

Editorial Note

Dear Reader,

Education is normally perceived as a pre-requisite to freedom these days. Some of one friends in the academia have been insisting upon education being the only provider of public good. Some have been suggesting that the spread of education can eliminate almost all major social and economic problems of our political community. The argument is that if we educate people they will gain greater awareness about their rights and then demand from the state in accordance with their understanding of the things and this may, in turn, lead to increased sense of responsibility among the political class and lessening corruption. Inefficiency on the part of executive will also decrease and in result, the social evils will essentially give way to modern secularized method of living and economic prosperity would necessarily follow. The argument dwells upon the accepted predominance of educated elite of different classes over the illiterate and uneducated masses. The feeling appears to be towards procuring better life for all the citizens through wide spread educational proliferation, which has in some cases paved the way of very enthusiastic government planning and schemes like 'Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan' And the corollary of this argument is that education is the panacea; solution to every problem, the torchbearer of development and so one.

Apparently, the argument seems quite promising and thereby, easily acceptable to all, but experiences put forth some apprehensions that may be translated as queries. Let us take one simple example of castes system in India. We may agree that the expansion of education loosens the strict caste compartmentalization's and the process of sanskritization finally assimilates all the coherent modernized group communities. This means that caste consciousness among people with greater educational will definitely be lesser as compared to those with lesser or no educational input at all. But the political scenario of last two decades reveals that this has not happened. And unfortunately this the other way round. The bondage of religion in the other example. In this case also the religious fanaticism is greater in people with greater educational input, which they disseminate through both traditional and modern means of communication amongst the lesser-educated people. We may take another example of corruption. The level of corruption in places where highly educated class in at the helm of affairs is greater as compared to others. We may go on citing examples. The essence of this argument is not to lower down the importance of the proliferation of education but to bring to notice that ironically, education has not been able to provide us with less communal, less corrupt, less casteist or less fanatic citizenry. This means that there is something seriously wrong with our educational system and we must take note of our output in terms of producing good citizens. The big question is that despite our tall claims of producing a large educators, communicators engineers, doctors, advocates, and so on, have we been able to produce truthful, dedicated, honest, dutiful and visionary people with educational excellence? Has our educational system been able to improve the living conditions of the villagers of even one single village of the country? Have our educational institutions been successful in producing people with original Indian thinking? Have our colleagues in academia ever attempted to come with indigenous ideas and clear-cut programme of action for socio-political menaces of poverty, dowry, population explosion, etc. this should not be construed as an argument refuting the multi-dimensional progress of our socio-political community coupled with economic and educational growth. But the fact of the matter is that our present educational system has not endeavoured to fulfill the dreams of common man, which have been equally shattered by

our political class. This has led to overall disenchantment with the people and institutions engaged in the activities of the state and other significant institutions of public life.

The end product of educational proliferation is, therefore, the increase in the number of people with educational exposure and the decrease in the number of people with conviction and integrity. Our highly educated class has developed a strange sense of apathy towards political life which, in turn, has given way to the people with lesser understanding managing the entire game of politics resulting in diminishing efficiency of our democratic institutions. This means that educational system has not complimented democratic way of life. This scenario is grim and requires serious attention of all the concerned. The main objective of our education must be the welfare of the people as our ancient treatises proclaim :-

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15th March, 2006

(Sanjeev K. Sharma)