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NET, IAS, State-SET (KSET, WBSET, MPSET, etc.), GATE, CUET, Olympiads etc. Essay: Education for All the Three: Body, Intellect and Soul

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Today, in the age when education has become synonymous with students carrying bags heavier than themselves, perpetually in fear of home work and examinations and constantly being prodded by parents and teachers to get good marks, our outlook on education needs revision. Do we want our educational system to produce good and able citizen or do we want to produce an army of bookworms who may have knowledge but not education. Here comes the question what good education means and what should it achieve?

Gandhiji said I do not value literary education, if it is not able to build sound character. Tagore considered freedom and joy to be the basic tenets of an education system. He therefore removed examinations, abolished punishment and all humiliating restrictions in Shanti Niketan. We can consider building up of human personality as the primary purpose of education to build better human beings. Man is not in this world to add to numbers but each individual has a spirit an individual personality that is strictly his own and distinct from that of others. A good education system tries to retain his individuality, in fact to further it and tries to bring the best out of him.

But man's individuality should not be considered as being egoistic or selfish; instead his individuality should develop in the social milieu he lives in. His individuality should add to the variety in the society like flowers in a garden. However, this individuality should not develop into individualism. So, a good education system should be able not only to retain individuality of a man but also to make him adjust according to the codes of human ethics and morality.

What constitutes personality? Certainly not just knowledge. Personality should include physical, intellectual and aesthetic elements. More than knowledge, it is the wisdom of man that is more important. No doubt, knowledge is important but simply mugging books can't make a man wise. Also, as age old saying Healthy body leads to Wealthy mind tells us that without good health, proper knowledge can't be attained. So education should also make man physically strong. It should include Yoga, PT, aerobics, games and sports. The usual refrain that these are wasteful pastimes is to be opposed man should be able to labor hard and use body as efficiently as his mind. No civilization can progress without man's physical labor. It lies at the root of all so called higher labors of mind. After all it is agriculture that lie at the root of economics not computers.

Another important element of personality is aesthetics. Education should be able to develop taste of man in fine arts. Man's feelings and emotions can effect social and political changes, said Gandhiji, So good education should be after man's soul and should be able to appeal to his heart, Painting, music, dance, drama etc, are only a few avenues open to man to express his feelings, Painting helps him bring * forth the emotions deep within his heart. About music, Tagore said, while speaking creates bond between men and men, music creates bond between man and nature. In a good educational system, fine arts should form an important part. This means that a good education system should be after man's soul. It should be able to satisfy man's emotional needs. This is possible only when element of fear is removed and substituted by freedom and joy. For this, we must change our material standards of success in life. A good musician or a good painter should be accorded same status and given same respect as a good doctor or a good engineer. However, one should not be tempted to teach art, instead it should be cultivated in student's mind. 'Let thousand flowers bloom' Let each man be able to give expression to his feelings, his ideas in his own way.

In ancient India, education was imparted in Gurukuls. The responsibility of the Guru was to create a man out of the boy who was raw, untrained and inexperienced. A person did not get any degree to prove his educational achievements; his personality and intellect was the sufficient proof. In the Gurukul he was taught everything from arms training and physical exercises to political science and religion to etiquette and mannerism and of course, fine arts and moral values. A whole man was molded.

As we are passing to more advanced life, we are tending to forget basic human values and so our education system has been converted to a machine that produces technically superior but physically and emotionally inferior individuals. In today's educational system the text book has become the source of all knowledge even though it fails to cater to enlarging mind and growing sense of enquiry of a child. Examinations make education a dry and fearful proposition. Sports and fine arts are frowned at. The result is that human personality is getting distorted. Student unrest and violence, frustration leading to increasing crime rate by young people, breaking of family bond, loss of respect for teachers and, in general, the loss of morality in society and crisis of character all owe their origin to our bad education. If we want human civilization to have all round, well balanced growth, we must have education system catering to all three body, intellect and soul.