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Indigenization in Education: Key to self Sufficiency and strategic Capability

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Abstract: Indigenization is a very broad concept. It can have various permutations and manifestations. In our present descriptive analysis, we are going to analyze indigenization through the prism of education and inculcation of values. It is to be noted that, the structure of education system in India is based on the foundations laid in colonial times. Since no radical reform has taken place in the same, it is pertinent for academia to look at the efficacy of the present educational system in meeting the needs and aspirations of present generations in particular and society at large. In addition to that, in the backdrop of leveraging demographic dividend, provides another important reason for academia to probe how relevant the western mode of education is to multilayered, multi-cultural, multilingual Indian society which has no dearth of indigenous Education system to dwell upon. Our paper, in no way criticizes western mode of education, on the other hand we try to analyze out, how relevant archaic colonial structure of education is to meet the needs and demands of Indian Society and how revamping the same can build the strategic capability of our nation.

Keywords: *Indigenization, Colonial structure of Education, Demographic Dividend, Value System, Society, Strategic capability*

Introduction: Before, we look into the need of revamping the Colonial Structure of Education, it is pertinent for us to understand the intention of English behind setting up of The Educational Structure which we have become so used to rely upon.

Rationale behind introducing the present system of Education By English: The foundations of modern Indian Education System may be traced back to English Education Act of 1835, which was spearheaded by Lord Macaulay (Macaulay, T.B ,1835) under the leadership of Lord William Bentick, the then Governor General of India. The objective behind English Education Act of 1835 could be best summarized in the words of Lord Macaulay himself in which he states, the intention behind legislating Education Act of 1835 is to create, “a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect”. The rationale behind the same is quite self-evident. On one hand, they wanted to create a clerical class who would do backend administrative work of the English and on the other hand they wanted to mesmerize Indians with the flare and grace of their “superior culture”. This was to be implemented through two-pronged approach, on one hand by aligning tastes and preferences of Indians with that of English, they were able to ensure that there was active demand for their goods in Indian Market. Then, by aligning the morals and opinions of Indians

with their cultural standards, they wanted to ensure that educated Indians wouldn't rebel against the British administrative and political system. All in all, given the fact that they were able to leverage Indian resources to fuel the growth of their country for more than a century, the objective behind introducing their system of Education in India seems to be fairly successful. However, in contemporary times neither is India a colony of British nor does England has her sovereignty over India. In this backdrop it becomes relevant for us to question the relevance of this archaic system of education which was set up to serve the needs and aspirations of her colonial master. Before we proceed further, we need to analyze how successfully the system has eroded Indian Ethics, Values and Cultures among Indians at the cost of blindly following western lifestyle at a superficial level. The objective of our paper is not to substantiate the superiority of one cultural values and ethos over the other. Both eastern and western culture have their own strengths and weaknesses. Their strengths more than compensate for their drawbacks. History being witness to their survivability is evidence for the same. However, the tragedy of commons is that, in Contemporary times Indians are neither completely loyal to western culture nor are they completely loyal to their indigenous culture. If history is anything to go by, following both cultures at mere superficial level without inculcating their inherent strengths and values is going to spell ruin for any society.

In this backdrop, we will make an attempt to analyze the fundamental structure of western educational system and the values inherent in their society there in and how the combination of these factors has added resilience to their culture and strengthened their nations.

Fundamentals of Western Society, their Educational System's Value Base and repercussions therein: The core principle of western society could be summarized through the concept of 'Invisible Hands' given by Adam Smith. (Persky, Joseph.,1989) In layman's term, the concept of Invisible hands basically means, that if every Individual in society does what is best for him in a legal manner, then the entire society is destined to thrive and flourish. The fundamental building blocks of western society is Individualism and Meritocracy. All the other institutions, be it executive, judiciary or legislative is built around this core ethos, with the intention of safeguarding and promoting the same.

Even western education system from the time of renaissance has strived to inculcate the values of rationality, individualistic line of thinking and questioning of status quo among their populace. This inevitably paved way for promoting western secularism which separated State from religious interference. Moreover, spirit of renaissance which was inherent in western educational base induced rapid growth of inventions and innovations. This in turn paved way for industrialization which later evolved to imperialism and colonialism. Subsequent world wars helped the western society realize the futility of competing for materialistic power and need for co-existence. Rise of International Unilateral organizations be it Bretton Wood Institutions or United Nations is a testament for the same. As the values of western society was built on the foundations of Individualism and Meritocracy, this enabled them to make rapid advancements and gains in the realm of materialistic research and development on one hand and accumulation of wealth and power on the other. So, it is pertinent for us to analyze as to where has the spirit of individualism and meritocracy guided the west. When we look at the richest countries of the world, among top ten, eight are heavily influenced by western culture, values and ethos. All the top universities of the world belong to either America or Western European Countries. Hence, in hindsight it does seem that the spirit of individualism and meritocracy has indeed taken Western Civilization to great heights.

However, unfortunately for western society their strengths themselves have inbuilt seeds of destruction. Although meritocracy is good, Individualism tends to induce people to chase after satisfying their egoistical needs which more often than not, is harmful for the society at large. Consequent world wars fought with the intention of showing their strength which ultimately brought the whole world to brink of destruction is a case in point. Although for a brief period the generation which actively fought those wars had realized their mistakes and wanted to co-exist, unfortunately they have become a relic of the past. The present generation of the west have not seen wars and acts of aggression in their own soil for better part of a century. Nuclear arms race is very much prevalent among nuclear powers. Moreover, the nations, who don't have nuclear power are in a race to be nuclear power.

Rich nations are consuming the resources of Earth as if there is no tomorrow. The nations which are economically worse off are actively strategizing as to how they can leverage their scarce resources to be economic superpower. The countries which are relatively well off aspire to run the race of being nuclear power. The tragedy of errors doesn't stop here. Even the nations which are regarded as failed states at international level, also aspire to accumulate more nuclear weapons in the name of national security.

Given such precarious circumstance it is just a matter of time before any irrational leader or cohort of leaders come together and set the world in the path of self-destruction through misuse of nuclear arsenal. Even if global leaders are sensible enough, the past leaders of powerful nations have created a legion of destructive forces in hope of fulfilling their own self-centered interests. Alkaida, ISIS, Taliban and the like being testament for the same. Even if, one or two nuclear armaments fall in the hands of these destructive forces, the whole world could be plunged to its doom. Hence the core value of individualism, if is not tempered with societal needs can result in self destruction as has been witnessed many times in the past.

Even if probable nuclear holocaust may not be of immediate concern promoting blatant materialistic culture in the name of individualism has already taken the world to the brink of global meltdown, curtesy of Global Warming and rapid environmental degradation.

Now, it becomes relevant for us to analyze the strengths and fundamentals of Indigenous Education System and what our values have promoted in us.

Fundamentals Of Eastern Society, Our Educational System's Value Base and repercussions therein: Although at present, given the unfortunate way the things have unfolded, finding fundamentals of Indian Society in the present set up is going to be a herculean task. Fortunately, the treasured values of our cultures can be seen in two of the magnus opus created by our elders, namely Ramayana and Mahabharata. In entire Ramayana and Mahabharata a single message reverberates throughout the epics which our ancients wanted to pass down to us for us. That message can be beautifully understood in the conversations of Lord Krishna and Maharathi Karna. It can also be found in the conversations of Lord Krishna and Beeshma Pitamaha or in the way Lord Rama acts when a commoner doubts his wife or through many other such references found throughout those epics.

To illustrate our point in a better manner, we summarize these intellectual conversations in a brief manner:

Conversation Between Lord Krishna and Maharathi Karna:

The conversation which takes place when Krishna is pressurizing Arjuna to kill unarmed Karna in Kurukshetra indeed is a fascinating one. Karna implores Lord Krishna that he is unarmed, his Vijaya Danush (bow) is in his chariot. His Chariot is stuck in ground. He is not able to remember his Dhanur Vidya (Archery Skills). What glory is there in killing a warrior like this?

For which Krishna reminds Karna, that he had all the talent to act righteously to stand against social discrimination. Yet he always thought about satisfying his hurt ego which drove him to pursue his lifelong ambition of being a better archer than Arjuna, and pities at the state which his selfish goal had brought him to. For this Karna retorts, by stating that entire society had discriminated against him. Deprived of a fair opportunity to learn and hone his skills, hence he had lied to Lord Parashuram to be his one of disciples as Lord Parasurama did not want to teach to potential disciples who did not belong to his caste. Karna continues to implore that, even after gaining knowledge, the society deprived him of his opportunity to compete with Arjuna in royal grounds. In this juncture, it was Kauravas who gave him an opportunity to prove his worth against Arjuna and Pandavas. Hence, he supported Duryodhana and asks Lord Krishna as to what was wrong with that? For that Krishna tells Karna that, using people as a means to an end was what he did wrong. Lord Parashuram had waged war against entire Kshatriyas of the world to avenge their abuse of power. If Karna had told him about how he was subjected to discrimination, wouldn't he have assisted Karna to accumulate knowledge in a rightful manner. Knowledge gained through wrongful means is destined to be forgotten when it's needed the most. Lord Krishna also reminds Karna that, it was not the first time that Karna had compromised his principles for fulfilling his selfish ends. After accumulating knowledge from a great teacher, he did not go to Hasthinapura to avenge for the discriminated lot, he went to prove to Guru Dronacharya that he had better archery skills than his best disciple Arjuna. When because of his caste he couldn't compete, he took the aid of Duryodhana who was also striving to fulfill his selfish ends through unrighteous means. He reminds Karna of how being with Duryodhana also forced him to forego his kshatriya dharma when a hapless woman was being disrobed in front of the entire court. Thus, he makes Karna realize of how forgoing societal interest for fulfilling his selfish interests had brought his life to complete ruin.

Conversation between Lord Krishna and Bhishma Pitamah

When Bhishma Pitamaha is on the verge of being incapacitated by a volley of arrows, Krishna gives him enlightenment. Bhishma implores Krishna by stating that he always stood for the welfare of his ancestral kingdom, Hasthinapura, then why such a miserable and inglorious fate awaits him? For which Lord Krishna reminds him that, Hasthinapura is not one family, or majority of people who reside there. It is composed of everyone, from the strongest to the weakest, from majority to minority, from those who had voice to those who were voiceless. Why did he not stand for the voiceless, the weak and the vulnerable. Had Bhishma realized that with time duties and responsibilities and the definition of righteous conduct also change, then he would have entertained the needs and aspirations of ambitious youth like Karna. And if he had understood his changing Dharma with changing time, then Karna wouldn't have been forced to stand for the wrong side and many other injustices could also have been avenged at the right time. Doing the right thing at the right time would have saved the Kuru clan from pursuing a path of self-destruction by foregoing the path of Dharma. Thus, in a way, even Bhishma Pitamah, although

wanting to do good to society by failing to recognize what society actually meant did end up doing harm to both himself and the society.

Ethical Dilemma before Rama: When Rama and Sita return to their kingdom after their exile in forest. A common person asks Lord Rama that, is his Queen Sita still chaste and pure as she was kidnapped for such a long time. In response to which Lord Rama despite knowing the impeccable character of his devoted wife asks her to enter fire to prove her purity. He tells her that if she is as pure as she claims to be, fire cannot harm her. Let us keep aside the practical aspects of it and concentrate on the message the epic is trying to convey. Lord Rama knew the impeccable character of his wife, yet he wanted his people and society at large to know the same beyond a shadow of doubt. This is an instance wherein a ruler wants himself and his wife to be role model to society rather than just dictators. Moreover, it is a classic instance where we are told even if we keep societies interest at the cost of our interest, then no harm can befall on us. In fact, we would be better off for doing the same. On the other hand, the conversations from Mahabharata reflect that if we strive to fulfill our selfish interests at the cost of society, it shall not only bring ruin to society, but it shall bring ruin to us as well. The immense destruction brought by two world wars by the west due to their reckless pursuit of their self-interests is a testament for the latter.

The theme of keeping our interests above society's interest is what keeps on revibrating throughout the epochs of our society, history and culture. Which is unfortunately absent in the colonial system of education which we are following at earnest illuding that it is a western education system. Western Education System provides industry academia partnership, provides education to attain skills of contemporary relevance and builds confidence and self esteem about their culture and heritage among their students. India is not one homogeneous culture, India is cumulation of several incoherent and vibrant cultural and social heritage. We in no way are replicating the western spirit of education in India. The rampant unemployment rate among the educated lot is a prime example of the inferior quality of education provided by majority of our institutions. True to the core, many would retort that, we have IITs, IIMs and the like which are giving lucrative alumni who are leading biggest names in business at international level. For that argument we would like to highlight two things: On one hand, these institutions are microscopic minority who are serving the needs and aspirations of elite. On the other hand, even these lucrative alumni are not serving for the welfare and interests of their nation but are strengthening the interests and strategic capability of other nations at the cost of our nation. It is to be noted that, we are not against people who are going out, there were a great people Like Sri Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Sri B.R. Ambedkar, Sri Sardar Vallabhai Patel and Sri Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru who went abroad, upgraded their skills and strengthened our nation. We feel that using the scarce resources of this country to upgrade skills and move abroad on the basis of those skills to serve the interests and strengths of other nation is more in line with pursuing self-centered interests than societal interests. Our epics have time and again shown that such actions have done more harm than good to both society and individuals.

However, certain intellectuals might debate about the relevance and practicality of epics whose "stories" and "morals" may have become redundant in fast changing materialistic world. In this backdrop, upholding society's interest over the cost of personal interests may not seem to be the right and practical thing to do. We would like to quote the following real life practical examples of more good than harm being done, when individuals held societal interests at the cost of their own interests.

Gandhiji's decision at Pietermaritzburg Station: Although Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi had a valid first-class ticket, he was asked to leave his first class compartment. Gandhiji did not take his insult as personal insult, rather he observed the larger discrimination which was happening in the society. He started waging legal fight against the discriminated lot in South Africa. It is South Africa wherein he developed his principles of Satyagraha which would eventually empower to free our nation from tyranny. Had that day, Gandhiji had taken his insult as personal insult and not society's insult, then the sufferings of our brethren would have prolonged for a longer period. Moreover, world would have missed a great leader, whose principles inspired yet another generation of great leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru, B.R. Ambedkar, Martin Luther King Junior and Nelson Mandela who played a vital role in strengthening and empowering their nation by securing the interests of the most vulnerable people.

B.R. Ambedkar and his decision to stand for equality of opportunity: B.R. Ambedkar also regarded as Father of Indian Constitution had a very challenging childhood. Due to his caste he was discriminated in every step of his life. Fortunately, he was given financial assistance by the ruler of Baroda, Sayaji Rao Gayakwad. (Abdul Qadir,2016) With ruler's assistance, B.R. Ambedkar was able to complete his Ph.D. If he wanted, he could have led a comfortable life. However, B.R. Ambedkar chose to give more weightage for societal interests rather than his interests which empowered him to be the architect of the constitution which eventually gave life to world's largest democracy.

Not only in India, even at world level, we find many such examples wherein great things have been achieved for present and future generations wherein responsible people upheld societal interest at the cost of their own interest. The lives of noble people like, Mother Theresa, Jyothiba Phule, Baghat Singh, Chandrashekhar Azad, Saradar Vallabhai patel are cases in point.

However, our education system whose foundation is laid to serve colonial interests are not doing justice in preserving the sanctity and strength of our value systems. This has resulted in Indian youth of following western culture superficially without adhering to their inherent philosophy of individualism and meritocracy on one hand. On the other hand, are unable to relate to core Indian value system which promotes to find individual welfare in societal welfare. Unfortunately, our younger generation are mesmerized by Western culture so much that they are unable to see the inherent seeds of destruction which reckless pursual of self-centered materialistic life carries.

Moreover, our educational system fails to do justice to even western mode of education. Our Education is creating an environment in which being successful is measured with all wrong yardsticks. People and education are being used as a means to achieve a self-centered end rather than treating these an end in themselves. The negative repercussions of the same are rampant in the society: According to NCRB report in 24 hours 28 students (Shuvabrata Garai, 2020) commit suicide. Corruption is draining society, rising income inequality, rising crimes, rising domestic violence, Environmental degradation, unsustainable development and the like are the result of individuals in society striving to uphold self-centered interests at the cost of society's welfare. This is not only unsustainable for individual but is also detrimental for the society as a whole. World Wars are classic example of what would happen if a nation, society or an individual chases his self-centered interests at the cost of societal interests.

At dawn of independence the idea of value based international order was advocated by Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru which manifested in India in being a leader of Non-Alignment Movement and inspire the voiceless to hold their own against the strong and mighty. For sustenance of world, materialism is not the solution. We need to develop our strategic capability based on our inherent value system. In addition to it, before preaching the world practicing our values becomes more relevant. To do so, we have to inculcate the same in our educational system. This requires a revamp of our educational setup.

Probable measures to revamp our Educational System in indigenous lines are as follows:

1. Indian value systems based on Indian socio-cultural context must be made part of the core syllabus independent of the nature of course.
2. Deliberate shift should be made from teacher centric approach to student centric approach. Debates and discussions should be encouraged. Chalk and board Teaching should give way to group discussions. We are not of the opinion that such practices were absent in our past. We would like to underline Takshashilla and Nalanda which were run like universities had inculcated and practiced such teaching pedagogy. However, in modern India, such teaching techniques are highly restricted to a few elite institutions.
3. Valuation of students cannot be done in terms of marks alone. A systematic process of continuous assessment has to be implemented.
4. To ensure students get quality education, State schools must be run in the lines of Kendriya Vidyalayas and Navodaya Vidyalayas. Even better approach would be to completely dismantle state schools and handover running of schools to Kendriya Vidyalaya and Navodaya Vidyalaya.
5. If the above solution is too radical, then as per the advice given by Swami Agnivesh of Arya Samaj, a legislation must be passed to mandate the children of all the government officials, starting from helpers to prime ministers to be educated in Government Institutions.
6. People who take subsidies from India and want to settle in abroad must be mandated to refund all the subsidies that they have taken from the Government before settling abroad.
7. Reservation must be given only for education and not in jobs. As giving reservations in jobs would compromise merit.
8. Government must subsidize institutions to formalize arts, crafts, drama and dance.
9. Government must subsidize and increase sports schools encompassing all sports, where in the nation can groom its future Olympians.
10. As per the vision of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhiji, regional arts and crafts must be made a part of the learning curricula.

Conclusion: All in all, through our descriptive study, we have illustrated the strengths and weaknesses of the western value-based Education system and Indigenous value based educational system. We have also analyzed the negative repercussions of colonial structure of education and how it has induced our society be uncritically mesmerized by western lifestyle and remaining blind to all its negative repercussions. By taking mythological, historical and contemporary examples, we have illustrated the negative repercussions of promoting self-interests at the cost societal interests. Finally, we have illustrated how blind chase of materialism in the name of individualism had and has brought the world to the brink of its ruin.

In this crucial juncture where all the countries are engaged in rat race to fulfill their materialistic needs in a reckless manner at the cost of present and future generations, our Nation is blessed with the potential of being a guiding light to guide the nations of the world to pursue Value Based Development Model. Such a model can truly be sustainable in the long run. To achieve the same, it is necessary for our nation to revamp its colonial education system and inculcate value-based educational system. To achieve the same, radical, and strong measures are the need of the hour which we have illustrated in our study.

In no way, we claim that our study is going to be the silver bullet which is going to resolve all the issues. Through our article we wanted to bring to limelight three important aspects. First and foremost, the education system prevailing in our country is mostly influenced by colonial mindset. Moreover, it neither does justice to truly western form of modern education, which is based on freedom of thought and rationality, nor does it do justice to Indian Cultural values and ethos which strives to promote self-interests through societal development. In this backdrop, Indian Educational system requires revamping. Second point being, reckless pursuit of materialistic desires is only going to bring distress and ruin for both individual and society in the long run. History is witness for the same. In this backdrop India can be a guiding light to usher a meaningful change at global level and put the world in the path of value based sustainable development. Finally, to effectively do justice to the aforementioned strategic role, there is a need for our nation to revamp and redesign the fundamental colonial structure of our education on indigenous lines in line with meeting modern needs and requirements. Afterall, the spirit of Education must not be just about enduring; it must also be about enjoyment and inculcation of value-based system so as to stay relevant in contemporary times and in times to come.

सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः, सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः।
सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु, मा कश्चित् दुःख भाग्भवेत्॥

Let everyone be happy, let everyone be free of concern, let everyone be safe and let no one be subject to harm.

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः॥

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