doing something in the area of his interest. So, let us not force our children to run after illusive *percentage syndrome*, rather let us allow them to acquire knowledge for enlightenment and empowerment in their own natural way so that they can become a confident and better human being to carry the torch of civilization.

