

## National Workshop on 'Why, What and How of learning'

Learning is the basis of life. All living beings are cognitive beings. It seems teaching is an activity that got invented in the context of modernity. With large scale penetration of literacy in Europe, in the 15th century modern man might have felt the need to teach children how to read and write. Till then children could learn anything with our assistance. Everything else in nature learns because learning is the nature of living. For all those close to nature it is very evident that inspiration, insight, instinct, intuitive capabilities, centeredness, empathy and expanding love (non-separateness) all come as effects of the interaction of human beings with nature.

We have to reconstruct spaces for true learning; Conditions that enable formation of human beings who are rooted in the laws of nature, sustainable, nature centric and inclusive. May be, partnering with nature helps us seeing things as they are & doing things as they ought to be done. As an individual one learns through observation, through experience - from family, society, and their surroundings. One may live as a part of learning community AND learn socially/ collaboratively/ experientially as one lives life.

It looks like modern society in general and prevailing education systems in particular, doesn't recognize some of 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.

With the commercialization and corporatization of education the problems in education seems to have multiplied. Knowledge seeking has shifted from its existential orientation to purely utilitarian and anthropocentric.

At this juncture can we come together to enquire on what is learning, what for is knowledge, how children learn, why nature learns, how learning takes place in nature.

Whatever that has been natural to children is being taken away from them. Playing, sharing, loving, making of toys, exploring their surroundings, exposure to nature and natural processes etc. After cordoning off children from the world we are attempting to teach them the **word**. Their creativity, natural curiosity towards the existential questions, cognitive process are damaged and distorted in this process.

Modern man is made to believe in his ability to control nature and his invincibility. Aren't we part and parcel of nature? Following its innate laws is in the formation of our beingness based on these innate laws.

One of the objectives of Sanchi University is to attempt understanding the whole gamut of education/learning, fine tune the philosophy behind it and try to 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.

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 may facilitate natural learning, especially in the formative years.

## **Tentative plan of the workshop**

The first session that is being planned is to enquire/ explore learning in nature- why, what it learns and how it learns. We can include the natural learning of humans where learning, livelihood and life are integrated in this itself as the second half.

The second day we will spend in exploring the modern learning paradigm in human beings, including colonization, impact of literacy, commerce, corporatization etc. How cognitive tools, processes and structure are differ when learning the world is replaced by learning the WORD. Or are these so rigid and mechanical and has no influence if the cognitive sources changed. So what has been the role of language? What really is mother tongue? What is the real quality in language that qualifies for being mother tongue? Etc....

The third day could be spent on exploring the possibilities given the limitations of the present context. As the learning, livelihood and living are fragmented and disconnected in this context exploration needs to done to arrive at a meaningful living where these are re integrated.

Arrive at principles that are the basis of learning. What new journey can be undertaken from these explorations, can we involve in research, documentation, reflection so that an ongoing sharing and learning can take place.



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