

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL NETWORKING SERVICES: A CURRENT SCENARIO

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Abstract

The Indian society which we witness now, by and large, is found to be a value-degraded society. For this state very often the system of education is held responsible. It is said that the system of education is not properly value-based for which there is degradation of values in the society. On the other hand, many elites held social networking services to be the cause of value degradation. So a question is raised, are the system of education and the social networking services jointly responsible for the value degradation in the society having some link between the two or any one of these two is singularly responsible for the value degradation? I hold the view that there has been possible link between the two and both are jointly responsible for value degradation and both can be jointly effective for the promotion of values in the society to make it a good society.

Keywords

Value Education, Functioning of networking services, Entertainment, Moral atmosphere, Good society.

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India has been widely acclaimed as a spiritualistic country having deep faith in the spiritualistic philosophy. From this perspective, the Western trend was and is regarded to be materialistic. But due to the rapid changes in the Indian cultural tradition no more it is found in spiritualistic trends. The present scenario of our country is that there are huge number of educational institutions functioning as degree-holders producing machines who are to face a big vacuum in getting suitable jobs. The system is found to be a fully mechanized one and the curriculums are to some extent responsible in this respect. This possible situation could be visualized by spiritualist leaders like, Swamy Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi and Sri Aurobindo and some others. The matter of regret is that sufficient attention could not be given to the method of value-based education as suggested by these nation-building patriotic thinkers. Now when the atmosphere is extremely smoky in the current trend of education in all corners, intellectuals, political authorities, etc. are all showing their concern for imparting the value-based education to the students at different levels.

It may be pointed out that the foundation of Indian educational tradition was to emphasize on the value of education in the past. It is seen that right from the Vedic days the seers have included the knowledge of values in the wisdom they have imparted to the mankind. There has been much emphasis on values like *dharma*, *artha*, *kama*, and *moksa* being treated as *purusarthas* and *ashram dharmas* in the *Gurukula* system of education. Moreover, there has been sufficient importance on the knowledge of *satya*, *ahimsa*, *dana*, and *vairagya* as values in the Indian classical texts. In the traditions of Jainism and Buddhism attaching importance to values appears to be primary concern. In the modern days there have been rapid growth in educational institutions and the rate of educated people has increased remarkably. The illiteracy has been removed to a considerable extent. But the society is found to be very rich in the state of value degradation. The growth of dehumanized people is increasing rather than decreasing. The paper is an attempt to focus on the concept of value education and the proper sources of such value education.

In the present day, the impact of the social media in shaping human knowledge and behavior appears to be quite significant. So the role of social media and social networking services (SNS) appears to be quite crucial. What is suspected is that what is the impact of SNS, which is widely providing news, education, and entertainment and what is not in the interest of children to old age, in favor of the promotion of values? The more popularity SNS is gaining the more money-minded it becomes irrespective of its good or bad impact on the society. The paper will also deal with examining the possibility of enhancing the respect for values of the common mass through SNS which will act as the catalyst in achieving the goal in the direction

of value education. Accordingly, in the paper, there would be two important sections, namely, the nature of value education and the functioning of SNS which will be followed by an epilogue.

The nature of Value-education

Swami Vivekananda was an ardent admirer of the *Gurukul* system of education where life-building education was given priority. In his opinion “Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs, rots there, undigested all your life. We must have a life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas.”¹ As a whole, Vivekananda was in favor of universal education by which the ‘level of awareness of the mass can be increased. It can help in building a dogma-free society.

To consider Gandhi’s approach to education it can be said that for him literacy is not education. It is knowledge of some available literatures which may not contribute to the real development of the being. Gandhi has emphasized on spiritual education or training and has said that “By spiritual training, I mean education of the heart.” He adds further “By education I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man-body, mind and spirit.”² According to him education should have immediate as well as the ultimate goal. That is why he has proposed a new method of education which has been known as *Nai tam*. In this method, he has emphasized on the man-making aspect of education.

In a similar way “Sri Aurobindo often speaks of National Policy of Education. ... The goal of National Education is to create good citizens as the future generation of India. He says: ‘The past is our foundation, the present is our material, the future our aim and sumit.’ ... It should prepare human beings with strong patriotic feeling and love for the motherhood.”³ Sri Aurobindo has said, “True education will be that which will be an instrument for the real working of the spirit in the mind and body of the individual and the nation.”

Thus we have seen that all the three thinkers have recommended man-making education which is possible through value-based education. Now I will spell out a few lines on the reason for thinking about the social networking services in the context of education. It is true that educational institutions are not properly imparting value education. But the educational institutions are not the only sources of educating the students and the people. So far as the present situation is concerned the media services can play a very important role in educating both students and the common mass from value perspectives.

Now the social networking services are found to be extremely active. People are found to spend unusually more time with the TV or mobiles using social

networking services. In this context, the important question comes to the forefront that “Why are the people of all category are interested in spending time with these services even very often neglecting their own duties?” The easy and apt answer would be ‘Solely it is fulfilling their need for entertainment’. Then obviously the next question would be ‘Can the sources of entertainment facilitate the value of education?’ I apprehend a positive answer to this question. But let me try to say something about what for I hold such an apprehension.

The Functioning of the SNS

Changing scenario in the media services: There was a time when few people were interested in using media services for getting some news. The newspapers were given top priority in this regard. But in the past, it was difficult for those interested people to have newspapers. Some were trying to collect newspapers to read from those few who were able to procure newspapers for them. Most of the students were going to libraries to read newspapers. It was the practice of the time. It shows the genuine interest of those people to obtain some knowledge. It is because the collection of news was treated to be source of knowledge.

Now a day the scenario is different in the sense that there is no difficulty in getting various types of news (wanted or unwanted) at the fingertips. If a mobile is in hand the picture of the globe seems to be in front. Imparting news is found as one of the primary activities of the SNS. The news is served as a source of entertainment on Face Books, Twitter and You Tubes which contain a lot of private and immature sub-sources. Mostly these sub-sources are trying to distort the news to make their channel attractive by making the news attractive and eye-catching. Moreover in the plea of news a lot of unhealthy entertainment and sex-based matters are served by many sub-sources. So presently all sorts of news, authentic or unauthentic, push themselves before everyone due to SNS.

The sole motto behind this practice is not to spread the news but to earn money and to make their channel popular as well as commercially better. Much unauthentic, distorted, and fabricated news was made available before the commoners in entertaining shape. SNS which is supposed to purify the atmosphere very often found to pollute it. For example: At a particular time the former captain of the Indian Cricket team, Mr. Dhoni decided to remain away from plying without expressing the reason. On this issue, thousands of suppositions were served before the commoners in such an attractive form which must have spoiled some valuable time for the readers only. How can expect that the media service is valuable and value-based?

A journalist may claim that it is the duty of a journalist not to mention the bare news only but to speak something on the news. But here the question of moral accountability of the journalist is involved which he should not forget. The media very often takes the upper hand in deciding the political career of a politician. The rise and fall of an artist is also modulated by the media. All these are intensified by the social networking services. Instead of educating people through their services very often they misguide people and corrupt the society.

SNS services, entertainments and education: In the past, the sources of entertainment were very few. But in the present society with the developments of various technologies, the sources of entertainment are too many. The attitude towards the sources of entertainment is changing very fast. There were only two major sources of entertainment three to four decades back. Those were (i) viewing cinemas or dramas and (ii) viewing various games or sports or listening to the commentaries on those activities. In fact, viewing cinemas in film halls or live dramas in the theatres, or *jaatraas* in open pendals were very important sources of entertainment. But in present days the majority of the previous sources are found to be squeezed and viewing cricket is there at the apex as a source of entertainment not only for youth but for people of different age groups. Viewing films and TV serials is probably in the next place to provide entertainment. Once upon a time, those were independent sources of entertainment but now all those are coming under social networking services. Now one of the major sources of availability of any kind of entertainment is the easy access to the social networking services.

So the changing scenario in the field of entertainment is that it is difficult to think of a common man to go without any kind of entertainment. In order to meet this need of man a lot of sources are available before him conducted by different agencies like the film industry, broadcasting games, and sports commentaries, various TV channels, etc.. Man finds enough pleasure out of these activities for which reason he remains engaged with these very often.

Now let me come to the issue that how can it be possible to relate education with the SNS services. In the present situation when people are spending maximum time with entertainment channels one can expect that such channels can also serve the purpose of imparting knowledge on values at a time. For example, a film, named, 'Mother India (1957) and another film, named, 'The Dirty Picture' (2011) were very much entertaining for the viewers and commercially very much successful in their respective periods. People were not hesitating to view those pictures for several times. But there is a lot to think about regarding the moral obligations of the pictures from the perspectives of contribution towards the society.

The first one could educate the mass that a woman can be too bold and fight for the establishment of the justice forgetting his kin relationships. The character was exposed in what sense 'mother' can be used and how is it linked with self-sacrifice. In the case of the second, the picture became very popular with the expression "entertainment, entertainment and entertainment" which happens to be a dialogue of the major woman artist. The film was primarily based on the life sketch of an ambitious woman artist which ultimately ended in utter frustration. And it is also suggested that behind the huge allurements of life, the real picture is always dirty. The theme can very well symbolize the difference between the real and the apparent. But the film appeared before the common man as portraying the theme that a beautiful woman can earn fabulous wealth and enjoy a very luxurious life becoming a source of enjoyment forgetting all ethical codes. The real motive behind the picture that is how a society changes the fate of a women taking her as a sex- symbol could not come to the forefront. People understood in the sense that a beautiful woman as a heroine stands for "entertainment, entertainment and entertainment." It is because the commercial aspect of the project was so emphasized with some bold bodily expositions the ethical message in it was vanished. Moreover, there is no such atmosphere that a film can educate a being. Instead of educating the people, it has very bad impacts on younger generations. The present-day entertainment sources are mostly neither educative nor value-oriented.

At present SNS services include so much of dirty elements to attract the people to their channels that the crimes are increasing and consideration of values is decreasing. The violations of such obligations are found to be very much an obstacle to good life, good living, a good society and a healthy future. It is high time that the government should take strong steps to stop such practices. Otherwise, what to talk about promoting value education, the value degeneration cannot be stopped.

Epilogue: The problem arises when the majority of the people are found to be engaged in viewing something which gives them pleasure in return neglecting their normal duties. The increase of negligence in duties becomes the cause of negligence in social responsibilities. Not only has the social good remained at stake there is no generation of moral atmosphere. The present scenario is that engaging in these activities has become the primary job of each and every *ashrama* stage of human life both in the rural and urban areas. It is also seen that more than ninety percent of students, more than sixty percent of housekeeping women and a good number of working men and women are found to be to be engaged in these activities much more than what is desired. This shows that the role of the social media has become highly vulnerable.

Both the system of education and the social networking services can contribute richly to creating a strong moral atmosphere in the society. The proper training on value education and the value consciousness of networking services can be very much helpful instead of harmful. If the entertainment channels will be educative and valuable based they will not drag maximum number of people to watch it day and night neglecting their duties. In this way, a good social atmosphere can be possible. So the curriculum authorities should take proper care in making it value-based and the Government should take very strong steps to check sex-based entertaining sources in networking services and social media for the promotion of the value-based entertainments.

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