

Role of Society in grooming up society

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PREFACE

“Every Child comes with message that God is not yet discouraged with man”. These were the views of Rabindranath Tagore.

In the development of personality of child beside parents and teachers society play an important role. Society is the web of social relationships and it is always changing. Man is social being and he is dependent on society for protection, comfort, nature, education, content of his thoughts, his dreams and his aspirations. But in today society there is great influence of media whether it is T.V, Radio, Computer or Internet on children psychological health.

The imparting of the value education to the present day children and youth is the last resort that can save society from disaster.

This booklet contain the articles selected by **Bhagat Puran Singh Ji** (*Founder of Pingalwara*) and **Bibi ji Dr. Inderjit Kaur** [*President, All India Pingalwara Charitable Society (Regd.)*].

The Role of Society in growth of children is explained in article “Is Modern Life Making Children Unhappy?” by Libby Brooks. Childhood has always been a disputed territory, its true geography quickly forgotten as we grow older, replaced by an adult

imagined universe. But there appears to be a growing consensus that childhood today is in a peculiarly parlous state. In a letter to the *Daily Telegraph* last week, a powerful collection of experts argued that the fast-moving, hyper-competitive nature of our society is seriously damaging children's mental and emotional well-being. They suggested that junk food, computer games and constant testing in schools were directly responsible for the well-documented escalation in childhood depression.

So is childhood genuinely in such crisis? Certainly, children growing up today are subject to increasing containment, surveillance and the tyranny of consumer and moral choice.

Neelam luthra in "**Moral Education Need of Hour**" suggested that the imparting of value education to the present day youth is the last resort that can save society from disaster. The parents and the teachers must join hands to overcome this dilemma. The parents must restrict their children from exposed to such a filthy and cheap literature as shown in some films and television programmes. It is possible only if they are themselves an example to their wards. In the educational institutions there is a crying need to teach basic values like honesty, obedience, integrity,

sincerity, punctuality, positive thinking and non-violence. This is only possible if a teacher himself is the possessor of all these qualities before he acts as role model for the students to follow.

Niti Paul Mehta in **Moral Debate** talked about the role of society and social media in moulding the personality and character formation of child.

I am sure that this booklet will be helpful for the understanding the role of society in Brooming up children.

Such books are printed by All Indida Pingalwara Charitable Society (Regd.) and distributed free of cost. Kindly donate generously for this work.

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Is Modern Life Making Children Unhappy?

Libby Brooks

Childhood has always been a disputed territory, its true geography quickly forgotten as we grow older, replaced by an adult imagined universe. But there appears to be a growing consensus that childhood today is in a peculiarly parlous state. In a letter to the *Daily Telegraph* last week, a powerful collection of experts argued that the fast-moving, hyper-competitive nature of our society is seriously damaging children's mental and emotional well-being. They suggested that junk food, computer games and constant testing in schools were directly responsible for the well-documented escalation in childhood depression.

So is childhood genuinely in such crisis? Certainly, children growing up today are subject to increasing containment, surveillance and the tyranny of consumer and moral choice.

And yet our panic about childhood betrays a deep ambivalence, too. Our children are in danger, fattened on fast food, corrupted by commerce, traumatized by testing. And at the same time, other children are dangerous, malevolent beneath hooded tops, chaotic in the classroom, bestial in the bedroom.

Before we can have the public debate on child-rearing that the letter writers call for, we need to unpick which of our anxieties truly reflect the reality of the situation.

Take the electronic media, one of the corrupting influences cited. And it is worth remembering that the imaginative life of children is full of violence as anyone who has spent any time in a playground could tell you. But today's concerns exist in the context of broader adult unease about the proliferation of technology, particularly in the home and the challenge to adult authority that it represents.

There is no doubt that children's access to media and the prevalence and extremity of sex violence in such media has vastly increased. And a growing body of research links electronic media with a medley of developmental horrors. But some in the field believe that many of these studies are flawed because they view violence as an objective category and fail to investigate what audiences themselves define as violent.

Vexed Question

And the question of correction versus causality remains vexed. A *Lancet* review found that violent imagery was more likely to increase aggressive behaviour in children who come from violent families.

As with other aspects of child-panic, concerns about modern technology reflect a set of assumptions about what it is to be a child: that they are pure and corruptible, that they are unable to discriminate or to assess what they see with any degree of sophistication. Regulation alone risks falling back on the standard of the incompetent child. We need to engage with children and help them to develop their own strategies for coping with technology.

The Telegraph letter describes children as being “*pushed by market forces to act and dress like mini-adults.*” Of course, consumer culture offers children access to areas of adult life from which they have traditionally been excluded. But the desire to get older younger is not a new one. Adulthood has always meant freedom to the child who feels restricted. What is new is that the template of adulthood presented to them is one of conspicuous consumption. It is surely, adulthood that has been most grossly distorted by consumer culture and reflected back to children as a venal, vapid, selfish place. Perhaps it is adulthood rather than childhood that is in crisis.

Our tangled agenda is again seen in the letter-writers insistence that children should have “*real play.*” But where? Under-investment means that there are fewer open spaces for children to inhabit. And those

that are left are dull and overtly safety-conscious. Our society’s profound risk aversion keeps children in their bedrooms with their dangerous computer games.

The norm of the indoor child has led not only to fear for children who do venture out—usually fear of the vastly exaggerated stranger danger—but also to fear of them. Teenagers who congregate on street corners are seen as a nuisance and a threat. It is worth asking whether confinement is also serving an adult convenience. If children no longer regard the streets as their territory, their elders won’t be disturbed by games or gangs. Nor do car drivers have to think about lowering their speed.

Increased surveillance of children by anxious parents or, in extremis, the police means that young people are spending less and less time alone amusing themselves. In his book *Solitude*, psychiatrist Anthony Storrs made a compelling argument for why the capacity to be alone is essential to creative development? When the childhood experience is one of containment, what becomes of self-discovery and self-realization?

Which leads to the core of the letter’s thesis—that modern life makes children unhappy. Children’s mental health has steeply declined in the past 25 years. An estimated 0 per cent of 5 to 15 year olds in the U.K.

uses child and adolescent mental health services. It is certainly the case that, for adults and children alike, increased affluence has not made us happier.

In relation to children, experts have identified a variety of contributing factors: academic pressure, the drawn-out transition to adulthood, drug and alcohol abuse and of course, parenting. Indeed, many argue that a crucial policy improvement would be the provision of parenting classes in school. But more fundamentally, we can help children and adolescents develop a more coherent social identity only by allowing them genuine involvement in the world they are growing up in.

In an essay on fostering resilience, Sebastian Kraemer of the Tavistock Clinic writes: “In a world in which individuality is acknowledged, even celebrated, resilience is best understood as the experience of agency: that what you do or say makes a difference, that it is worthwhile making plans for your life, that you are not simply a helpless victim of forces beyond your control”. But children, he argues, are still relatively powerless, “at the mercy of our adult terror of helplessness.”

Above all, let’s start talking to children rather than about them. Then perhaps they can provide us with some of the solutions themselves.

(The Hindu, September 20, 2006)

Keep Kids Off Computers

Krishna kumar

Parents and teachers don’t believe you if you tell them that computer, do little good to children. Aren’t American and European pre-schools already fitted with computers? If they are then there must be something good about exposing children to the exciting world of computers at an early age. And also, if computers are going to pervade our lives in the years to come, isn’t it a good idea to get children used to them early? Computers are not just machines, you are told; they are symbols of human transformation. So, why shouldn’t children gain mastery over them before starting their journey of life?

Why not, indeed? Educational theorists worldwide are not yet convinced about the good that computers might do during childhood. David Elkind, an American expert on children’s learning has this to say about the argument that computers can assist in children’s mental development: “With succeeding generations of computer language, even young children may be able to interact with computers in ways that would permit reflective abstraction. But we are not there yet and for the present computers that present

programmed learning to young children are examples of mis-education.” Elkind is guarded because the craze for computers is so strong that someone, even an expert who says that computers may have negative consequences for childhood could be seen as being out of his mind.

And yet, it is easy to appreciate the dilemma that anyone who knows either children or pedagogy well would face if asked about the merit of introducing computers in children’s education. Exciting though the interactive potential of learning with the help of a computer is, such learning is no substitute for interacting with the environment and the objects in it. Computers have an addictive effect but even if one might protect children against such an effect by monitoring the hours they spend with it (see how successful we have been in preventing similar addiction on T.V), we cannot compare the experience of unguided play or the pursuit of an interest in nature with the experience of sitting before a computer. The world of childhood does shrink when knowledge takes the shape of a monitor.

Advocates of computers and educational policy-makers however are determined to treat computers as isolated symbols of progress and modernization. That is why, schools which have no clean toilets or drinking

water nor decent libraries and laboratories are being equipped with computers. A dingy, crumbling structure with one air-conditioned room where the computer sits is soon going to become the national symbol of school education for the coming century. There is no sign that the government has decided to work out educational priorities in a rational manner. Symbolic gestures are all we seem destined to get in the name of priorities. *Saraswati Vandana* and computers are examples of such symbolic gestures. Neither is going to mean restructuring and consolidation of our sad, struggling system.

May be we will start rethinking about the illusory promise of the infotech industry when Western educators begin to question it openly. The fact is that not just questioning, even resistance has already begun. In his forthcoming book, *The Digital Diploma Mills* David Noble unveils the sordid face of corporate interests who are promoting online education with the collaboration of university administrations and governments. Their primary motive is to bring the faculty under disciplinary control, then to de-skill it and finally to dispense with it. As Noble says, “*Once the faculty convert their courses to courseware, their services are in the long run no longer needed.*”

A common plea one hears these days is that students love hi-tech instruction. In at least two major American universities, students have voted against hi-tech instruction and this kind of resistance is growing. A new movement, reasserting the role of the university as a source of free thought and enquiry based on face-to-face relationship has begun to take shape. Our trajectory in India may be a little different but we can be rest assured that the assertion of teacher's autonomy will soon come in conflict with the forces of commercialization in education, both hi-tech and others.

(The Hindustan Times, January 3, 1999)

Growing Aggression in Children

Dr. Samir Parikh

In February 2012, a 15 year old student stabbed his teacher in classroom in a classroom in a private school in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

In December 2007, two teenagers brought a gun to school and shot a fellow 14 year old student in Gurgaon.

In April 2007, a student killed 32 persons and wounded 25 others before committing suicide, on the campus of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University Virginia U.S.A.

We may have been caught off guard the first time round. But we cannot afford ourselves the luxury to be surprised a second time.

These events, both in India and abroad, have caused an uproar worldwide and have led society to revisit some of its norms, cultures and policies.

When we speak of aggression, however, we can't restrict ourselves to these ghastly, widely publicized acts of violence.

A regular menace

Aggression comes in many different forms and it has now become a menace that every child has to deal with on a daily basis. Small arguments in school have now grown to resemble gang wars, replete

with hockey sticks and knives, with 50 members per ‘gang’.

Report of sexual harassment and violence are increasing. Children, these days, seem to have lost the ability to complete a single sentence without the use of abusive or swear words. The acts and consequences of ragging and bullying have been obvious for all of us to see and read about in the newspapers. Social exclusion and other forms of passive aggression can do a great deal of psychological damage as well. Cyber bullying is the latest in the evolving and ever-changing forms of aggression.

Concerns over aggression among children have been increasing. Social media has, perhaps, been one of the greatest factors responsible for the increasing aggression among children and teenagers. The cultural stereotypes that surround children these days enforce expectations of ‘*macho*’ behaviour among boys.

Children who bully are looked upon as being ‘*cool*’ and others follow for the same kind of social approval—simply to fit in with peers. Children with academic as well as emotional difficulties have been found to be more prone to aggressive behaviour. Even clinical conditions such as depression often manifest as aggressive behaviour among teenagers. Children’s lives are becoming increasingly stressful.

Our cities are becoming more congested and the safe outlets for children to discharge of their energies are gradually decreasing. In fact, studies have suggested that environmental factors such as increased heat, crowding and even the accessibility to weapons can increase the likelihood of aggressive behaviour.

The consequence of aggression are devastating for all but more so when the victim is a child, still at a nascent stage where personalities are only just forming and where coping mechanisms are not yet entirely in place.

Acts of physical violence, bullying and social exclusion have the propensity to lead to many psychological disturbances such as loss of confidence lowered self-esteem and difficulties in sleeping. Children, who themselves are at the receiving end of aggressive acts, whether in homes or among their peers, are more likely to engage in aggressive behaviour.

In that case, the victim then becomes the victimizer broadening the net of violence and aggression. Psychiatric conditions such as depression, anxiety and eating disorders may also develop. The facts are clear to see—childhood and teenage depression is on the rise. Adolescent suicide is also on the rise.

Adults often tend to ignore childhood aggression; they treat it as a part of normal development,

hope the child grows out of it and basically just push it under the carpet. The bad news is that aggression among children is on the rise. The good news is that there are things we can do to curtail it.

Problem management

Aggression management needs to come to the forefront—enter the domain of the classroom as well as that of the dinner table. Anger and aggression are both things that can be controlled and children need to be taught the skills to be able to do so.

*Educate children about different kinds of aggression—that it is not restricted merely to acts of physical violence.

*Discuss the potential longterm consequences of aggression, both on the victim as well as the perpetrator. Focus on teaching children effective life skills and move beyond the academic curriculum.

*Teacher must take time out of regular classes and teach children effective conflict resolution skills as well as effective communication styles. Parents need to do the same at home.

* Explain to children the difference between aggressive and assertive behaviour and encourage the latter. Screen for vulnerable students and address social and emotional needs and concern of children.

* Schools must adhere to a zero-tolerance

policy towards bullying, ragging and other forms of aggression. The corrective measures taken, however, should be reformative rather than punitive.

Hitting the child is a terrible idea—in fact, corporal punishment has been found to only increase the incidence of aggressive behaviour. Instead, aim to understand the child and later educate and sensitize the child. Psychological counseling for both the victim and the perpetrator of aggression is also advisable.

What is most important to remember is that aggression is a learnt response. Children do what is being done around them. What the kids need are positive, pro-social role models. And this social responsibility of being effective role models falls on each and every one of us.

Childhood aggression has become a great hazard to the society. What it now needs to become in the priority of parents, teacher and policy-makers alike.

The Role of Social Media

The Super Columbine Massacre RPG is a role-playing videogame, which was released in 2005. The game recreated the infamous 1999 Columbine High School Shootings.

Five decades ago, Albert Bandura, a pioneering social psychologist, proved that aggression is, to a

large extent, a learnt response.

Children learn aggression by watching and imitating the behaviour of others. With the rising incidence of aggressive behaviour among children, it is high time the social media is brought under scrutiny. The media doesn't just represent our reality; it creates it among the way as well. It begins with children imitating the choke slams they see on WWF, followed by reproducing swear words that have become 'cool', thanks to our new age reality shows.

Reality T.V is not just getting dumber by the day, it is also getting meaner. The cartoons children which aren't free of aggression anymore and neither is the news. Whether television or the internet, violence is everywhere. The problem is that role models are changing. Children don't have many pro-social role models to look up to anymore. It is, instead aggressive, intimidating, rowdy, anti-social behaviour that catches the eye and evokes acclaim.

Videogames are another major cause for concern. Be it Hitman. Call of Duty or the countless others, the constant exposure to the violent imagery that characterizes such games has led children to become desensitized to violence, leading to a culture that normalizes aggression. It is as if violence doesn't bother the kids as much anymore.

In a social environment such as this, children are at the receiving end of thousands of media messages every day. So, educating children about the social media is essential. Concept of media literacy need to be introduced in schools. Children need to be empowered with the knowledge and skill to filter and make sense of the information they are bombarded with. We need to discuss the media messages that children receive and help them analyze them. Children need to be told what is real and what is to be believed. Consequences of aggressive acts need to be looked into.

We need to introduce workshops and interactive discussions on the subject in schools and in the community, at large. Students themselves need to be transformed into effective role-models for their peers and juniors. At the same time, change can only come about if parents and teachers come together to lobby in, trying to bring about changes in current social media practices. What we need is stronger censorship and a lot more engagement with children and adolescents to take away the impact that the social media can have.

(The Tribune, May 10, 2012)

Youth And Terrorism

Anand Prakash Adlakha

Sir,—Modern violence makes no distinction between a VIP and an ordinary person, rich and poor, criminal and innocent. Daily news bulletins of death evoke impotent anger. Cries of relatives of whole families slaughtered, corpses shown on television do not help the killers to repent. We are witnessing the strange phenomenon of all-round helplessness, of unlimited political power failing to overcome tiny pockets of so-called terrorism scattered all over the world. The latter are highly motivated persons. They have a commitment to achieve or Perish, no government agency can ever match. They fight, not for personal gain but for some cause dear to them. Their revolutionary spirit, though often misdirected, is far more real and valuable than what politicians and bureaucrats, who put self before the country, can muster. But they will need to be convinced that there are bigger and more important causes waiting for them to fight for. This is not an insurmountable problem. Because quite a number of them are educated young people of exceptionally strong will power all nations can put to use.

Modern man is rightly proud of his science

and its rationality. What is lacking and what must be mustered with full force is faith in reason and reason in faith, which the Buddha preached. This is the only hope for human civilization to continue and progress without fear of self-annihilation.

Faith devoid of free inquiry and reason is fanaticism which gives rise to communalism and terrorism. Faith wedded to reason was the basis of Mahatma Gandhi's approach to life, including the freedom struggle. No wonder it succeeded in pushing a mighty colonial power out of this country and others. Faith plus reason is a great force which can achieve anything. It can help us to see and use our revolutionary spirit in its true form.

It is the children and youth who are to be addressed. Simplicity of the child and idealism of the youth are great assets to make a good beginning towards reform implementation. A series of higher causes should be placed before them each providing practical opportunity for them to assume a leadership role and learn to bring about basic changes and improvements in society. Give them the confidence and know-how and leave the rest to them—that would be a wise policy.

(The Hindustan Times, 31 March, 1990)

Youth Power Why They Revolt

K.D. Gangrade

Youth power has to be reckoned with and listened to. The apprehensions and actual problems of the youth have to be understood and resolved. The authorities must have continuous discussion and dialogue with the students to defuse the issue of reservation.

The psychological distance between the younger generation and the older generation has become a normal feature of the present society. Revolt and indiscipline are the natural outcome of such a situation. The present age has rightfully been characterized by youth rebellion the lie of which has never been seen in the past. The students have been in the vanguard of such a revolt.

AGGRESSIVE PATH

All over the world, from Sorbonne to California and from Tokyo to London and from India to China, students are on an aggressive path and demand that their voice be heard. Many theories have been offered to explain the contemporary revolt of the youth. It has been argued that their rebellion is an expression of the critical times in which we live, when all values

are being questioned and when no institution receives automatic allegiance from its members. The youth naturally revolts in the absence of anything which can give meaning and direction to life.

On the other hand, it has been argued that the rebellion is a characteristic of an affluent age. The youth has ceased to be dependent on the older generation; by itself it constitutes an economic class with wealth of its own.

The rebellion of the youth is basically a reflection of the growing gulf between the young and the old. The old are seen not merely as out of date but also as hypocritical. The youth finds the world in a mess and blames the older generation for it. The latter are not the exact models who deserve to be emulated by the young. This is true both in the West and the East.

In the 42 years of Independence, there has been a marked change in the character of the leadership in both social and political fields. In the pre-independence period the youth was in the national movement; the leaders were 'accepted'. Today we find that leaders in almost every walk of public life have forfeited the respect of the young.

Serious differences, even conflicts, are

inevitable in the process of transition from tradition to modernity. The need to have greater flow of easy communication, sympathy and understanding to tide over the difficulties of the present transitional period through which the larger Indian society is passing in the midst of many stresses and strains from within and powerful influences from outside has been rightly stressed.

The progress of social change would be faster and smoother and our developmental goals could be realized more speedily and effectively, if the active involvement and enthusiasm of the youth can be generated, guided and channeled through appropriate modalities of action. The present unrest in the country and especially on university campuses and frequent challenges to authority by student activists cannot be tackled without sufficient knowledge and appreciation of student motivations and their origins.

ISOLATION

Unfortunately, the isolation of students from their elders grows with the growth of numbers in educational institutions and the growing irrelevance of the education process itself. Policy-makers, educational administrators and even teachers have little contact with the thoughts, feelings and aspirations

of the young people. The bonds of understanding and sympathy have snapped and the youth is sullen and rudderless while they become needlessly depressed and embittered.

The ignorance of student motivations and youth attitudes is the strongest among those who plan and execute our educational policies or what goes under that description. The need of the present moment is more authentic knowledge and greater patience and sympathy on the part of elders. To generate such a climate of understanding and cooperation, the educators and policy-makers must have dialogues and discussions at different levels with the people of diverse sections and regions of our country.

UNESCO STUDY

The UNESCO study on the subject concludes that cooperation, rather than confrontation, is the emerging pattern of relationships between the two generations. The attitudes and values of the youth are the winning force which will transform the character and values of the culture before long. The signs pointing to the way of cooperation are strong and dependable but the future can also take a more violent and unexpected course of conflict and confrontation.

A lot depends upon the wish and the capacity of

the dominant establishment to satisfy the aspirations of the young and in the process of doing so, transforming itself to a larger, wiser and more purposeful segment of Indian society in order to provide a dynamic and imaginative leadership. This can only be achieved by evolving an adequate youth policy and national programmes of action.

The potentialities of youth for nation-building and also the possibilities of its subversive and destructive role cannot be ignored any longer but so far little has been attempted and less achieved for developing adequate, relevant and viable youth policies. If the ruling establishment begins to appreciate the supreme importance of the involvement and cooperation of the youth in nation-building and social development, appropriate youth policies will surely emerge.

(The Hindustan Times, 25 October 1990)

Neo-Rich Youth Inclined Towards Gun Culture

P. Raman

It has been a fashion for us to ridicule Karl Marx for his failed prophecy. His rigid characterization of class, based on the social and economic background of a person or group, may not fully fit into 21st century paradigm. But a look at the nocturnal pleasure haunts of Capital's emerging class of rich and powerful will convince one of the aptness of the good old man's exacting definition of class.

Their lifestyle, show of wealth and power that go with it and the utter unconcern for the rest—all this constitutes a statement of the typical class. Even in this modern crowd of the rich, the social climbers from the middle class with all their lack of self-confidence, stand out. Watch the pathetic adjustment problems of a lowly model just into the circuit or an ambitious management trainee eager to join the club. A semi-literate prosperous property dealer can move in MBWs and easily buy as many 100 rupee coupons as other from Malini Ramani. But his rough background will make him a misfit in socialite Bina Ramani's Tamarind Court of Kutub Colonnade at Mehrauli. That explains

the class—in spite of the contemporary trend of rapid upward mobility.

Suddenly, ex-model Jessica Lal's midnight murder in full view of a couple of hundred celebrities as bared the ugly side of the partying sets watering hole. Scribes covering 'celebs'—they have their own slangs—in Delhi say the latter have specific day for each haunt. Djinns for Wednesday Bina's Colonnade for Thursday and Hyatt Gym and Rave Parties for other days. They have to move with quickly changing tastes to maintain their "celebhood". Theme parties, we are told, is the new craze of the supercrat. When they attend a Bollywood party they have to dress up as film stars; in "hair party," women come in attractive looks and there is a red, amber and green party." Everything has to be exclusive and the wretched class should not pollute the club. That is the emerging philosophy of the new socialite.

Old clubs and five-star hotels have become stale for India's upcoming rich and neo-rich. The sudden mushrooming of the sprawling private farms, "courts" of different tastes, "exits" and five-star discos is indicative of the preferences of "party animals". The new tribe is dangerously aggressive as compared to their relatively dignified older generation. After

all, they have to catch up with globalization. Of late, there have been several cases of rowdy behaviour, brawls, scuffles, stabbing and shootouts involving the new genre. Some go unreported as the glitterati could easily suppress the incidents as otherwise a bad name would Force their closure. Some time back, a waiter was found drowned in a swimming pool of a haunt. It was abruptly shut down.

In another case, the husband of a well-known designer was stabbed. There was another stabbing in a five-star disco. An artist was dragged off the dancing floor and stabled. Thus, the shooting of Jessica Lal was a manifestation of the new trend of partying-cum-gun culture. The fun-loving rich youth who are so conscious of the protection their birth could provide them, hardly bother about the consequences. It is a fast life and youth have to act fast to make the mark. The arrogance of wealth makes them blind. Availability of easy money and guns, parental protection and absence of character building—tall claims of those residential schools where these guys get their education apart—provide an ideal ground for the grooming of the neo-rich youth.

Most of them are raised on "guilt money" amassed by the prosperous. For those have grown up

feeding on video games like “kills and scores,” firing and murder seem part of the normal impulses. In such games, the more you kill on the screen, the more you score. The trigger could be pulled just for the fun of it or on the slightest provocation. It can be refusal to pour more liquor or an argument. Just this week, a 13 year old Ranchi boy took out his father’s gun from his school bag and shot another boy in the class—like their video games. A similar incident was reported from down below south. Delhi has 60,000 licensed guns, i.e. one for every 200. Webley Scots or Colts have become a fashion with today’s neo-rich.

An impression seems to have been created that politicians and bureaucrats are the main villains of the piece. They may have a fair share. But it is travesty of truth to depict Delhi’s midnight model murder as the misdemeanour of a politician’s son alone. Even in this particular case, two senior executives of a multinational cold drinks’ cartel have been arrested despite the initial moves to save corporate honour. It simply reflects a new twist in which a whole lot of players merrily indulge in business mixed with pleasure. Among them are bigwigs from business, wheeler-dealers, plain fixers and media imposter. Contacts are established, business negotiated and deals struck.

Bina Ramani’s Colonnade where Jessica was shot dead has been a typical case. Like other super-rich haunts of the national capital, it has violated every available rule. Serving liquor without license has been a common feature causing huge revenue loss to the exchequer. The excise department has acted only after the press reported the kid-glove treatment of the glitterati. They violate the deadline rule for night parties, ban on woman serving liquor (the very strength of these havens has been lissome celebs) and complaints of public nuisance by neighbours.

In her case, the Archaeological Survey of India had objected to her establishments in both places. A DDA official, who had served notice on her for demolition, was suddenly shunted to the Andamans. The sub-inspector who had the temerity to remind her of certain violations found himself transferred to a faraway police station the very next day. She phoned the police chief in the SI’s presence. That is the blatant display of the power of money and influence. When senior police officers visit the place, will their juniors dare to prosecute the owners?

Bina Ramani’s metamorphosis from a ramp girl to the nation’s socialite guru represents the growth of Delhi’s super-rich and the upwardly mobile upper

middle class with all their bar girls, celebs, models, the bold and beautiful and the high and mighty of that genre. It marks a transformation from the rather timid club-going genteel of yesteryear to a generation of daring go-getters. The phenomenon of Romesh Sharma and the drunken bravado of the BMW boys have been manifestations of this kind of grand globalization. Incidentally, Romesh Sharma himself is pretty close to Bina Ramani, who had a wedding at his farmhouse.

Change in lifestyle, fashions, behaviour and habits have a tendency to spread out at breakneck speed and intensity to the farthest corners. A few years back, the first priority for those who visit Delhi with kids was a visit to Appu Ghar. Now we have it everywhere in India. Porn videos are more popular in small-town parlours. Popularity of a particular trend, say fashion itself's is its enemy. If everyone begins to go in for a particular wear, it ceases to be a fashion and dies a natural death. By the time it percolates to lower levels, in a horizontal expansion, it also undergoes distortions, loses its original traits and becomes shoddy with all its consequences on physical and mental health.

Every fancy-priced cosmetic is available in the original brand name or deceptive imitations at weekly bazaars and corner shops of slums and lower class

colonies. The slum girls' aspiration to go in for the same cosmetic memsahebs use on T.V is being taken full advantage by the local producers of shoddy goods. Such crude cosmetics made of cheap chemicals are harmful to health apart from causing irritation and skin troubles. A similar thing will happen when the "*fash frat*" and "*haute couture*" culture seeps small towns.

An aimless generations fast coming up, thanks to a conspiracy of excessive consumerism, misleading media, misleading ad campaigns and infectious T.V projections. It begins with the mindless globalization based on '*sell or perish*' philosophy. If there is no demand, you have to create or grab it. It knows no values or ethics. To sell you need more ads to reach the target. To penetrate minds, you need more appealing shows even if it tends to sicken your mind. More T.V and glossies mean more ads and more sales. The whole campaign is based on the inherent human weakness for more accretion and being in an exclusive club of consumers. You can be a cute kid or charming girl if you use a particular brand.

The multi-billion cosmetic industry and the beauty business thrive on such cultivated fads. In the mid 90s, we found every girl wanting to be a Sushmita Sen or Aishwarya Rai. Beauty clinics sprung up in every

street corner. Slimming fad the carefully engineered concept of beauty has its own massive global business. Out of this, emerged a new genre of celebrities and socialites. They have their own highly priced glossies which reveal their attributes to the laity. Newspapers now have their own colour pullouts to glorify the supercelebs lifestyle, tastes, favoured dress and food. Curiously, assorted groups of middle class models, big-time dress designers and plain socialites are all put in the same paradigm.

This media portrayal of the privileged as new icons triggers off intense social strains due to its aspirational effect on the middle and lower classes. The growing criminalization of the school dropouts and the illusory ambitions of the youth are its symptoms.

(The Tribune, May 11, 1999)

An Action Plan

Dhirendra Sharma

The Government announced a major programme to encourage generation of additional three million jobs for the educated unemployed in the private sector by 1994-95. At present, there are about 20 lakh educated youth unemployed in the country who cannot wait for another five years. Even with high grades they cannot get admissions to higher educational institutions. Seats available in medical and engineering colleges are totally insufficient considering the size of the country and the high demands for these professionals.

In the draft of the 8th Five Year Plan the Government has also promised to create job opportunities particularly in hitherto neglected sectors. This emphasis is a welcome departure from the policy of the previous Government which aimed at the 21st century without meeting the challenges of the predominantly agro-industrial society with less than 30 per cent literacy. But all these efforts would remain ineffective so long as their execution was not carried out at the grassroot levels and the masses were not made aware of their rights and responsibilities.

SERIOUS PROBLEM

The most serious problem facing the country is

the threat to our democratic system by lack of trust and respect for public institutions. Even in normal times, almost 50 per cent educational institutions remain closed due to students unrest. Educational standards have been permitted to be lowered in order to help unemployed youth. The Government, therefore, has recognized urgency for allocation of resources to job-oriented schemes in the 8th Plan. But they should also launch crash programmes to open many more medical and engineering colleges and job-oriented industrial outlets in rural districts.

However, big industrial projects with big funds are not the only way to generate jobs. The Government plans have relied on computer industry to create about 200,000 jobs in the next five years. There are more purposeful social service activities which can provide good job opportunities but do not require big funds. Providing children's nurseries, medical and nursing facilities in every village and urban localities would offer almost more than five lakh jobs. In contrast, projects like computers and atomic energy would require big funds.

PROPOSALS

In the execution of the proposed plans we must not ignore the principle of rural social welfare and

environmental safety. Mobilisation of the youth force is also long overdue. The Government should consider introduction of National Service Force for Social Reconstruction (NASFORCE) for all unemployed able-bodied citizens. Through such a scheme about 20 lakh youth can be easily assured minimum stipend under NASFORCE duties. It will also help to stagger the huge influx of graduating manpower to the job market.

Manpower is our most superior resource and it can be effectively utilized through a National Conscription Scheme. Under this, every graduate should be required to serve the nation for one or two years on a minimum stipend. On the basis of national and regional needs, individuals may be given a choice for national service befitting their age, health and educational backgrounds.

The National Service may be divided into five divisions:

Education and Scientific Division: This division should take charge of spreading adult literacy in all parts of the country. Exploration and efficient utilization of natural resources, innovation and application of agro-industrial technology, development of renewable energy resources, public and personal hygiene,

propagation of scientific attitudes and principles of civic responsibility through adult and mass educational activities can be taken up by the E.SD.

Engineering and Construction Division: Maintaining and repairs of canals, dams and public utility buildings like schools, hospitals, digging tube-wells, construction of solar and bio-gas plants and maintenance of public utilities and civic centres for community activities in villages and smaller townships. This division can also be responsible for fighting soil erosion and assisting in efforts of land reclamation and reforestry in the arid zones of the country.

Civil Administration Division: This division shall provide auxiliary force to police our roads and highways, to supervise city traffic and to keep a social check upon anti-social elements. Such a volunteer force can also oversee the police services at the State and Central levels and help to provide additional manpower to increase the effectiveness of the civil law and order authorities.

HEALTH, FITNESS

Health and General Fitness: Millions of man-hours are wasted every year due to lack of fitness of our working people. The division shall provide the nation with a kind of “*doctor on bicycle*”—(Chinese barefoot

doctor) type programme under which immunization and first-aid services can be provided at grassroots levels to the masses. Rules of public health and hygiene can be spread to the villages by the opening up of new rural health centres and their proper maintenance in rural sectors.

Cultural Division: Youth with artistic and creative talents in performing arts should be organized under this scheme. Regular visits of 6-12 months duration may be organized shifting them to the countryside from one region to another, creating a new cultural awakening among the young. Through their art performances they can assist in generating enthusiasm about economic plans, infuse sense of unity and discipline and other issues of social advancement and family planning.

(The Hindustan Times, October 25, 1990)

Moral Education Need of Hour

Neelam Luthra

The advancing environmental pollution of the present times is coupled with the pollution of the moral environment. At no other time in world history has man faced this dilemma as today. Modern science and technology has astonishingly enhanced the natural potential of man and there is a gap between the external capabilities of man and his internal moral strength. Since man has a potential of both evil and virtue, the modern allurements have dragged man to different predicaments and maladies which are being confronted by human race today. We experience a total decline in the human values in the present day society.

The political life of our leaders has been exposed in the Jain Hawala Scam recently. These so-called guides of the masses have accepted money in lakhs in the names of their parties to fight and win the elections and thus have shell-shocked the entire nation. When the law makers are so dishonest, immoral and valueless, how can we expect honest execution of laws by them? And probably this is the reason that right from their secretaries down to their office clerks immorality is prevailing. And their victims, being innocent citizens

are running helter-skelter on riot-ridden streets. Murders, lawlessness, rapes, fraudulent practices in banking, trade and business, the commercialization of T.V and movies, sex discrimination etc. have rendered our country weak, shaken and rather ungovernable.

The modern youth is the outcome of this valueless set-up of society who is sent to the schools, colleges, universities and professional institutes with an objective to become educated and learn good manners and etiquette. The education of a child actually starts from the cradle and the mother's lap. Since this modern youth is an imported stuff of that valueless strata of society, he cannot behave in a manner in which the educationists expect him to behave. When we throw a glance at the present world scenario we find split personalities everywhere.

Currently, the knowledge which is being imparted is disintegrated and given piece-meal, hence resulting in disintegrated personalities and society. So the teacher is encountered with a rebellious pupil instead of a humble and obedient seeker of knowledge. The relationship between the teacher and the pupil has deteriorated to such an extent that the students have almost stopped respecting and recognizing the teachers.

The teachers are themselves responsible for bringing an ugly situation for them. The deliberate disinterestedness in them to teach their students in classrooms has brought the students to a state of chaos. And taking advantage of this situation, some teachers have started compelling students to take private tuitions. Thus classroom teaching has now been replaced by “*drawing room coaching*” which has adversely affected the fate of students coming from poor families. Some of them are forced to adopt unfair means to pass the examinations. The whole educational set-up seems to be like a sinking ship which must be rescued if we want to bring about social renaissance. There is no other silver lining in the sky than to impart value education to the young generation.

To my mind, the present films and television programmes are mainly responsible for fuelling violence, sexual lust, drinking and kidnapping etc. The pity is that this obscene material in films and T. V programmes is approved by the Central Board of Film Certification ignoring the destruction it is going to cause. And thus, lack of values in early period of life, may result in proliferation of characterlessness in all professions, all segments of society and all spheres of human existence.

There is a lot of intellectual propaganda in favour of value education in society by the religious reformers, philosophers and intellectuals. Instead of sitting on the Himalayas to meditate, they have come down to general masses for their awakening and to advocate the values of life, viewing the sinking ship of moral values in the deep sea. At the same time the rulers should also not keep their eyes closed on such an issue.

The imparting of value education to the present day youth is the last resort that can save society from disaster. The parents and the teachers must join hands to overcome this dilemma. The parents must restrict their children from being exposed to such a filthy and cheap literature as shown in the films and television programmes. It is possible only if they are themselves an example to their wards. The mother enjoys the most respectable position in society as a teacher. She can inject moral values in her child from the very beginning.

In the educational institutions there is a crying need to teach basic values like honesty, obedience, integrity, sincerity, punctuality, positive thinking and non-violence. This is only possible if a teacher himself is the possessor of all these qualities before he acts as

role model for the students to follow.

The most significant issues are to feel the dire necessity of value education for society which forms the basis of life. Education accompanied by moral values is wisdom and a blessing and education without moral values is a tool of exploitation, a means to achieve material gains and a way to false '*pride and prejudice*'.

Society must realize the vital importance of these values in human life. Otherwise, the time is not far off when we will come across "*moral bankrupts*" and "*first class devils*" in every sphere of life. By imparting of value education, i do not advocate inflicting any additional burden of syllabus and courses on the students but i feel that it should be interwoven in the texture of education in such a way that the child should have plenty of opportunity to mould himself to the values he is being taught.

(The Tribune, June 10, 1996)

Moral Debate

Niti Paul Mehta

The MMS scandal has brought into focus the depths of depravity and perversion into which raw instinct and unbridled passion can lead even our otherwise educated youth. It will be unrealistic to view it as a stray, isolated case. It points to a disease which has grown and spread its tentacles rather too fast in a promiscuous society. Unless our society wakes up to this looming menace and parents and teachers get together to deal with it, it may swallow our youth.

Blaming the child will not do. The child does not grow up by himself.

The family, the school and the society at large play a decisive role in shaping the personality and character of the child. The tragedy of our times is that all these three agencies have lost their traditional commitment to the child. The family has lost its hold on the child.

Vitiated atmosphere

A completely vitiated environment outside the family has acquired a dominant role in moulding his personality and character. He imbibes little from the family. The relationship between the child and the

parents is no longer as complete as it once was. In fact, today's parents are spending less and less time with the child. Even when they are together they hardly ever try to transmit or instill any positive values in the child.

The relationship lacks the needed warmth. The communication is formal and casual. The feeling of togetherness is missing. There is no proper moral education. As a result today's youth has become a victim of inadequate conscience development. The media, both print and electronic, has thrown social commitment and responsibility to the winds and projects mostly what is dirty, vulgar and obscene in life.

What needs to be remembered is that freedom of expression cannot be limitless. Any freedom without responsibility, restraint and self-control is meaningless, the very negation of the spirit and ethics behind the whole concept of freedom. T.V channels mostly dish out violence, crime, sex and sleaze. Music videos are the worst offenders in this respect. All this leaves an unhealthy and negative effect on the viewers, especially on the impressionable minds of the children.

The worst part is that it tunes their minds of think in a particular direction and in a particular pattern. The net doles out pornography in diverse forms and the

cyber cafes threaten to become the new age brothels. The adolescent mind is being assailed by images of unhealthy, casual sex. Today's child is growing up in an environment heavily loaded with images of violence, murder, kidnappings and corruption.

It would be wrong to presume that these things do not have any effect on the mind and fantasy of the child. In fact, much of what a child sees, hears or experiences becomes a part of him. A good part of it sticks to him all his life. To a very large extent the child is a product of the environment.

Tomorrow's men

As an American poet, Walt Whitman, wrote: "There was a child went forth every day, and the first object he looked upon, that object he became and that object became a part of him for the day or a certain, part of the day or for many years or stretching cycles of years. The early lilacs became part of the child...And the old drunkard staggering home from the outhouse of the tavern whence he had lately risen."

That child never leaves and even when he grows up and becomes a man, that child is still there. What kind of children are we moulding today? What kind of tomorrow's men?

Sex is a powerful instinct. It is not wise to incite

it. The results of promiscuity and “*sexual liberation*” are before us to see. What happened at some cyber cafes in Agra was reported in this paper. Another case was reported from Ghaziabad school where two students of classes VI and VIII were allegedly caught while forcing a class II student to have oral sex with them.

Many decades back Will Durant had warned, “Our civilizations has unwisely stimulated this sex impulse. Our ancestors played it down, knowing that it was strong enough without producing. We have blown it up with a thousand forms of incitation’s—advertisement, emphasis and display—and armed it with the doctrine that inhibition is a mistake, whereas inhibition, the control of the impulse, is the first principle of civilization.”

Self-control and restraint in speech, behaviour and in interpersonal relationships are necessary attributes of a civilized and cultured person. No moral education can be complete unless it lays proper stress on healthy, human sex norms. Animals are instinct controlled creatures. Humans, through education, training and upbringing learn to control and regulated their instincts.

Parents need not be authoritative but they must

maintain a certain degree of control and supervision over the child. They should know where the child goes, what company he keeps and what he does in his spare time. It is their responsibility to guide the child about how to spend his time in a meaningful manner. Children should have freedom but not the license to disgress into deviant behaviour. They must not be allowed to abuse their freedom. Parents must not be harsh but they should be firm and consistent in dealing with them.

Parent’s responsibility

Parents have the responsibility to instill moral values in the child. The child should grow up with the ability to understand the difference between what is right and what is wrong. There will be situations and there will be moments when he will have to make a choice.

Morality is not an abstraction. It is something you can see and experience in your day to day life. It shows in our speech, in our behaviour and above all, in our relationships with others. It is all about being decent, polite, honest, truthful, dutiful and straightforward in our dealings. It is about having self-esteem and accepting that others have it too. Morality means being dignified and respectable. That is what we

describe in general terms as one's "*moral character*". It consists of small things but it is no small thing when all is added up.

The child of today is deprived, at least partially, in another sense. He is short of proper role models. If parents want the child to grow up into a good human being, they must set an example before him by being good so that he can emulate them. They must become his immediate role models. The school also has a definite role to play but the largest role in the growth and development of the child is always that of the parents. Mahatma Gandhi described the family as the first university for the child. Qualities of caring and sharing, of making small sacrifices, of mutual trust, of adjustment to each other's needs, of being honest and truthful are best learnt at home. The foundation is laid there. The school later builds on that.

When both the parents go to work, they cannot spare time for the child beyond a certain limit. The number of such families is growing at a fast pace. In such homes, parents should ration or distribute their time in a manner that the maximum of the time they spend at home is spent together in the company of the child. They must listen to the child and answer his questions with patience. The family should have

their supper together. The child should be made to feel important and wanted. If he has a problem, it should be discussed with him and solved.

Emphasis on quality

Often it is said that quality rather than quantity of the time spent with the child is more important. In my view both are important. But the term "*quality time*" is often left unexplained. What is this "*quality time*"? I think it is the time which the parents spend mostly with and for the child, the time in which they don't quarrel or clash over their own problems.

It is the time in which they satisfy the physical, emotional and social needs of the child. It is important for the psychological development of the child. If the child enjoys it, feels happy and satisfied and looks forward to it each day, then it can be truly termed quality time. It provides emotional security to the child and he feels assured that his parents are there for him whenever he needs them.

After the recent unsavoury happenings, both parents and schools in Delhi have woken up with a jolt to the need of disciplining and guiding the youngster's better. It is now being widely realized in the educational and social circles of the capital that things have gone terribly amiss. New gadgets and new technology have

given birth to new problems. To deal with this new menace, we will have to evolve new ethics and a whole new work culture. As educationists we failed to anticipate the social, moral, ethical and legal problems we could face with the advancement of technology.

Cyber-crime is a reality. Students need to be informed about its implications and pitfalls. It should be explained to the students that the computer is a machine of great possibilities but it should not be misused. We must have a computer ethics.

Sex Education

In the prevailing promiscuous social environment, ignorance about sex can prove more harmful than enlightenment. It is important that children receive information about sex from parents, teachers and counselors rather than picking up wrong notions about it from music videos and the pornographic sites on the net. The child needs to be well informed about the physical, social, cultural, psychological and medical aspects of sex. Imparting biological knowledge is necessary but more important is the need to educate the child about the right sex attitudes.

If a boy feels attracted towards a girl or vice versa, it is natural and a healthy sign. They can be good friends but their relationship must remain within

the confines of social acceptance. Neither should take advantage of the other, exploit his or her position and indulge in physical abuse. In such relationships there always comes a moment when it becomes necessary to know where to draw the line. Limits must be kept. Not to allow oneself to become the victim of physical abuse is a sign of maturity and good upbringing.

Casual sex can sometimes prove tragic. It always has consequences and in certain cases the consequences can leave a person shattered and the memory might haunt him/her all his/her life. The relationship should be built on mutual understanding, trust and respect. Sex should not become an obsession. When it becomes an obsession, it becomes a disease.

Co-curricular activities, especially sports activities, in schools need to be broad based so as to ensure participation of the maximum number of students. Their value cannot be undermined. These activities have always proved useful in the development of the child's character and personality.

Disciplining force

Besides ensuring physical fitness, they provide opportunities to imbibe literacy, cultural, artistic and aesthetic values. These activities develop the finer aspects of the child's personality. They are a great

disciplining force. They inculcate a healthy team spirit among the students. They develop the ability to tackle unanticipated problems both individually and collectively. They bring poise and help the child to attain temperamental and emotional stability. The old belief that a rich, healthy and diverse school routine can develop healthy social, cultural, moral and sexual attitudes in the students still holds true.

Let us give knowledge of modern technology to our youth but let us temper it with some of our traditional concepts and values of morality. Let us be modern-day parents but let us be friends to our children. Let us live for whatever; we want to live for but let us also live for our children!

(The Statesman, 8-9 February, 2005)

Empathy Is Natural, But Nurturing It Helps

JANE BRODY

Empathy, the ability to put yourself in someone else's shoes and recognize and respond to what that person is feeling, is an essential ingredient of a civilized society.

Lacking empathy, people act only out of self-interest, without regard for the well-being or feelings of others. The absence of empathy fosters antisocial behaviour, cold-blooded murder, genocide.

The capacity for empathy seems to be innate and is evident even in other species—the adult elephant who to rescue a baby rhino stuck in the mud despite being charged by its mother, as recounted by Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson and Susan McCarthy in *When Elephants weep*.

Manifestations of empathy often show up early in life, as when a toddler brings a favourite toy or blanket to another child who is injured or in distress. Some experts maintain that infants display empathy when they whimper or cry upon hearing another baby cry.

Children may enter the world with different capacities for empathy, a result of neural connections in the brain. The capacity for empathy may be partly or wholly lacking in disorders like autism and schizophrenia, in which the minds focused inward. But in otherwise normal children, the environment in which they are reared can make a big difference in whether empathy is fostered or suppressed. Healthy self-esteem is essential to empathy, so anything that helps children feel good about themselves will also help them recognize and respond effectively to the feelings of others.

START EARLY

If children are to relate positively to others, they must feel secure themselves and “*have a secure attachment to another person,*” said Carolyn Zahn-Waxler, a psychologist at the University of Wisconsin. Infants and young children whose own distress is ignored, scorned, worse yet, punished, can quickly become distrustful of their environment and feel unsafe.

Nancy Eisenberg, a psychologist at Arizona State University, agreed. “Children need a positive caring relationship with their parents or caretakers,”

she said, “If they are to be able to go beyond themselves to care about others”.

“*Empathy comes from being empathized with,*” Dr. Stanley I Greenspan, a clinical professor of psychiatry and pediatrics at George Washington University School of Medicine, wrote in his book *Great kids*.

Children should also be helped to recognize their own feelings and express them, he wrote. By learning to identify and label their feelings, children are better able to recognize the feelings of others. For example, when a child becomes frustrated with a toy car and throws it across the room his caretaker could say something like: “You’re feeling upset because the car isn’t working the way it should. You don’t like it when toys don’t work.”

Zahn-Waxler says the kind of discipline a child receives should “help the child regulate emotion, to calm down rather than become more agitated”. She advises parents to stay calm: “The more emotionally aroused you are, the more aroused the child is likely to become. Hitting or screaming at a child results in anger and fear and interferes with the child’s ability to care for others.”

Dr. Eisenberg emphasized that in addition to avoiding physical punishment, “*children should never be threatened with a loss of love*” for misbehaviour. Caretakers can help young children understand how other people feel, say, when a child cries because a toy breaks or is snatched by another child. When a child acts kindly toward someone, Marjorie Taylor, a psychologist at the University of Oregon, suggests that saying something like “*You’re very kind for doing this*” or “*You’re the kind of person who does nice things like that*” can help make empathy a part of a young child’s identity.

Even very young children need to know how their behaviour affects others, experts say. They need to have it explained why certain behaviours are hurtful or helpful and how to make up for bad behaviour. “*Be really explicit, because children can’t draw conclusions as easily as an older person,*” Taylor said.

Also helpful, she said, is reading books and talking about how people (or animals) in a story feel and why they feel that way.

One such book, *PJ the Spoiled Bunny*, by Marilyn Sadler, can help children appreciate the effects of being selfish and stubborn and always demanding one’s way.

The story helps children see how someone’s actions affect the and responses of others. PJ learns in the story that by behaving differently, he could have more fun with his friends. For older children, Greenspan suggested books like *To Kill a Mocking-bird* and *The of Anne Frank*.

Even televised events of natural disasters can help, by encouraging a child to imagine what it must be like for people whose lives are devastated by an earthquake or tsunami.

Although an early start is ideal, experts say it is possible to instill empathy later-even, for example in children whose emotional security was neglected in an orphanage. Undoing the damage may require extra effort on the part of adoptive parents, as well as unconditional love.

MODELING EMPATHY

Parents and teachers can set a good example of empathetic behaviour by how they behave themselves. The old saying “*do as I do*” has particular relevance for fostering empathy in children. “Parents need to be models of altruism, compassion and caring,” Zahn-Waxler said. “It’s not enough to talk the talk. You

need to be seen doing it and you need to show caring behaviour toward your child.”

Parents who are sympathetic to the feelings of others and rise to a need for help, especially when it is not in their own best interest, can teach children how to identify feelings, think beyond themselves and respond empathetically to others.

In school, teachers who inspire empathy are those who recognize and address the feelings behind a child’s behaviour. The most effective teachers are warm and affectionate and when trying to correct bad behaviour they remain calm, not punitive.

The New York Times

(The Indian Express, 20 February, 2010)

Keep Learning To Stay Young

Radhika Nagarth

This Incident happened in the late 1950s at the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. A research scholar in Pharmacology heard a knock on her door when she was working in her office.

On being asked to come in, an elderly gentleman in his sixties entered and startled the scholar by asking, “*Would you mind teaching me something of microbiology?*” The young scholar agreed and thus started his lessons on the subject, which went on for about a month. Later the knowledge gathered by this old gentleman was applied to the study of physiology of vision and a valuable book was written on the topic. The old scholar was not an ordinary man but a Nobel Prize winner, Sir C.V. Raman.

What is it that motivated a person like him to decide to learn an entirely new subject at such an advanced age? He had already done his best research work by that time and had won the world’s most coveted prize. But there was that urge in him to learn, an urge which was not too particular about where or from whom he could get something new: a true example that age is no bar for a genuine knowledge-seeker.

Learning is indeed a lifelong process, through our experiences in life, both good and bad. To be able to observe ordinary events and draw profound conclusions from them is the hallmark of a genius and we all can learn till we meet the end of our lives, not necessarily from school education only. To learn, one just has to keep one's eyes and ears open. Nature, too, is constantly teaching us, if only we are perceptive.

The SRIMAD BHAGVATAM talks of Sage Dattatreya who acquired 24 Gurus from nature. He learnt from the five elements and from creatures like the vulture, elephant and honeybee. For instance, he observed a vulture with a piece of meat in its mouth being chased by many crows, wherever it went. Only when it dropped the meat did the crows stop their pursuit and give it peace.

Dattatreya derived from this incident that the more we run after the material things, the more we invite problems. In the mad race, we get hurt and disturbed. Our inner being never wants to grow old. The body may take its normal course of ageing, but if the spirit of learning is alive in the heart, one remains young for long. And this youthfulness is reflected in our personalities as well.

(The Hindustan Times, November 12, 2005)

True Education Promotes Spirit of Inclusiveness

Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev

What is the role of school in education?

Educating yourself fundamentally means to broaden your horizons. From being in limitedness, you want to enlarge yourself. Unfortunately, though education today is broadening your information capabilities, you are becoming very narrow in terms of your perception and including life around you.

In the Ashram, if you have to live with 500 people, you need an enormous sense of inclusion. Without that, you cannot live with people harmoniously. We dropped all those uncles and aunts and grandmothers. Then we said family means me, my wife and my children. My parents are OK but wife's parents? 'No'. Then we thought parents are too old and are in the way. Now family means me, my wife, my children.

Increasingly, in large cities worldwide—in India as well—even two people is unable to live together. They have separate homes and meet during weekends. If they are together for more than a weekend, finished: there will be a war. We are becoming so exclusive that loneliness has become a big problem.

Gypsies live a completely different kind of life. They have a different attitude which is considered romantic and in some ways, very beautiful. Once a gypsy was scolding his son: “You good for nothing fellow, if you don’t learn some magic and jugglery to make a living, I will put you in school and make you an educated man and then you will suffer from endless want”. Unfortunately, this is what education has done to people. Endless want. The more educated societies are becoming, their wants are becoming unbelievable. Soon an individual will want a separate planet for himself to dig up resources. All of us cannot live on one planet. Not because there is something wrong with the content of education but there is something wrong with the way it is delivered. It is not information which damages people, it is the way you gather it and the way it is given and with what context.

India’s family planning department coined a slogan: “We are Two, Ours Two”. Then they changed it to: “We are Two, Ours One”. Soon they might change it to: “we are Two, Why Add one More?”. As more people get educated, no government policy is needed because your ability to include and share is going away.

Whether it is your own child, mother, wife, your

own whatever, your ability to share and give is gone with education. People don’t want to have children any more. Inclusiveness is disappearing from human beings. The whole dimension of spirituality means ‘all-inclusiveness’, not exclusiveness. Inclusiveness is life. Exclusiveness is death.

Today, Education is just about survival. It should be about broadening your horizons. Obsessed with economic status all the time, we have twisted the whole education just as a way of milking money from the world. This has to change. If you keep your intelligence uncluttered, wherever you are placed, you will survive. We want to produce not just loving wonderful adults; we want to produce very resilient adults. If you put him in hell, he will slowly convert it into heaven.

(The Times of India, 7, 2005)

Our Children...Let Us Handle With Care

B. O. Sebastain

You are not interested in me; you are not bothered about my studies and future.

Dear friends, would you be able to digest the above words if they were addressed to you by your son or daughter? Each one of us will proudly say: "*my child will not and cannot say like that.*" Let us pat ourselves on our backs and be proud of our children.

It was on December 5, 1987 that a gentleman stepped into my house and in the course of our conversation mentioned that the above statement had been made by his son. You can imagine the feelings of that parent. A similar incident took place a few months later when a boy said to his parent in my presence: "*You need not advise me. I know what type of people you are. I can prove it. First correct yourself.*" The parent was dumbfounded. Though I am not exaggerating. I do agree with you that these are stray incidents and we cannot and should not generalize.

I don't blame the children for their statements. I feel that these are the messages that these children had carried for 10 or 12 years. Both of them were

studying in Standard X.

A powerful sensitive tape

The child is a powerful sensitive tape that can register and record or pick up the feeblest vibration. He or she is a living computer that projects in future all the recorded programmes that we feed in.

What do our children register? Is it fear, shame or hatred? If so, we are failing in our duty. As Dorothy law Holtz said, "Let our children live and grow with tolerance, encouragement, praise, fairness, security, approval, acceptance and friendship so that they will learn to be patient, confident, appreciating, just to have faith in and have liking for themselves and find love in the world. On the other hand, if the child lives with criticism, hostility, ridicule and shame, they learn to condemn, to fight and to feel guilty."

If we all do agree that children are the most precious assets of the nation, they should be handled with care. Don't you think that their future depend on us and ours in turn on them?

If we accept that life is the greatest gift of God, the gift of children is second to none. So it is our bounden duty to work and live for their welfare. Let our children grow in love and concern so that they may cultivate a sense of belonging to their family, to

their society and to their country.

The parents, teachers and all the well-wishers of a child have roles to play for the growth, development and the blossoming of the character of a child. If the parent is the first teacher and a teacher a second parent, all of us are friends, guides, philosophers and counselors to our children and to all children entrusted to our care.

Then, shall we not say a word of encouragement which instills confidence in them? A harsh words kill's initiative. Shall we not congratulate them when they do things well, get good marks, act, sing, dance, speak and play well? A smile, a kind word or a gesture of approval will go a long way in their growth.

Shall we not make them feel that we care for them and that they are important?

Defenceless

Don't you think that our children are the most defenceless at home and in the school? They are easily suspected. Are not we prejudiced that they are telling lies? Don't you feel that they are most hurt when let down, when misunderstood, mistrusted, when their honesty is questioned, when punished without sufficient reason?

A hurt feeling can surely become a lasting

feeling which may have something to tell upon their character. They are the most delicate living beings who need a lot of support. One can make or break them.

We are in the midst of contradictions. Though we do not want our children to be tied to our apron strings, we want them to confide in us without any reservation and rise up to our expectations. Though we are very much interested in the welfare and bright future of our children, all of us are not quite aware of their likes and dislikes, inborn talents and dormant abilities.

Although we are overjoyed in their achievements when they win laurels, we do sometimes make derogatory, offensive, humiliating remarks which are detrimental to their personal growth.

Our nation's slogan is "*Happy child-nation's pride.*" And this is the message our children want to share with us...

(The Hindu, 19 February 2006)

PINGALWARA DIARY

(UPTO OCTOBER, 2016)

Services rendered by Pingalwara Institution for the service of the suffering humanity are:-

1. Homes for the Homeless

There are 1764 patients in different branches of Pingalwara now a days:—

(a) Head Office, Mata Mehtab Kaur Ward, Bhai Piara Singh Ward	374 Patients
(e) Manawala Complex	854 Patients
(b) Pandori Warraich Branch, Amritsar	82 Patients
(c) Jalandhar Branch	39 Patients
(d) Sangrur Branch	228 Patients
(f) Chandigarh (Palsora) Branch	94 Patients
(g) Goindwal Branch	93 Patients
	<hr/> Total 1764 Patients

2. Treatment facilities

(a) Dispensary & Laboratory:- Pingalwara has a dispensary and a laboratory for the treatment of patients. It has an annual expenditure of about Rs.90 lakhs. Medicines are also distributed free of cost to the poor and needy people.

(b) Medical Care Staff:- Experienced medical staff like Nurses, Pharmacists and Laboratory

Technicians are available for the care of the Pingalwara residents.

(c) Blood-Donation Camps:- A Blood Donation Camp is organized on Bhagat Ji's Death Anniversary every year. The blood is used for Pingalwara residents and road accident victims.

(d) Ambulances:- Ambulances with basic Medical aid are available for victims of road accidents on G.T. Road, round the clock and provide facilities for taking Pingalwara patients to the hospital.

(e) Artificial Limb Centre:- There is an Artificial Limb Centre at Manawala Complex, dedicated to the memory of Bhagat Ji which provides free of cost Artificial Limbs to Polio-affected and amputee cases. 8137 needy people have benefitted till October 2016.

(f) Physiotherapy Centre:- A Physiotherapy Centre equipped with State-of-to-art equipment is functioning in the Manawala Complex since June 2005. On an average 80 patients are treated everyday.

(g) Operation Theatres:- There is a well equipped Operation Theatre in Bhai Piara Singh Ward Amritsar for general surgery and A Micro Surgery Operation Theatre in Manawala Complex where Cochlear Implants and major operations are carried out.

(h) Dental, Eye, Ear & Ultrasound Centres:- These Centres have been set up to provide these services to Pingalwara residents, sewadars and their families.

3. Education

Pingalwara Society is running five Educational Institutions for the poor and needy children.

- (a) **Bhagat Puran Singh Adarsh School, Manawala Complex:-** This school provides free education to 728 students from the poor and deprived sections of the society. They are provided with free books and uniforms. Children being brought up by Pingalwara Society are also studying in this school.
- (b) **Bhagat Puran Singh Adarsh School, Buttar Kalan (Qadian):-** This school is dedicated to the sweet memory of Bhagatji. 452 students are getting free education under the able guidance of well qualified teachers. The school also provides financial help to students who have finished their school studies and are aspiring for higher studies.
- (c) **Bhagat Puran Singh School for Special Education, Manawala Complex:-** This school is providing Special Education to 217 Special children.
- (d) **Bhagat Puran Singh School for the Deaf:-** Bhagat Puran Singh School for Deaf Children is functional at the Manawala Complex since May 2005. The

school is equipped with state-of-the-art training aid and has 152 children on its rolls.

- (e) **Bhagat Puran Singh School for Special Education, Chandigarh (Palsora):-** his school caters to the needs of Special adults of the branch.
- (f) **Vocational Centre:-** This Centre is providing free training in embroidery, stitching, craft work, making washing powder, candle making, ainting, etc. Young girls from the villages of surroundings areas are the main beneficiaries.
- (g) **Computer Training:-** Computers are available in all the schools for academic and vocational training.
- (h) **Hostel facilities:-** There are separate hostels for boys and girls in Manawala Complex. Many girls are pursuing higher studies in different colleges.

4. Rehabilitation

- (a) **Marriages:-** After being educated, boys and girls at Pingalwara are married to suitable partners. 40 girls and 4 boys have been married off till date.

5. Environment Related Activities

- (a) **Tree Plantation:-** Bhagat Puran Singh Ji was deeply concerned about the degradation of the environment. A vigorous campaign of tree plantation is started every year on Bhagat Ji's Death Anniver-

sary. Each year 15,000 to 22,000 trees are planted in various schools, colleges, hospitals, cremation grounds and other public places. These include Amaltas, Kachnar, Behra, Champa, Arjun, Sukhchain, Chandni, Zetropa, Kari-patta were distributed to different institutions.

- (b) **Nursery:-** Pingalwara has its own Nursery where saplings of various plants and trees are prepared. Every year, the aim of nursery is to grow more than 54 different kinds of saplings every year.

6. Social Improvement Related Activities

- (a) **Awareness:-** Pingalwara has played an important role in spreading awareness about the evils in the society. This has been done by printing literature on religious, social and environmental issues at the Puran Printing Press Amritsar and is being distributed free of cost. It has an annual expenditure of printing and publicity is about 1 crore 50 lakhs rupees.
- (b) **Puran Printing Press:-** The Printing Press has been updated with an Offset Press.
- (c) **Museum and Documentaries:-** A Museum, and a number of documentaries have been prepared on Pingalwara activities as well as on zero budget natural farming. The C.D.s are freely available from Pingalwara.

A feature film produced by Pingalwara Society Amritsar EH JANAM TUMHARE LEKHE (Punjabi) on Rev. Bhagat Puran Singh Ji, founder Pingalwara and his struggle not only for selfless services of wounded humanity but for Environment Crisis also, will prove a beacon for the generations yet to come after us.

7. **Help to the victims of Natural Calamities:** Pingalwara makes an effort to provide succour to the victims of natural calamities like floods, earthquakes and famines. Aid was sent for the earth-quake victims in Iran, Tsunami disaster victims, Leh landslide and flood affected areas.

8. **Cremation of unclaimed dead-bodies:** Pingalwara cremates unclaimed dead bodies with full honour.

9. **Dairy Farm**

120 cows and buffalos at Manawala Complex provide fresh milk to the Pingalwara residents.

10. **Old Age Homes**

Old age homes at Sangrur and Manawala Complex of Pingalwara caters to the needs of elderly people.

11. **Projects Completed and Under Construction**

Since 1997 ambitious projects of Sangrur, Palsora at Chandigarh and Manawala Complex have been completed. In the year 2009 new buildings— Administrative Block, Puran Printing Press, Deaf School, T.B. Ward at Manawala Complex and at Head Office and

a New Administrative Block have also been completed.

In the year 2013, a new modern Bhagat Puran Singh School for Special Education in Manawala Complex of Pingalwara and a new Block for Pingalwara patients in Pandori Warraich Branch is under construction and is fast coming up.

Other Details:

- a) All India Pingalwara Charitable Society is a Registered Society, registered by Registrar of Companies vide letter No. 130 of 1956-1957 as amended vide No. A-28/4540 dated 07-07-1998.
- b) All donations to Pingalwara are exempted under Section 80 G of Income Tax-II Amritsar letter No. CIT-II/ASR/ITO (Tech.)/2011-12/4730 dated 11/12 January, 2012.
- c) PAN Number of the All India Pingalwara Charitable Society is AAATA 2237R
- d) FCRA (Foreign Contribution Regulation Act) 1976 Registration No. of Pingalwara is 115210002

Wahe Guru Ji Ka Khalsa

Wahe Guru Ji Ki Fateh

Dr. Inderjit Kaur,

President,

All India Pingalwara Charitable Society (Regd.),

Tehsilpura, G.T. Road, Amritsar. (Punjab).

DETAILS OF BANKS FOR SENDING DONATION THROUGH ONLINE/CHEQUE/DRAFT					
Cheques & Bank Drafts may be sent in favour of :					
All India Pingalwara Charitable Society (Regd.) Amritsar.					
PAN CARD NO. AAATA2237R					
S. No.	Name of Account	A/C No.	Name of the Bank	IFS Code For Inland Remittance	Swift Code For Foreign Inward Remittance
FOR FOREIGN DONORS					
1.	All India Pingalwara Charitable Society (Regd.) Amritsar.	01562010002890	Oriental Bank of Commerce Sharifpura Amritsar.	ORBC0100156	ORBCINBBASR
FOR INLAND DONORS					
2.	All India Pingalwara Charitable Society (Regd.) Amritsar.	01562010003720	Oriental Bank of Commerce Sharifpura Amritsar.	ORBC0100156
3.	All India Pingalwara Charitable Society (Regd.) Amritsar.	10978255668	State Bank of India Town Hall, Amritsar	SBIN0000609	SBINHBB274
4.	All India Pingalwara Charitable Society (Regd.) Amritsar.	630510100026147	Bank of India City Centre Amritsar	BKID0006305	BKIDINBBASR

5.	All India Pingalwara Charitable Society (Regd.) Amritsar.	685010100009799	Axis Bank Ltd. City Centre, Amritsar	UTIB0000685	AXISINBB179
6.	All India Pingalwara Charitable Society (Regd.) Amritsar.	0018002100097336	Punjab National Bank Hall Bazar, Amritsar.	PUNB0001800	PUNBINBBAHB
7.	All India Pingalwara Charitable Society (Regd.) Amritsar.	006601012522	ICICI Bank Ltd. Lawrence Road, Amritsar	ICIC0000066	ICICINBBFEX
8.	All India Pingalwara Charitable Society (Regd.) Amritsar.	01151000246510	HDFC Bank Ltd. Mall Road, Amritsar	HDFC0000115	HDFCINBB
9.	All India Pingalwara Charitable Society (Regd.) Amritsar.	13131000082013	HDFC Bank Ltd. Ghanta Ghar Golden Temple Amritsar	HDFC0001313	HDFCINBB
10.	All India Pingalwara Charitable Society (Regd.) Amritsar.	00011000096048	Punjab & Sind Bank Hall Bazar, Amritsar	PSIB000A001	PSIBINBB017
11.	All India Pingalwara Charitable Society (Regd.) Amritsar.	01010100015572	Bank of Baroda Town Hall, Amritsar	BARBOAMRITS	BARBINBBAMR

- * Preserve natural resources.
- * Service of the poor and destitutes is the service of God.
- * Plant trees to save environment.
- * Wear Khadi clothes to lessen unemployment.
- * Simple living and high thinking is a bliss.
- * Use less of diesel and petrol.
- * Exercise restraint in your living habits.
- * Don't forget to plant trees. They are the sign of prosperity of a nation.

—Bhagat Puran Singh

K.M. Munshi writes that Matsya Purana says: "One who sinks a well lives in heaven for as many years as there are drops of water in it. But to dig ten such wells equals in merit the digging of one pond; digging of ten such ponds was equal to making a lake; making of ten lakes was as meritorious as begetting a virtuous son but begetting ten such virtuous son had the same sanctity as that of planting a single tree."