
Value Education through Sports

Dr. SUVARNA SHINDE
Associate Professor & Head
Dept. of English, Arts and Commerce
College for Women, Deopur, Dhule, M.S.
India

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;
Where knowledge is free;
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic
walls;
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.
-Rabindranath Tagore

The paper aims at drawing the attention of the educationalists and teachers to the urgent task of redeeming the youth from the hell-fire of commercialized education and the mechanical academic life. The alarming consequences of the so called 'current education' have definitely forced all of us to stop for few moments and rethink over it with all seriousness. The time has also ripened to assess what we have really understood by education.

Unfortunately, the meaning of education these days is teaching the youth to live by machines and gadgets and not by the universal human values like truth, non-violence, love and compassion. These values have relegated to the fringes and man is fast becoming a non-entity. Family and society are breaking away. Life has become so artificial and materialistic that young men and women have begun to think whether they need any value system at all that will guide them to the right

way of living. If this doubt becomes a conviction, life would not remain as sensitive as it should be and our society would be called something else but not a human society.

This has all happened because life has been mistaken to be a synonym for technical expertise. It has led to an unhealthy competition in all spheres of life. The fast pace of life and madness for money have been badly mistaken for 'progress' and youth are already in the grip of frenzy for such a kind of progress. As a result, there is always a sense of urgency with everybody. Impatience is becoming the ruling principle and men and women want to work when they are physically exhausted. Life has become a rat-race.

Man is looked as a multi-functioning machine, not as a valuable organic being. There is always a tension between man and his time as he wants to make prosperity out of it but unfortunately it is resulting in stress, anxiety and breakdown of health. As individual health is in danger it has caused a serious danger to social health as well. Therefore, there is a loss of values like leadership, discipline, tolerance, self-reliance, sporting spirit and concern for public welfare. These values cannot be imbibed just by preaching sermons to young boys and girls. Sermonizing generally tends to be bookish and therefore ineffective and futile. Why shouldn't we try other options which have been either side-tracked or considered, just as an 'extension', 'co-curricular' or 'extra-curricular' activities? What I believe is, an activity like 'SPORTS' which has been grouped in above mentioned categories can be of great help in imbibing different values.

Fortunately, all bookish methods of inculcating values have simply failed. Now, academicians should open their eyes because we are living in a country where hatred grows in the name of religion, crimes are politicized and violence is mistaken for nationalism. If the mechanical and parrot-like class-room teaching has failed to generate an interest even in the respective subjects then an attempt to imbibe values by adopting such an outmoded method would be a far-fetched idea.

Surprisingly enough, even after witnessing such a tragic picture at all levels our emphasis on bookish knowledge has not changed. It is also the time to reassess the undue importance given to the examinations. It has degraded education to the level of just an accumulation of facts. The well known English poet, T.S. Eliot was absolutely right when he said:

"Where is the wisdom?
We have lost in Knowledge.
Where is the Knowledge?
We have lost in information".

The accumulation of college certificates and higher degrees are not associated with the students improved ability to face the challenges of his time. The cognizance should also be taken of what Deputy Director-General of UNESCO has observed about our so called academic set-up and examinations conducted by it:

"The examination system is not an evaluation of students personality and intellectual equipment his powers of thinking for himself; reflection and reasoning. The teaching methods and learning techniques ... are rusty; cranky and antiquated."

It's an eye-wash for all us. This kind of education has become just an ornament and failed to shape the psycho-dynamics of the human beings which determines his or her social behavior. The Radhakrishnan Commission had also hinted at this weakness.

"No amount of factual information would make ordinary men into educated or virtuous men unless something is awakened in them, an innate ability to live the life of the soul."

Instead of awakening the innate abilities or preparing the students for self-actualization we concentrate on accumulation of information and classify them among different categories on the basis of their score in the examination. Arnold Toynbee an eminent thinker calls this classification absurd when he says:

"It is both absurd and unjust to classify a person once and for all, as being first-class or third-class when he is only 22 years

old. There are slow growers who blossom late in life and conversely there are brilliant starters who fail to fulfill their early promise.”

The comparison between including values through conventional classroom teaching and sports is unavoidable. Obviously, I have no intentions to underestimate class-room teaching but I have serious reservations about its impact in this regard. Ideally speaking, the process of teaching and learning should be student-centered. But we cannot deny the fact that even today our method is teacher-centered. As a student has no role to play in a class he becomes more and more passive - physically, mentally and intellectually. This indifference in a class-room could be seen even in society. Our graduates and post-graduates remain indifferent to the burning issues around them.

Sports imbibes participation at all levels. In it the player is not active only in a physical sense but he has to be fully focused and therefore has to keep all his senses alert to reach to the goal. The participant learns very important lesson that there is no short-cut to reach to the destination. Sincere efforts and hardwork can be the only ways to translate the dreams into reality. Through participation in sports one can learn the significance of honesty, sincerity, integrity and hardwork. Formal education falls short of equipping our pupils with these life-making values and that is why most of our youths face failure, and frustration in different walks of life.

India is the largest democracy in the world. But there have been no conscious efforts to imbibe the democratic values for the sustenance of healthy democracy. An ideal set-up of democracy gives a liberty to act within the framework of certain rules and regulations. These laws or rules have been made in the interest of the individual as well as the society. In sports every game has its own rules and every player has to respect them. It is really interesting to observe that the games have also been designed like a Democracy. As an equal opportunity

irrespective of caste, religion and gender is important in democracy in the same way, in sports every player gets an equal opportunity to make an optimum use of his skills, intelligence and imagination with due respect for the rules and the opposite team. By participating in any game the player understands that the opponent in the next team is not the enemy.

Politicians just speak about democracy but the players practice it on the ground. The ruling as well as opposition parties can definitely take few lessons of democracy and its values from the children playing various games in different corners of the country.

It has also been observed at different levels that educated people have become so self-centered that they do not think they have any obligation to the society. They try to improve their private interests even sometimes at the cost of the society. To eliminate this self-centered attitude, students should be encouraged to participate in games so that they can relate themselves to their surroundings. A player learns to play for the team and the team for an institution or region. It develops concern for others and a sense of belonging to the group or an institution. Generally our intellectuals at present have been totally divorced from social reality. If sports becomes an essential ingredient of academics, then, in future we will be able to see the intellectuals making substantial contribution in bringing about changes in society through their active participation at various levels.

It is sports that gives a concrete direction, meaning and profundity. It shapes their inner sense of what is right and what is wrong. Defeat and victory are the part of the game. Participants learn to take both the things in their stride with equal courage and modesty. If the team gets defeated at one place then instead of having any contempt or grudge against the opposite team they prepare themselves to win the next match with all determination. Kiran Bedi had also

acknowledged this fact that she acquired courage and determination through sports.

Sports, provides all essential ingredients for the all round development of personality, independent thinking and leadership qualities, and ultimately it helps to bring social harmony. In sports a person has to act in the context of the team. Everyone is supposed to contribute to the decision. For this players come up with innovative ideas for the better performance of the team. Whether defeat or victory, everyone's performance is recognized and acknowledged. It creates a sense of responsibility amongst the players. As a result, leadership qualities develop in a better way through sports. Leader of a certain game cannot create an illusion around himself that he is the man of special gifts who brought the victory. He realizes that the sincere effort of every member of the team has made them win. In case of defeat instead of blaming each other they learn to assess their own performances objectively. As Dr.Purushottam and Dr.Antony Stella has observed that "according to the social psychologists, leadership is a special phenomenon arising from group action: it is not considered as a special property or gift of an individual. Although some people appear to possess more of the characteristics conducive to it than others, leadership occurs in group action".

Sports satisfies the criteria laid down by Gibbs for the development of leadership qualities. Gibbs has listed three conditions essential to leadership activities:

- “(a) There is a group.
- (b) The group is unified around mutually agreed goals.
- (c) Certain tasks or roles have been assigned officially to the various group members.

This concept implies that leadership evolves from a dynamic and interacting group that is held together by loyalties to an individual, but concerns for the goals of the group".

To sum up, taken into account the infinite potential the activity like sports has; it is time for the authorities concerned to take some drastic measures to come out of the prevailing situation

which if allowed to continue, will take our academic field to a point of no return. Education without ethics is arrogant and dangerous. In the words of Dr. Albert Schweitzer, "you may have a great education, you may have the name of great college behind you, you may have great careers ahead of you, but if you do not block out at least a small part of your life to give to others, you will never be truly happy".

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