

What education is not?

Devajit Bhuyan

I was looking the TV program “Boogie Boogie” where the anchorperson asked a young child what she want to become in life. Her reply was that she wants to become a District Collector. The anchorperson asked her again why she wants to become a DC. Her reply was that she would have bungalow, car and money. Though is a very small incident, it represents the mentality of the larger section of our society. Most of the people in our society now a days think that the goal of education is only to earn a *degree* and then *earn money* for a comfortable luxurious living. So we don't hesitate to teach our children “parha suna kare ji ghura bagit uthe si” this means ‘he who study well is able to ride a horse cart (car now a days)’. If driving a car remains the prime objective and motivation for education, there is bound to be degradation of education as a whole and society will be the sufferer. No doubt earning livelihood is a major objective of education but earning money or driving a car can't be the sole objective of education. After all surrendered militants, thieves and robbers also can earn lot of money and drive a car. So we should be able to tell our children the prime and basic objective of education in clear terms. Once these objectives are fulfilled the earning of money for livelihood will automatically follow.

If earning money and livelihood is not the prime and basic objective of education, what are the objectives of education? *Education is to acquire knowledge, Education is to acquire skills, Education is to learn toleration and respect values, Education is to enlighten and enlarge the horizon of mind, Education is to live in optimum (dynamic equilibrium) condition with nature and society, Education is to look at life without coloured glass, Education is to build a character, Education is to develop a positive attitude, Education is to develop inner potentials, Education is to achieve self actualization*

Knowledge is power and skill is money. So, once a person acquires knowledge and skills he need not run for money or livelihood. It will be automatically at his doorstep. But when one thinks that his prime objective of education is only to earn money, he end up his life running after money and chasing a mirage in the desert. Let us teach our children the true and real mission of education, certainly we will have a better tomorrow free from killings, violence, corruption, hate, war, violence and sufferings but full of love, joy and happiness.

Value Education for New Millenium Youth

Whenever we speak about value in present day context, one thing always come to our mind, that is *money*. This is because we measure all our worldly materials in terms of money. As long as we consider material objects or material values as the primary objectives of life, it is difficult to define value or formulate a concept of value in the true sense. Because whenever there is a clash between a material objective and abstract concept of value, we normally adhere to the material objective rather than to abstract concept of

value. But it is not that money alone is the measure of value. When we look at our life from a broader prospective like mission, goal and objectives then there came the concept of value.

The concept of value is a dynamic one. The concept of value is also not an absolute one. It is a relative concept. What was value during the days of crusade and sati is not value today. What is value in France may not be value in Afghanistan. Though value or value system is not an universal one, there are some universal factors or things, on which the value or value system is based or depends.

In simple words, we can say, value is the average of the sum total of believe, geography(physical and political), ethics, economy, education, technology, need and greed, environment etc. But there are some factors like *truth, honesty, courtesy, virtue, integrity, justice, commitment, love etc* which are universal and eternal.

The concept of value is always within a domain called time. As we know that time is not a static thing or concept but a dynamic thing, so also value is a dynamic concept. Along with time, value also changes only with the exception of the universal constants of values. When time was zero(During big bang) there was no value and during 19th century there was value of 19th century. What was value in 19th century is not a value in 21st century.

We as a society and human being are loyal to value system. This is because unlike lower order animals, we can't live with bread alone. If we don't have a scientific and rational value system, we can't have a harmonious, peaceful and better society to live in. However as the concept of value is an abstract one, we can't have an unit like money (rupees, pound or US\$) through which we can determine the value of any material goods in the market. Being an abstract concept in the whole, sometimes we as a human being or society are irrational in determining value of materialistic things also. We give more values to gold and diamond, which had little use than iron and aluminum. We give more value to original painting of Monalisa than the value of 10 luxury cars. Materials wise there would be very little in the painting of Monalisa (few US\$), but in terms of value it may be several million US\$. This is important, because value always need not be in terms of material cost or utility, society can set it.

A society becomes good or bad, based on the values of individuals and society as a whole. And what gives society its strength is its value system. Any society that has lost its moral bearing is heading for disaster, because all failures in history were moral failures. During recent years technology has changed the value or value system most in comparison to other factors. In the digital world of Information Technology

and computers, the new generation children are better equipped to know things/information or acquire knowledge simply by click of a mouse. But in the absence of any well-defined value system, they think that whatever they saw on the TV or computer screen are of values and what they did not see are of no values. They think car, mobile, sex, beauty queen and money are only thing of values. But this lead to broken homes, unfulfilled life, depression, guilt and an unruly chaos society. In a society where relationships are determined by how much money is in your pocket, it would be futile to speak about values. So it is the duty of everyone in the society to teach our children what money can't buy instead what money can buy. Money

can only buy what money can buy. And in fact, the most precious things in life are those that money just can't buy. Money can buy:

- Amusements but not happiness
- A bed but not sleep
- Books but not wisdom
- A clock but not time
- Companions but not friends
- Finery but not beauty
- Food but not appetite
- A house but not home
- Medicine but not health
- Luxury but not character

In the new millennium we are living in the digital world. The most advantage of the digital world is that there is no intermediate position or position in between. In a digital world, it is either ON or OFF, it is either YES or NO, it is either TRUE or FALSE. It is like the 'Mahabharat' war. You are either in the side of Pandav or Kaurav, no in between. Digital world is in tune with natural world where a TRUTH is always TRUTH and a LIE is always LIE.

In this era of digital world, we have to teach value system to our young generation through the language, which they understand. The language of digit, dotcom, quantum mechanics and relativity. We have to fix benchmark for new millennium children on mathematical models which computer can understand, they can understand. The advantage of mathematics and physics is that five plus five is ten in the whole world, one metre length is one metre in every where of world, one second of time is one second in every place. In this time of globalization, our value system must be defined in a globalized perception. Otherwise young generation will simply not accept it. Because they are accustomed to global scenario, computer, Internet and dotcom. No doubt it is difficult to have a uniform global value system due some of the factors which are not universally applicable, yet it should be uniform and global in spirit.

The point of satisfaction is that, the fundamental constant of value system is above the law of changes. Only the variable factors changes, not the constants. Truth is same as it was 5000 years ago. Similarly virtue, honesty, character, justice etc are all same even today except our changed perception or yardstick. Whether we say speed of light 300000 km per second or 186000 miles per second in physics, the fact is that speed of light is same as it was one billion years ago. The good thing of TV, IT, other means of mass communication and globalization is that slowly we are approaching to an universal value system. This value system will be for all living beings in this world based on universal law of nature like Newton's third law, Planck's Quantum theory and Einstein's $E=mc^2$

While referring to North East India and Assam, we observe that we are living in extreme condition—an underdeveloped economy with low moral, ethical values and high aspiration for a luxurious, comfortable digital life projected by TV, Internet and media. But the reality of nature, reality of life is that there is no free meal in this world. Today’s situation of new generation youth looking for free meal without any work is nothing but the failure or breakdown of value system. In the initial stage though the illusionary hope for so called freedom/independence encouraged the youth to take up guns instead of pen and tractors, later on it lost way and the lure of easy money and comfortable life without any hard work attracted the youths to insurgency. Due to very low respect for human values, the killing of people became a simple thing, which was once considered to be the most heinous and worst crime. In the absence of any law enforcing authority in real terms, the fear for punishment also vanished and this added further degradation of values. If the degradation of values continue, certainly one-day jungle Raj will prevail and society will collapse. It is easy to make up the damages caused by flood or earthquake but it is difficult to make up failures of values, because it will take generations to rectify the damage.

In the name of bringing the militants to the mainstream(so called), we are encouraging the hooligans who did not respect values, people and social norms. So unless we try to teach our youth to respect values, it would be better to allow them to stay in jungles and die a natural death, instead of bringing them to society and increase nuisance. Society has a limit to bear parasites. Our political leaders lack the will, lack the vision. So it is the teachers, educationists, youths and society at large has to find out ways and means to overcome the gun culture, overcome the no work culture, over come the free meal culture. ***This can only be done through respect for a value system and imparting value education to the new millennium youths.***

In any value system, present or future, the most vital role is to be played by human mind. We should teach our new millennium children to cultivate and enrich their minds. We should teach them truth, honesty, virtue, character, integrity, justice, commitment. Let me complete with the Albert Einstein’s saying, ***“Try not to be a man of success but rather try to be a man of value”.***

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 other wise 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 every body 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, and a sense of duty, commitment and respect of 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 100 point syndrome. It is the time 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. If we don't do it, certainly next year also I will meet another Rajiv and few more young lives will lost forever.

Values and Career

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While choosing a career one must give due importance to values he /she respects. Over emphasis on money will lead to collapse of mental peace, happiness and family life and then money would be a useless piece of paper without any significance.