

Nation Building And Social Justice Through Distance Education

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When Aristotle defined state as an assemblage of numerous villages, the wider concept of nationhood as a cultural unit had not seen the golden hair of Apollo; the two powerful city states were Sparta and Athens, the twains that seldom met. Plato's *Republic* envisaged *Justice* on the well known dictum that Socrates brought philosophy from heaven and made it dwell in the groves of Athens. The very ideology that man is a social animal, makes the concept of social justice expedient and indispensable. The essential difference between learning and education is that while the former is like the vernal shower on the twinkling grass, the latter is meant to bring out what is hidden in the light of thought and constitutes a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings taking their origin from emotions recollected in tranquility. Education thus is of two types – campus oriented and distant. The distant education is helpful in dealing with two problems simultaneously the making of Nation great and strong and scattering the seeds of social justice to promote the betterment of the social infra structure.

The founder fathers of the Republic of India had a clear vision that education is pre requisite for regeneration of society, empowerment of people, national integration and international understanding. This led to growth in demand for higher education and concerns about the access and equity began to pose challenges.¹

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In relation to this August International conference, the concentration is on Higher Education; this should be self evident. The purpose of university education is to provide the human beings with logical force at a larger level. That was why it was written on the gates of Plato's Academy, 'those who cannot do geometry, need not enter here'. It is well known that geometry is the mother of logic from where metaphysics and astronomy take their origin.

The essence of Newman's book *The Idea Of A University* is Knowledge is Power; such power cannot be achieved by remaining enclosed in the class rooms. Walt Whitman, a renowned American poet in the poem '*The Learned Astronomer*' hints at the point how the class room lecture and diagrams became a source of boredom and the student came out of the class room to inhale fresh breeze and to get a first hand glimpse of the star that was a diamond in the sky. This appears to be the prime dream of distance education on a geometrical pattern. We all know how rich and prosperous a country America is.

The idea of distance education and National consortium march side by side. The concept of National Consortium is the nucleus of distance education. It indicates that there should be a consensus also, when the frame work of a National policy is being framed. It further becomes a desideratum primum to find out various literal and lexicographical interpretations.

According to Webster's Dictionary(1985) consortium is "an association or union ; a combination of financial institutions and capitalists for the purpose of carrying into effect some financial operation requiring large sources of capital." This definition conceives consortium in a narrow sense. In Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (1989) consortium is defined as "temporary association of a number of countries, companies, banks etc. for a common purpose. ²

This is enough for establishing the relevance of Adam Smith's approach in *The Wealth of Nations*. If the citizens of a nation are well trained in the handling of financial affairs of a country certainly the Nation will emerge as a strong one, for there will be no exploitation of the labour by the capitalists in that ideal common-wealth.

The majestic edifice of distance education is built on the foundation bricklaying of teachers also. There is an anecdote that a certain lady teacher told her students that the young one a bird is called 'birdie' ; whereas the appropriate word happens to be 'chick : The irony was not that the teacher did not know, rather it was that the teacher did not try to know. It is to safeguard the distance education against this peril that the provision has been made to ensure the professional development of teachers.

There is a need to strengthen recurrent training of teachers. Therefore, time and money invested on initial training and ongoing professional development of elementary teachers need to be balanced. Their mastery over curriculum, their competencies skills and their expectations of students all contribute to quality education. The quality of teaching-learning process depends upon the professional knowledge and skills of the teacher who should be well qualified, committed, motivated and responsible for bringing desired changes in the society.³

If this objective is achieved, social justice is a must to come with all its paraphernalia.

India is a religion and ritual Oriented country. The famous Jh lwDr expressly mention 'vga jk"V^{ah} laxeh olwuke~' (I as a nation, am the Assimilator of Wealth) It is a group prayer that 'jk"V^{as} o;a tkx`;ke' (Let us be always awakened in the form of a nation). The concept of a vigilant

citizen in the cradle of Nation is indispensable for Nation building. The same ideology is envisaged in the precept Lok/;k;Uek izen~% (Donot be slothful in self culture through study) It is a noteworthy fact that the yajnas or sacrifices were the oldest ways of distance education through vibration of holy incantations or Mantras.

When it is to be established that the imparting of primary education from distance needs the uses of lingua materna it becomes self evidence that the mother off spring relationship is the genesis of love between the teacher and taught. William Wordsworth also agrees with the view when he says:

This child I to myself will take
She shall be mine, and I will make
A lady of my own.⁴

This forms the nucleus of the first proposition You can't deny mother hood and apple pie.

What I mean by the proposition I is that there is typically so much publicity perceived value in the nation of PIs that, ipso facts, performance measurement is good and necessary thing. Massy(1999), for example bases his entire article on this supposition. Even if language used is not that of performance measurement, an almost standard observation is the of the more information we have the better things will be.⁵

The secondary education is ambition and value oriented. It is in the adolescent age that a student determines what he has to become in future. He fixes up some ideal role model before himself and remains in constant search for values that are supposed to help him in becoming such a great person. He is given to realise.

Heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained in a sudden flight:

But they while their companions slept
Were toiling upwards in the night.⁶

At this juncture the validity of Proposition 2 is realised that **Performance measures are not value – free**. The excess of emotions may lead towards some happy prologues of an imperial theme making the student aware of a state of divine frenzy sometimes, but there is a method in it:

Any given measure has no inherent meaning in and of itself. Even in the physical sciences a measure has meaning only in reference to an agreed upon standard. Every measure takes its meaning from a context.⁷

The significance of the dictum question, Try and Test is realised from the vantage ground of higher education, that makes a scholar comprehend the validity of the 3rd proposition **It may all sound rational – but it isn't**. The research orientation makes it comprehensible that the teacher is there to remove the honest doubt not the bliss of ignorance. The purpose of education is complete, Nation has been built, Social Justice has been inculcated ; the youth has attained from the light house, the nuclear preaching of intellectual deliverance : now he has to carve his path on the Buddhistic ideology 'Be a Lamp on unto thyself⁸ alongwith the Christian dictum **In hoc signo vincit** (By this sign thou shalt conquer)⁹

References

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8. *Lord Buddha at Kushinagar:*
9. *Motto of Car melite Monastery.*