

It is true that little
variant strains



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It is true that little variant strains of innovation still exist, but these strains do not present the entirely new face of our present day educational system. To unravel the snarl into which our education system finds itself, it is necessary to go back to the basic question: what is it education? The irrefutable answer is that education is preparation for life. Life is precious; and therein lays the necessity for long years of careful attention and preparation for it. This puts education in its proper perspective and it now becomes easy to what the goal of education is. Children must learn the basics. This aspect of education requires very careful methodology for this is the real preparation for life. Education does not mean just seeing the child through board examination but to equip him/her to live as critical thinkers and active workers. This is the yardstick of the process of education.

If so then whatever education we provide needs to be relevant and sustainable. Education must be forward looking. But what is relevant? The accelerating production of knowledge and dissemination through sophisticated communication channels such as the internet and TV present bewildering kaleidoscope, what must be obvious knowledge for each child. Her/his knowledge of the geographic, socio- biological cultural community and social environs is not available to them. Education must take upon itself the task of systematically creating this knowledge and helping children their geo-cultural world. Without this they will be rootless. Let us look at the school system in India.

Some private schools ironically termed as “ public schools” offer small number our children a semblance of the kind of education, described within a specific socio-economic milieu. The vast majority of our children study in

government schools. In almost every village of our country there is a government school. This awesome network of school (possibly largest in the world) is being systemically being starved to extinction. Today we can see a sizeable number of professionals, who five decades ago studied in government schools. This is eloquent testimony of free education fulfilling its purpose in the best sense of the term. But the children who are in government schools today can barely read and write after spending five years in school and unlikely to follow in the foot step of their illustrious alumni.

The gross and criminal manner in which government school are being neglected renders around half the children in the country greatly handicapped by not receiving the kind of education that is their birth right. The other halves of our children of which two thirds are girl do not go to school. Not because they do not want to but because the schools are so bad that the parents see no point in sending them there.

The government school system is lifeline to education for the vast majority of our children. It must be realised and made to function well, in such a way that it is not in any way inferior to any school in the country. The Kendriya Vidyalayas have shown that the government run schools can function well. The task is to make every government run this way.

It is only then that the monopoly that some private schools enjoy will be broken. It is pointless to talk about the monopoly of private school until government school begins to functions well. Let us concentrate on improving every school in every village of the country.

Let us create if need be, more government supported schools. We have already the structures like NCERT, SCERT, DIETO and NCTE. Let us revamp them. Our schools need infrastructure and teachers. It is more essential to allocate resources for school education than to subsidies higher education. This does not mean that higher education is not important but the focus needs to be more on the earlier years of education, so that more and more children can look to higher education.

Then higher education will not be Small Island but a huge ocean development. Education must be seen not just as a sub set of society, but also a superset that can transform society. Just as the industrial force changed the face of England in nineteenth century; education revolution can regenerate society in 21st century in India.

The general enlightenment that good education will bring to people will be accompanied by associated socio-economic elevation. The road to success is simple. Instead of reciting the obvious mantra of making school-going compulsory, we should make it compulsory to have good schools. A task that is awesome in its perception but fairly simple in its execution.