

Rediscovering Inner Potential: The Role of Meditation in Modern Education System

Dr. Nisha Chandel

Assistant Professor, School of Education, Sanskriti University, Mathura

Mail: [drnisha08052021\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:drnisha08052021[at]gmail.com)

Phone No: 7060094524

Abstract: *This paper tries to explore the inherent subtle powers and potential within a person. In the present scenario everyone is busy in accumulation of means of materialistic comforts and resources. In this pursuit of materialism the time available for self, family and relations is drying up day by day. In this age of information technology, humankind is moving towards self - alienation. The ancient spiritual traditions have advocated self - discovery, self - realization and self - actualization as the keys to happiness and satisfaction. Yoga and meditation are the two most wonderful gifts which India has gifted to the whole world. Meditation, a part of yoga is a well tested strategy for strengthening the mind and coping with stress. Meditation, is a concentrative technique in which the practitioner concentrates on the beads, positive symbol, flower, breath or positive attributes of soul and the Almighty.*

Keywords: Self - Introduction, Self - Actulisation, Meditation, Yoga, Meditation

1. Introduction

In the present scenario everyone is busy in accumulation of means of materialistic comforts and resources. In this pursuit of materialism the time available for self, family and relations is drying up day by day. In this age of information technology, humankind is moving towards self - alienation. The ancient spiritual traditions have advocated self - discovery, self - realization and self - actualization as the keys to happiness and satisfaction. The materialistic pursuits have led humanity towards crisis in moral, social, emotional and spiritual domains of life. Most of the people are running and wasting their time, money and energy behind these pursuits. We can witness the highly educated people committing heinous crimes; like murders, rapes, corruption, dowry, domestic violence etc. Was this the aim of education? Where are we lacking? Is accumulation of materialistic comforts the sole aim of human life?

I have tried to explore these questions in this paper. The report of UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the 21st Century talks about four pillars of education. These are: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be (Report of UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the 21st Century). In our education system our main stress is on learning to know; the knowledge part of education. In the education system emphasis is given to complete the syllabus prescribed by the university or the administering body. Main educational activity is centered around dissemination of knowledge and mastering the knowledge. At the end of the academic session examinations are conducted for the test of the knowledge.

Second comes learning to do. Learning to do is related with the acquisition of skills. This pillar though skills are being developed, but this education system does not develops skills among all. Only those lucky ones who get admission in the vocational and technical institutions get the practical knowledge and skills. Some good rated institutions are able to better skills among their students.

Next one is learning to live together. Less importance is given to it again. In the multicultural, multilingual, multinational society of today living together harmoniously is very important. It requires understanding and respecting the individualities and diversities of others. The interdependence of all cultures and countries and sharing of the common purpose of development of all is possible only if the educational institutions train their alumni to live together.

And the last one is learning to be. Very - very insignificant importance is given to this part of education. Learning to be requires training for development of the true human potential like development of the moral values, personality, creativity, imagination, and developing the true potential within an individual. Memory, reasoning, aesthetic sense, communication skills play a vital role in the life of a learner. As we know that if these faculties are developed to the full potential of an individual to the optimum level; it will change the whole scenario of the teaching - learning process. This will be the true education as cherished by great philosophers like Swami Vivekanand and Gandhi ji. But in the present education system the most important aspect is given the least importance.

Education without this pillar is lop sided education. Learning to be, is what one really is. The real self - esteem, the real self - concept, real self - confidence, real self knowledge, the real self - acceptance and the real self - actualization is necessary for a learner for holistic development. Learning to be is related with the being. What we are? What is our real identity? Most of us identify with our physical identity. One's name, one's qualification, one's parents, one's home, one's town, one's state, one's country. Yes, of course, this is our first identity. But we also have other identities, like the emotional self, the social self, the moral self and the spiritual self. This is our identity as a soul or the spiritual identity that is the treasure house of many powers. But the question arises how to reach and use that treasure house within.

Self is an idea that has received importance in education and modern psychology in the recent years. Concept of self is the holistic representation of the word 'I'. What is that we have to know and understand about the inner organization. There are three aspects of us: the innate self or the real self and the acquired self and the ideal self. The acquired self is the result of interaction of the heredity and environment. The body, the relations, the skills, social status, achievements, beliefs are the faculties of the acquired self. The innate self is also known as soul, atma, spirit which is the essence and the store house of all values and energy. It has five main faculties through which it functions or performs all the activities. These are also called as the mind, intellect, sense organs and work organs. The mind is a very powerful faculty which imagines, thinks, feels, forms ideas etc. Every moment the mind creates thoughts: thus we can say that the mind is the planning committee to the inner organization. One can create nearly 60, 000 thoughts every day (Loder, n. d.). All the ideas or the thoughts created by the planning committee are then passed on to the next faculty—the intellect which is the decision - making committee of the inner organization. The intellect is where the wisdom and the will power to take decisions are stored. This is the most crucial faculty which understands each and every thought and reasons and analyses, discriminates, evaluates and then gives its decisions whether to carry out the practical actions or not. This faculty knows the weaknesses and strengths of a person and gives the correct decision. All the actions get registered in the sub - consciousness as the “records of the self” in the form of experience, tendencies, habits, talents or memories. This as a result forms our personality. Any records from the sub consciousness can be traced within fraction of a second and accordingly the thought process starts. This subconscious is very powerful. A soul is like a seed which contains all necessary information for its expression when planted in a body. Just as a seed forms into a particular plant when sown in the earth and sustained with water, sunshine and fertile soil, so a human being comes to life when a human soul enters an embryo. A soul will take a body according to its action and Sanskaras. The soul occupies no space in the physical body since it is not physical, but it animates the body and operates it via the brain and nervous system. The soul also receives signals from the body.

The potential of soul can be tapped through yoga and meditation. Yoga, meditation are the most important and valuable gifts of Indian culture to the world. The ancient Indian scriptures Vedas, the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, and the Yoga Sutras are the main sources of knowledge of meditation. In these scriptures and also in the ensuing practice, meditation does not stand alone as a technique but is always embedded in a religious or spiritual and philosophical context. This context deals, for instance, with views of the world, assumptions about the existence of God, and prescriptions for living (Raju, 1985). Chamber's Twentieth Century Dictionary (1960) gives its origin from Latin word “*medri*”, which means to heal. Whenever you are in prayer or meditation, Divine feels your loving thoughts or your frustrations and responds with waves of love and peace from the non - material dimension. Meditating is a very effective way to develop values. A human soul can regain its original high levels of purity,

peace, bliss and love through meditation and yoga. Yoga means to link one's mind with Divine in remembrance and love.

Various researches on meditation prove its benefits on health, education, social - relations and emotional regulation. They have identified a wide range of effects of meditation practices on physical fitness, anxiety, attention, achievement motivation, emotional stability, working memory, long term memory, short term memory, cognitive flexibility, visual - spatial processing, executive functioning, emotional intelligence and academic achievement (Chandel, 2020). However, still a lot of work is required to be done in this field, but it can introduce ourselves with the hidden treasure within us as the above mentioned variables are directly related with the problems in education sector or enhancing effectiveness.

So this is the correct time to ponder and take decisive steps to explore the subtle treasure hidden within us. This will lead the education system into a never visualized state of efficiency.

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