

Abstract:-

As is well evident the Indian society is under the throes of social, political, economic, technological and educational upheavals. All the problems of yester years are going strong and influencing the life of a large number of people very badly. The phenomena of inequality and poverty, illiteracy and illhealth superstition and ignorance, class and caste conflicts, regional and communal crisis are gnawing at the vitals of individual's lives. Central and state Government are withdrawing from investment in production, health, education and many service sectors. Education has become a tradable good.

Keywords:

Learning Problems , Consciousness , Quality Higher Education , Indian society .

LEARNING PROBLEMS OF STUDENT'S: NEED FOR CONSCIOUSNESS AND SOLUTIONS FOR QUALITY HIGHER EDUCATION



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INTRODUCTION

Due to wrong priorities and skewed policies pursued by the powers that be Indian higher education system has suffered a lot and failed to reach the much avowed objectives. Especially, the higher education opportunities of youth from deprived sections of the society are affected irrevocably. And the quality in higher education is in peril.

Jandiyala B.G. Tilak (2004) has observed that public expenditure on higher education began declined since the beginning of the 1990's. Central Govt. spent in 1993-94 Rs. 645 crores whereas in 1996-97 it was only Rs. 559/. Paradoxically during this period it was emphasized that 'quality of higher education has to be improved to produce globally competitive graduates'.

Several thinkers, on education have enumerated the objectives of higher education. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru declares "Higher Education stands for humanism, for tolerance, for progress for the adventure of ideas and for the search of truth. It stands for the onward march of the human race towards ever higher objectives. If the universities discharge their duties adequately, then it is well with the nation and the people."

Jandiyala B.G. Tilak (2004) has listed five significant aims of higher education. They are: creation and dissemination of knowledge; providing man power for industrialization; developing positive attitude and overall transformation of societies; formation of strong nation state and reaping the benefits from globalization; enhancement of life of mind offering the wider society both cultural and political benefits.

Arun Nigavekar, (2004) the Chairman of U.G.C. strongly believes. Education is the key to creating, adapting and spreading knowledge. Higher education is a powerful tool to build knowledge for information based society. Further, he emphasizes on hitherto neglected, but highly important skill of 'learning how to learn'.

Sunney Tharappan, (2001) Director of CLHRD, Mangalore avers that degree education has been designed to achieve following objectives: To lead a student to the fulfillment of purpose of his life; to develop professional skills; to nurture concern for fellow beings; to make a student humanistic in attitudes; to create balance between the emotional and rational minds; to enable the student to become principle centred; to understand the need for social compromise to belong to any society.

In essence the objectives of college education to us are making the student capable to:

1. Earn knowledge and wisdom
2. Gain professional skills for gainful employment
3. Enable the students to seek post graduate education and take up much needed research work
4. Develop tolerance for differences in others
5. Enhance awareness, critical and creatively thinking skills
6. Obtain skills of 'Learning to Learn' for continuous education in the knowledge based society
7. To enable people to take initiative and leadership
8. To produce goods or give services
9. To provide an instrument of development social, political

LEARNING PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES

After having gone through what higher education should achieve, now let us look at problems and challenges faced by the college students. Problems in essence are impediments which hamper the smooth cross over from one stage to another. They cause difficulties and hardships. Therefore, they need to be solved before one can go ahead and reach the set goals. Similarly, challenges are pressing problems which ask for solution at the individual. It requires total devotion and dedication not only of students but also of teachers and parents and management, Govts'. collective effort. What are the problems and challenges faced by students'.

Reaching the essential objectives discussed above seems to be impossible because of various problems and the college education is plagued with. V.C. Kulandai Swamy (2005) States that 'these institutions of higher learning perform only class room teaching preparing students for examination like tutorial colleges. Colleges are ill-equipped and under staffed'. After the exam a paper degree is handed over without much knowledge and no skills. He pointed out that India with nearly 300 Universities and 16,000 colleges is able to take only seven percent of relevant age group (18 – 23) into its fold. There is need to increase this to at least 25% by 2020. The money spent by the Government on higher education is very low. It is a mere 0.48% of total budget (6% of GDP) earmarked for education.

An attempt was made by R. Venkatreddy (2005) to identify the learning problems of under graduate students' studying at Gulbarga. The content analysis of the student's responses reveals that more than 85% of the participants feel fee hike as the biggest problem. The other problems which emerged in the study are: 1. lack of support from the family and community for education; 2. lack of guidance for learning; 3. lack of teachers in the college; 4. lack of regular classes; 5. old and outdated syllabus; 6. lack of library facilities and lack of job opportunities percentage has not been calculated.

In interaction with students during invited lectures and psychological counseling sessions the following problems are observed in connection with college education.

Students report that they have to learn a lot in a short time.

1. Accumulated academic deficit largely hampers present academic achievement.
2. Negative pressure of peer group becomes an impediment for learning.
3. Misconstruing of messages dished out by the media and development of harmful illusions.
4. Feelings of hopelessness, helplessness, meaninglessness due to disorientation.
5. Inability to manage emotions and examination fear.
6. Confusions and apprehensions related to sexual matters.
7. Development of wrong study habits and response patterns.
8. Complaints about continuous chit chat in the class room, while lecture is on.
9. Insults and harmful comparisons by teachers.

Dr. C.R. Chandrashekhar (2000) reports that 50% of students suffer from physical health problems, 15% of the students suffer mental disorders, such as depression, anxiety, hysteria, adjustment disorder, and these get exhibited in the form of irritation, anger out burst, aggression, sadness, feelings of inferiority, examination fear, conduct disorder, irregularity in attending the lectures, poor learning and failure in the exam. He remarks that since there is lot of stigma attached to mental illness students suffer in silence without consulting the doctors / counselors. Srinivasan (1994), Prayag Mehta (1970) and Majumdar (1977) found many problems of students.

(Sudarshankumar 1978). R. Parthasarathy (2000) states that biological development and emotional readiness of the youth for heterosexual relationship do not proceed at the same time. The cheap literature, wild shows on T.V. Internet and films stimulate sexual impulses which lead to dangerous and painful sexual experience in youth further leading to unwanted pregnancies and infections, and anxiety. There is a pressing need for age appropriate sex education, development of right values and positive attitudes coupled with nurturing responsible behavior in the youngsters. All these problems render students incapable of adjusting to challenging situation of learning.

EMPOWERING THE STUDENT

There is a need for the effective programme on a massive scale to empower and enable the students to adjust to the demanding challenges of higher education in India. Besides, providing the infrastructural facilities there is need for change in value orientations, perceptions and attitudes of community leaders and students alike. William James in this regard asserts 'the greatest discovery of my generation is that people can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind'. However, stopping at changing the attitudes while keeping the old, ineffective and inefficient response patterns will not contribute for any meaningful progress. Therefore, the need for massive counseling and psychotherapy for behaviour modification is emphasized.

Financial support and psychological encouragement must emanate from the family members and community leaders. The perceived lack of importance among significant others will induce low need for achievement in the students. Udaya Pareek has identified a motivational syndrome among the large number of Indians. He has stated that among Indians there is 'low need for achievement high need for dependence, low need for extension, no delayed need gratification. It is necessary that this motivational syndrome is to be reversed for increasing the academic achievement. For this as mentioned above assessment and awareness raising programmes are very necessary.

Department of Collegiate Education in Karnataka in association with CLHRD, Mangalore started several innovative orientation programmes for degree students under 'TQM in college education'. Sunney Tharappan, designed and trained the lecturers to implement these programmes. These are very effective and efficient to help the students to adjust and obtain maximum academic achievement. The programmes are (1) Orientation to College Education, for I year (2) Spoken English, for II year & (3) Employment and Entrepreneurship training for III year Degree students. Conducting these programmes for students will make them clearly oriented to the important task on their hands and builds necessary competency for learning in them. It seems the good initiative has been lost. The well meant programme has been a one time affair. Last academic year these programmes by and large were not conducted for want of funds. Regularity and continuity in conduction of these programmes is a must.

PROVIDING STUDENTS COUNSELING SERVICES

So many psychological problems, emotional disturbances and mental disorders of students have emerged in various studies. These problems are not recognized by the students as well as the 'significant others' as having any impact on learning. These aspects neglected, rejected and not reported to any body. Suffering of students in silence continues. It is an undeniable fact that mind is a vital element in the process of teaching, learning, gaining knowledge and skills. But, when mind is suffering it can not be efficiently employed in learning. Understating the structure, functions, strengths, weaknesses and disorders of mind would enable the teacher and learner to face the challenges of learning adequately. Therefore, it is necessary that at least 15 hours of time in the beginning of the academic year is earmarked for conducting a workshop on Mental ability, Learning ability and Personality Development'. A certificate course may be offered to students. (Since the test of Mental Ability and general knowledge have been a common features of all the common entrance tests (CET) conducted for the selection of candidates for higher education or appointment to any job starting from

Police Constable. F.D.C., High School Teacher to Superintendent of Police, there is dire need of imparting training in these fields to students at degree education.) The following topics can be discussed in the workshop:

1. Psychosocial Problems of Learning
2. Effective study habits & Skills
3. Enhance concentration & Memory
4. Rapid Reading and Writing Skills
5. Adolescence: Period of Storm & Stress
6. Personality Development what? & How?
7. Healthy Personality Syndrome
8. Life Skills Education
9. Face the Exams Confidently
10. Stress Management
11. Understanding and Improving Mind and Behaviour
12. Management of Resources
13. Promotion of Physical and Mental Health

Following Psychological Testing of students can be taken up

1. Measurement of Intelligence
2. Assessment of Personality
3. Measurement of Interests & Aptitudes
4. Measurement of Motives and Goals
5. Measurement of Mental Ability
6. College Adjustment of Students
7. Occupational Preferences

Based on the data obtained on these tests guidance and counseling programmes are to be devised. Exams are sapping the enthusiasm of students for learning. In case of few unfortunate, and emotionally ill-equipped students exams are taking away their life. Failure in the exam and lack of expected marks ranks leads to lot of inferiority feelings. Dr. D.R. Nagaraj, Director, NIMHANS, Bangalore while inaugurating the 5th National Conference of IAMH at Gulbarga University in January 2005, pointed out that 'Every year lakhs of students are writing the board exams, students as also parents are under constant and seivour stress during this period. This is a big mental health problem which needs the urgent attention of professional psychologists and counselors'. Dr. C.R. Chandrashekhar, delivering the key note address at the above conference, said that there is a strong, case for providing counseling services to help the students learn well, remember better and face exams with confidence.

In Karnataka since 1995a novel programme of 'Training College Teachers in Students Counseling' has been undertaken by the Collegiate Education and NIMHANS, Bangalore. 'It is a matter of pride to note that such a programme is first of its kind in the entire country'. Under the initiative and coordination of Dr. C.R. Chandrashekhar, more than 300 lecturers have been trained and they are serving the student community to good effect. When asked Dr. C.R. Chandrashekhar about the impact by he said I have no any post.

About the importance of counseling Mr. Conant, Former President of Harward University states' It would not be too much to say that on the success or failure of our guidance and counseling (emphasis added) programme hangs in all probability the success or failure of system of education'.

Therefore, Management and Principals are requested to take a lot of interest and support the teachers trained in the 'student counseling' for carrying on the most meaningful work of counseling which benefits the students.

STUDENTS INITIATIVE

To make general degree education job oriented several measures have been taken up by UGC. They are vocationalisation of theory subjects and offering certificate courses in journalism travel and tourism, script writing for T.V. and Radio programmes, fashion technology, early child hood care and education, guidance and counseling. Spoken English, office management, etc. Grant of 'Academic Autonomy' to colleges means some more meaningful addition to syllabus along with introduction of semester system of examination. Students stress and pressure will further increase.

Under 'colleges with 'Potential for Excellence; scheme lot of funds are coming for the development of infrastructure and equipment. In order to adjust to these aspects necessary changes are to be made at the level of student who is the key figure in this whole process of learning.

This requires lot of initiative and active participation of students. They have to once to realize that, knowledge is power; skills are the assets, and new ideas help influnce the people around. Education is the only way out to garner the power of knowledge. Along with the social support, personal interest, high motivation and full confidence are necessary psychological aspects for effective learning. Students should realize that 'learning is the exploration of treasure within' in which their total and active participation is mandatory. Breaking the ineffective habits and cultivating scientific study skills to learn are two fundamental

requirements in this regard. Student's organizations and teachers have to prepare students for the essential changes in attitudes, habit and values with regard to learning. They have to perceive that poor learning and poor performance can not take them forward in life. To become globally competent youth they have to strive hard and learn well.

CONCLUSION

There are serious problems and daunting challenges in degree education which require special and concerted efforts on the part of various agencies, such as Government, Community and Management etc. If there are problems there are also solutions. Resource crunch, wrong policies skewed priorities have put sustainability, quality and expansion of college education at bay. Students are also facing problems from the family front. At the lowest rung of society there is in general discouragement of the poor and deprived women students going to receive higher education. Personally students have a plethora of physical, psychological, emotional and mental health problems. Inadequate attitudes, bad habits, wrong values

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