

Spirituality as a Part of Education Curriculum – Dire Need of an Hour



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Now, it's a high time that education should be perceived as a tool for not only the source of livelihood but, a path to the evolution of mankind. Spirituality should invariably be a part of the Education curriculum towards a holistic and comprehensive mode of upbringing a student who turns to be an asset for the society towards a sustainable living. Definitely many B-schools have started introducing spirituality as a course but, extra efforts are required for continuous education to more focus on nurturing an ideology for proving the most senior capable entity and guardian of this planet earth.

Keywords: Spirituality, Education, Sustainability

1. Introduction

Recently and as most of the time news papers, news channels are bursting with topics of scams, pollution, political uncertainty, recession, Kashmir issues and so on with a little coverage of constructive and positive happening. Such problems are at the surface because they are the outcome of the greed, sins and negativity prevailing at the bottom level on human mind. Seeds are at deeper level not being seen properly but, complaining about what is being intruded definitely requires a deep introspection and examination to the roots. One striking point which seems the very root of all intricacies is the quality of human being. We go on talking with the issues, problems and many enthusiastic fellows ponders with the solutions but, when we takes a stocks of the situation over a certain period then it concludes that the ultimate outcome is not one which was aimed while deliberating for the solutions and implementation thereof. Classic quote clings that prevention is better then cure and it's a very high time to plunge into the very basic nuance of any issue.

Profile and level of a human being, level of the personality, quality of ideology, mindset that matters because it give birth to the emotions and thoughts are the outcome of emotions and such thoughts result into actions. If we focuses and put our energy and efforts for nurturing the profile, quality, level of human being which get reflected in emotions, thoughts and actions then certainly cure shall be minimized. But, very pertinent question alarms to this – how to do this?

Life is not a single block but, built up by so many components and also do not survive in isolation so, one component affect the other one and if one component is not functioning properly or having effective functioning then certainly it will have negative or positive impact on other and thereby the overall wellbeing is determined with a genesis of level of functioning of different components. By and large our actions are not in isolation but, are a resultant of our overall personality, state of mind and way of upbringing and certainly surrounding, environment in which one lives have a great impact on the actions. If we examines and do a little introspection then we realizes that upbringing by the family and later by the school, colleges in the form of education occupies a prime space in articulating ones ideology and way of perceiving the things and society and then beliefs, thoughts and ultimately actions.

Education is one of the most powerful medium for ensuring the qualitative life circumventing sufficient wealth, craving health, societal respect and a space of honor and acknowledgement. Education remains like a life blood for the overall personality of a person. By ensuring most qualitative education one can hope for the translucence in the way of life.

2. Need of an Hour

By depicting the utmost importance of education, we logically feel the need of education and followed by accessing the periphery of education with the prevailing situation. Unless and until we continuously access the point where we were before and where we want to reach, we won't be able to judge the point at we are standing. Applying theses parameters do we see the education justifies our requirements? Answer to this question abrupt with a NO say. So, does it mean the education is wrong or insufficient? Perhaps, YES, present strand of education starting from schools to post graduate educational institutes needs an extra flare so as to fully grab the fruits of efforts. Spirituality is the dire need of an hour professing that extra flare in the realm of education. Leadership qualities build up on a cornerstone of spirituality has brought revolution in the society. A comprehensive approach towards the life and wellbeing is required at this juncture.

It's worthwhile to go through an article titled "Make moral and spiritual education compulsory" written by Rajyogi Brahmakumar Nikunj ji and published on 5th September, 2016 which carries "Since its Independence from Britishraaj in 1947, India has crossed many milestones and created history in many fields of developments. However, despite these achievements, its quite unfortunate that the current budget allocation for education sector is just 3.8 %, Rs 68,968 crore of the total outlay of Rs.17, 77,477 crore. It is a great misfortune of our country that, in the matter of educational policy, the voices of even the greatest personalities, whose names stand out prominently as men of integrity and as our national leaders, are not properly heeded! Though our present-day leaders often quote Mahatma Gandhi in their lectures in order to find support to

their policies and to win public sympathies, in the matter of education, they almost disregard even his views. Mahatma Gandhi had clearly expressed his views on educational policy when he said: "I know that there is a school of thought which believes in only secular instruction being given in public schools. I know also that, in a country like India, where there are most religions of the world represented, and where there are so many denominations in the same religion, there must be a difficulty about making provisions for religious instruction. But if India is not to declare spiritual bankruptcy, religious instruction of the youth must be held to be at least as necessary as secular instruction." The Education system in India undergoes change every five years when a new government comes to power. It's a fact that we all have witnessed over last few years specifically. It should also be noted that ever since India adopted the present Constitution, the word secularism has been bandied about wrongly so as to block all efforts to introduce moral and spiritual education. Even though one Education Commission after another has recommended the introduction of moral education, the Government continues to disregard their recommendations in the fancied interest of a false secularism. The result is that things continue to deteriorate more speedily than before. Sri Aurobindo had clearly said that "To neglect moral and religious education altogether is to corrupt the race. The notorious moral corruption in our young men, previous to the saving touch of the Swadeshi movement, was direct result of the purely mental instruction given to them under the English system of education". Hence it would not be wrong to say that a person without moral and spiritual education, is sub-human whose life is worth not a penny. One can quote views of many other national leaders like Dr. Radhakrishnan, Vinoba Bhave, among others, extensively in support of the above contention. But there seems to be no need for this because the policy makers very well know about all these views. Then where is the hitch? Its simply lack of realization of the need to formulate a consistent education policy in which moral education and the practice of meditation form a part of our educational system. However if it is not realized soon, than it may lead to a moral vacuum which may further give rise to crime, corruption, cruelty, violence, and extremism. The need of the hour is not just introduce moral education, but there also is a need to know the nature of consciousness or the self because it is not enough to teach physics, chemistry, maths and science. "Education must enlighten a person about the self or the Mind. Aurobindo has said: "The true basis of education is the study of human mind. Any system of education founded on theories of academic perfection, which ignores (mind) the instrument of study, is more likely to hamper and impair intellectual growth than to produce a perfectly equipped mind". Likewise, Schrodinger, the physicist who was awarded Nobel Prize for research in Wave Mechanics, wrote in his book- titled Science and Humanism Who are we? The answer to this question is not only one of the tasks of science but the task of science." Today scientific research has established it very clearly that Meditation has many benefits for the individual and the society, then why the Government does not introduce it in schools and colleges? The answer to this question might, perhaps, be that there are so many systems or kinds of meditation in vogue and the government does not know which one to introduce. This, however, does not seem to be the sufficient reason to block the introduction of a very important and useful subject for all time. A way will have to be found to determine which form or forms are the best among the dozen or more that are in vogue. If the results are judged from the benefits which accrue to the practitioners in respect of their physical, mental, spiritual and social health that should be a sufficient ground to consider its introduction in some schools to begin with on trial basis at least. The other criterion could be whether the principles on which it is based are universal, scientific and psychologically correct. Furthermore, the Government could give recognition to institutions who impart moral and spiritual education and teach Meditation along with giving its students a broad international outlook. So, let us raise demand for education reforms by coming together in unity and get rid of our laidback attitude to move into the age of enlightenment where our thoughts will be constantly loving, pure and harmonious (<http://www.dailypioneer.com/vivacity/make-moral-and-spiritual-education-compulsory.html>).

3. Nuances Engraving Spirituality, Education

A.

The word "Spirituality" comes from the Latin term "Spiritus", which means "breath". In its true sense Spirituality is highly individualistic and certainly applies at a personal level. Many have tried to institutionalize for the foundation of Spirituality and that is welcomed so as to channelize the group energy but, at its route Spirituality is an individual persona and multidimensional nuances of Spirituality caters to the individuals depending upon the individual capacity and level of consciousness. Therefore, many times it seems difficult to describe, explain and convince the foundation of spirituality.

1. Mr. P. Rajagopalachari (2002) says: "spirituality is the natural expression of once own inner Self. Spirituality is the science of divine human perfection up to the highest limit of divinization"
2. Kelemen and Peltonen (2005) opined: "Spirituality is a positive emotion that serves to bring together the rational and the embodied aspects of human life while at the same time reaching to make a connection with a larger universe. To make this a guideline for human existence at work, it is, however, necessary to understand it as an art, requiring regular exercise and constant working on one's self and one's relation to the world"
3. This student / author believe that : "Spirituality is the God's gift to the mankind given by way of an inherent virtue and quality that deals with introspection, magnification, refinement and purification of total physic, psychological and intellectual levels through managing the self and further nurturing intrinsic values and tendencies towards the supreme level of consciousness for attaining self actualization through the route of the balanced life between materialistic world and the inner world and generating value addition at both the personal level and for the mankind in general "

Based upon the personal experience, characteristics of being Spiritual at individual level are the feel of: wisdom, emotions, awareness, completeness, living in the present, presence of mind, willpower, sacredness, sensitive, sensible, inner peace, inner

love, joy and happiness, faith in oneself and to the God, unconditional love, acceptance, drive of excellence, balanced life, importance of the ethics, values and virtues in life, quest for the truth etc.

B.

The term Education is derived from the Latin word “educere” meaning “out” and “ducere” meaning “to lead” so, traditionally implies that education is the process of nourishing or nurturing a person, to lead out for his / her potentials for the development.

Education should be perceived in a larger context and in a holistic way which encompasses not only the prescribed course curriculum, text books and teachings by the teachers in classroom.

Education (shiksha or vidhya) is the ideal blending of moral refinement and intellectual development for living a fruitful life for the overall evolution. Educating a student should be holistic and not just dumping information, it should be the comprehensive tool for the wholesome development, nurturing and grooming of body and mind. Imparting education should be a harmonious blend of information, knowledge and wisdom, harnessing the traditional and cultural values and ensuring creative and innovative thinking, self esteem, cultivating divine manners, fascinating character, elegant human traits and enduring for the brighter future.

4. Intelligence Quotient (IQ), Emotional Quotient (EQ) and Spiritual Quotient (SQ)

IQ = Intelligence Quotient is about thinking. IQ measures our cognitive ability but academic or cognitive intelligence alone offers little preparation for the emotional challenges we all have to face in the course of our daily lives. Measuring IQ alone is not enough; measuring the whole is more accurate and conclusive, IQ and EQ and SQ - a holistic approach.

EQ = Emotional Quotient is about feeling. EQ is a term used to represent other factors that can lead to healthy relationships and the ability to respond appropriately and positively to everyday life. It is about recognizing emotions and managing them. Emotions without a physical expression are collections of thoughts. Talking about emotions means we have to have an understanding and a language for feelings then we have to be able to articulate our feelings. EQ is about understanding ourselves, how we relate to others and how others perceive us. EQ also helps us to understand how others are feeling and enables us to develop more fulfilling and deeper relationships. All this is essential if we are to be able to manage and resolve conflict as and when it arises as well as functioning collaboratively and collectively in everyday situations.

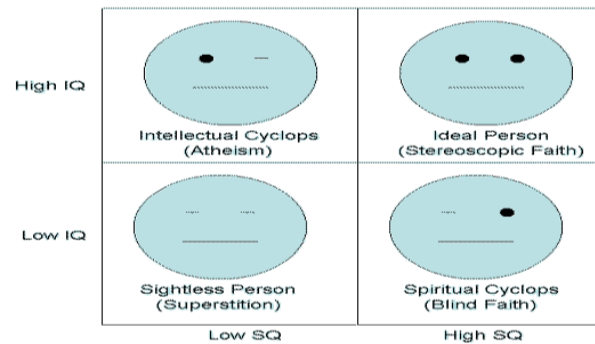
SQ = Spiritual Quotient is about being. SQ is very difficult to define. But it needs to be clear it is not about organized religion. SQ is about questions more than answers. It lives in stories, poetry, metaphor, uncertainty and paradox. One of the biggest qualities of SQ is wisdom. Ingredients of SQ are values such as courage, integrity, intuition, compassion, empathy and knowing the limits of your knowledge. SQ can also mean unlearning what others have taught you; questioning life issues; thinking laterally or outside the box; seeing situations and issues differently; having a greater understanding of all possibilities. Spirituality is an essential component of a holistic approach to life, its finds expression in creativity and all art forms and is the bit that adheres together our conscious intellect and our intelligent action. Spirituality sustains us from within when all else fails; spirituality allows us to dream, aspire and raise ourselves up.

Three types of Intelligence

Capital	Intelligence	Function
IQ		
Material Capital	Rational Intelligence	What I think
EQ		
Social Capital	Emotional Intelligence	What I feel
SQ		
Spiritual Capital	Spiritual Intelligence	What I am

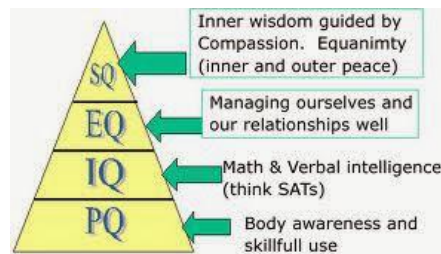
(Source: <http://www.speakingtree.in/allslides/what-is-iq-eq-sq>)

The premise of Guillen's book (*Can a Smart Person Believe on God?*) is that life is best lived with your IQ and SQ fully functioning. He offers the following figure to illustrate where we might find ourselves.



(Guillen, 2004)

So, we can summarise above with a help of following diagram



(Source: <http://www.liberalpulpit.org/2013/11/spiritual-quotient.html>)

5. Spirituality Blended with Education

The term spirituality is turning out to be more basic as well as common as an area of academic interest for the academicians and Management consultants. Even for common men due to advent of technology so many media outreach are available highlighting excerpts from the talks by various spiritual leaders from different paths and thereby access to the ways and means to know and practice the “Spirituality” have also been accessible for most of and thereby momentum for the spiritual journey has evolved around and thereby concerned can benefit according to his or her level of grasping.

Now, it’s a high time that education should be perceived as a tool for not only the source of livelihood but, a path to the evolution of mankind. Spirituality should invariably be a part of the Education curriculum towards a holistic and comprehensive mode of upbringing a student who turns to be an asset for the society towards a sustainable living. Definitely many B-schools have started introducing spirituality as a course but, if introduced at a very early stage of school life then it will serve the purpose for giving the shape at the tender age. Extra efforts are required for continuous education to more focus on nurturing an ideology for proving the most senior capable entity and guardian of this planet earth.

Spirituality cultivate a sense of “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam” [entire universe belongs to the same family] and leads to the state of “together we grows”.

6. What Encompasses and how to Develop Spirituality?

Spirituality in Reflected and Visible Through the Expression of Following into Actions

- humanity as a base,
- having a vision and insight for the inner world,
- belief in supreme power,
- inclinations for the ideals, virtues, moral
- a propensity to foster human attributes, such as love, faithfulness and goodness
- the quest for meaning in life, for truth and ultimate values
- the sense of identity and self-worth which enables to value others

Spirituality involves a deeper drift with the inner world and realizing oneself passing through the true meaning of life and being connected to the supreme level commonly understood as the God.

Quest for experiencing the truth beyond the five (physical) senses, Inspiration, creativity and consciousness are the pre-requisites of spirituality.

Religion and Spirituality are two different connotations. Religion can be part of the Spirituality. “Spirituality is the God’s gift to the mankind given by way of an inherent virtue and quality that deals with introspection, magnification, refinement and purification of total physic, psychological and intellectual levels through managing the self and further nurturing intrinsic values and tendencies towards the supreme level of consciousness for attaining self-actualization through the route of the balanced life between materialistic world and the inner world and generating value addition at both the personal level and for the mankind in general”.

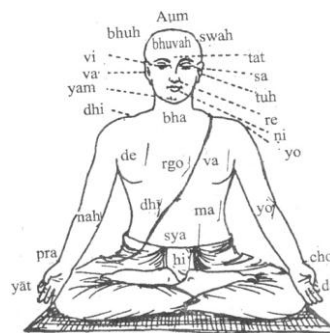
Spiritual practices may include meditation, mindfulness, prayer, the contemplation of sacred texts, ethical development and the use of psychoactive substances. Love and/or compassion are often described as the mainstay of spiritual development (Dalai Lama, 1999).

Waijman Discerns Four Forms of Spiritual Practices

- Somatic practices, especially deprivation and diminishment. Deprivation aims to purify the body. Diminishment concerns the repulsement of ego-oriented impulses. Examples include fasting and poverty.
- Psychological practices, for example meditation.
- Social practices. Examples include the practice of obedience and communal ownership, reforming ego-orientedness into other-orientedness.
- Spiritual. All practices aim at purifying ego-centeredness, and direct the abilities at the divine reality.
- (Waijman, 2000 through <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spirituality#CITEREFWaijman2000>)

Based upon the Personal Experiences, the Student / Author Believes Spirituality can Be Developed Through

1. Thorough study of Vedas, Upanishads, ancient holy scriptures. Further rethinking and grasping the essence of such readings and implementation thereof.
2. Yoga, Pranayam techniques are quite useful for physical as well as mental health.
3. Gayatri Mantra is having a very powerful effect on the five bodies and 24 places in the human body. See below picture depicting the effect of Gayatri Mantra (http://www.awgp.org/spiritual_wisdom/gayatri/activation_of_internal_power_centres_by_gayatri_sadhan).



4. Healing is yet another tool for curing the illness at physical, mental and emotional level. "Shivyog" has proved the effective scientific tool for the healthy life. (<http://shivyog.com/research/>)
5. Prayer, Meditation is widely known for the living holistic life. Einstein has rightly explained with a small formula $E = MC^2$. From above formula, a spiritual inference can be drawn that energy is formed from vibration and vibration is formed from thought which is an outcome of emotions and that energy leads to materialization. So, it would be: - Emotion → Thought → Vibration → Energy → Materialization.
6. Giving unconditional love, respect to all, doing philanthropic activities with a view to "something to give back to the society" definitely helps to grow in manifold.

7. Spirituality should be a Way of Life and Extra Efforts Required

Spirituality should be a way of life and not a technique or a tool time being. More and more efforts should be towards development of Spiritual Quotient (SQ). Instead of putting an effort to teach Spirituality, focus should be on interweaving as a natural part of life addressing the interiors of human life through educational curriculum.

Firstly, fraternity of teachers needs to be equipped by providing extensive training and a base for further imparting the teachings to the students.

Spirituality is an essential component of a holistic approach to life, its finds expression in creativity and all art forms and is the bit that adheres together our conscious intellect and our intelligent action. Spirituality sustains us from within when all else fails; spirituality allows us to dream, aspire and raise ourselves up (<http://www.speakingtree.in/allslides/what-is-iq-eq-sq>).

It is not guaranteed that spirituality will flourish under the formal guidance and structured supervision but, it supports and helps.

Following factors are essential for getting desired outcome through blending spirituality with education:

- Basic interest and aptitude for the ancient Indian philosophy, Indian wisdom
- Adaptive to change and grab the new thought process and ideology without biases and most important implementation thereof, only learning without implementation has a little value
- Urge to share the treasure of knowledge with others

Practice makes man perfect and continuous learning, development with a Spiritual way of life helps to manage stress, enhance equanimity and that leads to the realization of ultimate truth of oneness with the supreme energy – the God.

In general it is said that instead of driving anything out of compulsion it is good if causing anything to be done by self motivation. In general this is perfectly should be the case but, when object and vision is for the sustainable living and a push is required then for initial stage a sort of compulsion by implementing relevant rules and regulations should be welcomed because it would be in the interest of the society at larger and for being a mean to the end of sustainable living. It's a high time that Government should incorporate statutory provisions in the Education Act to direct all public, private schools, colleges to include a course on Spirituality without any bias for any particular caste, community, religion.

India is a secular state entailing equal treatment of all religions by the state. A sharp demarcation line between religious education and spiritual education should be drawn. Spiritual education involves a more comprehensive treatment above the religion, rituals, beliefs. Indian wherein so many religions are being followed, Government sponsored education can be a ground of politics and societal conflict. Wikipedia shows approaches towards religious education in different countries as follows

China → formal religious education is permitted

India → Number of private schools by religious institutions are operating

Japan → religious or political education that promote a specific religious or political group are prohibited at public schools

Pakistan → Muslim students must take Islamic studies and it is optional for non-muslim students

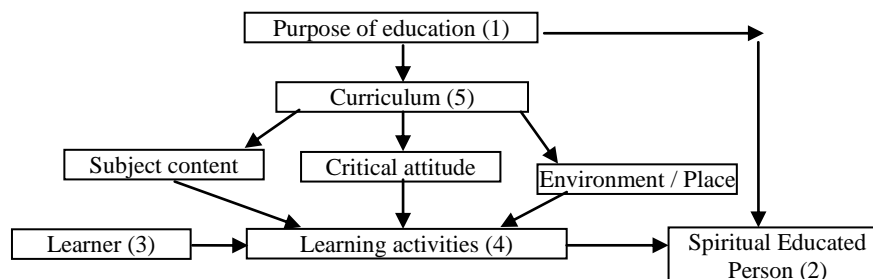
South East Asia → Buddhist teachings are taught in public schools

UK → Catholic, Church of England and Jewish schools are supported with the State system

US → religious education is prohibited in public school except from a neutral academic perspective

So, looking to the present stratum of societal and political situation, it will certainly not useful to start with religion so as to deal with Spirituality. Rather, basic practices should be taught and let the pathway be created by the student-teacher joint efforts. At initial stage few experiments and trail and errors can occur but, with a passage of time and joint efforts a clear pathway will be carved out. Different paths to spirituality will be suitably applied to different students based upon his / her ability, need and requirements.

Robert Scott Webster in his Ph.D thesis titled “An Existential Framework of Spirituality for Education” (2003) submitted to Griffith University narrates a general model of education consisting five elements as per below diagram



First element is Purpose of education which are main goals, objects and forms the basis of the policy as well strategies for the realization of goals. Ultimate result to be achieved is spiritual educated person and is the second element. Third element of the educational model is the learner who is to become a spiritual educated person. Fourth element of the educational model comprises learning activities enabling the learner to develop the learning outcomes. The fifth and final element of this model is the curriculum designed to promote those learning activities identified. This broadly involves subject content, a critical attitude and the environment (place). Post implementation, continuous evaluation and review of the model is required to take adequate corrective actions.

8. Conclusions

The world has tried enough to take decisions and tackling human issues on the basis of market driven ideology but, a deeper insight is required with a flare of spiritual dimension. Perhaps this is the only way left to take a try and which can be a source of hope for a sustainable living. We have to decide “what kind of persons required for the future?” and answer shall underlie to quest for the self awareness and subsequently providing guidelines to the next generations. Spirituality is somewhat less explored domain in the field of education so, a great scope to explore and reap the fruits. Spirituality is the gift of the God and is interwoven with the inner self however, need to be uncovered with the constant and continuous practice.

It's a very popular saying that - Journey being at home and also a very famous story of Zen master who realizes at the last stage of life that instead of changing the word, society it would be rather worth that I should first change myself – these two aptly answers the intricacy and issues being faced by the society, nation.

Rabindranath Tagore once narrated having essence that men is the most senior capable entity of this planet earth and therefore must behave and prove as the guardian of other living creature, environment and the planet earth. Education is such a powerful medium that last forever and remains interwoven with one's ideology which reflects in once actions. Spirituality if

blended with the education curriculum could be a big source of realizing the vision of an ideal state. It's a time to revert to our holy ancient scriptures, Upanishads, Puranas and Vedic literature for the holistic living and same can only be through the means of spiritual way of life.

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