



Alternative Education

It is ironical, rather comical – but a harsh reality that only human beings require training, telling, tutoring, teaching – formal education, to learn survival & soft skills and earn their food & shelter, become human beings/better human beings. No other species does that. The life form which is supposed to be most logical, most social - needs to be educated. Do they really need it? If not, then why educate at all? What is education? Literally, the Latin meaning of the word means ‘to help a learner, learn with care’. Over time, we’ve seen that both the words ‘learning’ and ‘care’ had degenerated to numb memorizing and rote teaching.

Since its inception, mankind has created its own world – an extension of his desires, intellect & ego – manifested as discoveries, inventions, creations, ideations, hypothesis - sometimes meeting/mostly not meeting all his needs & habits beyond needs. We made this simple world really very complex, complicated. Since time immemorial, learning had been an essential component in any society. Lately, it took the shape of formal education. It was philosophised, organised, hypothesised, modelised but it didn’t deliver much.

It is true that learning is a natural process - ongoing & continuous. Despite of so much of natural & organised learning mankind has added more to his misery, chaos & unhappiness, than solved. Our inability to still meet the basic needs for all, everlasting peace & joy for everyone is a distant dream – in fact a collective failure. May be we have taken a wrong track, walked wrong way. Perhaps because we aimed wrong; we created wrong hence we learnt wrong. Today, the amount of information & knowledge we have collected & created is colossal. The world we have created has multiplied desires & made things complex. There is an ongoing debate on the relevance & efficacy of prevailing system of education, simultaneously there is a constant reference of the experiences of the yore & new ways called ‘alternative’. Some even advocate home schooling & others call for de-schooling/de-learning – a never ending debate. But still the issue remains. If can’t be solved, it can’t even be buried under the carpet. Human being is constantly creative, finds out new ways & means and releases in public domain (now more easily) – and the journey begins for the impact to be understood & analysed later. Today we have various belief systems in the field of education and numerous ways to achieve it.

For all those close to nature though, it is very evident that inspiration, insight, instinct, intuitive capabilities, centeredness, empathy and expanding love (non-separateness) all come as effects of this interaction. Alas! Modern society and prevailing education systems in particular doesn't recognize this truth! Today we value, respect and reward intellect, thought, logic, talk over contemplation, poise, feeling and silence. Nature doesn't create photocopies. Every individual is unique, so there can't be a single system workable for all. We need to enable adaptable processes according to the evolving needs of the individuals. It can be examined that whether nature can play a part in learning and studying. May be partnering with nature help us seeing things as they are & doing things as they ought to be done. An individual one learns through judgement, through experience - from family, society, surroundings One may live as a learning community with your teacher (who was like a foster-parent, facilitator, mentor, guide, friend and philosopher) AND learn socially/ collaboratively/ experientially as you live life.

Many of us have done a great deal of effort & some have even devoted their lifetime. It is the time to sit together, share our understanding & experiences, pool our wisdom & try evolve a process which facilitated learning, especially in the formative years, which can be called education or to differentiate 'alternative education'. Let us make an attempt to quench the human need for prosperity with peace.

One of the objectives of Sanchi University is to attempt understanding the whole gamut of education/learning, fine tune the philosophy behind it & try evolve the purpose, content & the process to achieve it. Sanchi University of Buddhist-Indic Studies wants to know and understand the experiments in the field of education, shaping underlying probabilities according to the individual needs and working on alternative education. The University wants give a common platform, where we can share experiences, learn, understand and channelize our efforts. We also intent to study what are the new experiments currently going on and their impact too. Sanchi University of Buddhist-Indic Studies (SUBIS) proposes to organise 3 day workshop to deliberate upon the entire gamut of 'alternative education'. A wide range of participants from educationist to philosophers, child psychologists to practitioners; teachers, facilitators, technologists, professional, freelancers & amateurs shall be participating. This ongoing process involves working in depth on the options and University would like to work further on the ideas and recommendations emerged from discussions. The University also aims to establish a 'special centre for alternative education'.