

How to Combat Terrors of Knowledge Explosion in the 21st Century?

*Dr. Shashikanti Tripathi**

*Dinesh Pandey**

In the present world scenario, man has achieved perhaps the highest ever level of Science and technology through inquisitive knowledge explosion. On the contrary, one can simply infer that the present states of mankind and environment both social and natural, are far away from happy living, leading to the sinking of mankind into the deadly wells of poverty, pollution, corruption and crime. In consonance with the development in Science and technology, there is a paradigm shift in the field of education at school, college and university levels. Emphasis on information based education occupied the foremost place in our products of education. Despite recommendations and suggestions of various commissions and committees, the forerunners of education across the world, laid significant emphasis on an education based on information and competition. The so-called modern education sounded its trumpets with development of man with the help of materialistic satisfactions whereas the core of the man, i.e., divine potentialities and value part of man were utterly neglected. As a result of this horrendous development, mankind today, is facing the most terrible times with constant threats from out and within. External threats include environmental degradation, nuclear war, violence, terrorism and natural disasters whereas internal threats include trauma, tension, turmoil of poverty, physical and mental diseases and of course the evils of lust, anger, attachment, greed and ego due to body consciousness which are considered as the bye-product of knowledge explosion rooted in our present system of education.

Today's society, where every individual or group is self-centred, is not a peaceful society in true sense for it lacks enduring unity of minds or commonality of abiding interests of its people. Thus, it fails short of an important cohesive force or uniting factor that should give to it solidarity and integrity. Even if the groups constituting it, have some common set of customs and social norms, these groups or individuals often break the norms when their self-interests clash with those of others, such a society is, at best, a loosely unit network of communities, classes, institutions or nations, each one of which thrives by using the other for its own growth. And a logical consequence of this is that, when a situation arises for a group to choose between what is of benefit to all and what is of greater benefit to that group, it opts for the latter, thus unleashing the forces of disruption, conflict and split.

Ignorance and False Knowledge

The bounds of human knowledge have vastly increased in the present day world and man is intellectually far more educated and advanced than he ever was in the past. But

* Associate Professor, Deptt. of Education, Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapith.

* Research Scholar, Deptt. of Education, Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapith.

we also notice that, despite all this, there has been a progressive increase in human woe and misery all bound. Why this paradox?

To understand this, one has to know that the ignorance or false knowledge, we have mentioned above, is of four different kinds. The first is that man considers himself solely as a physiological mechanism, although he has, within his body a self-luminous, incorporeal yet conscientious entity, called "soul", which drives the body like a vehicle.

The second kind of ignorance is that man conveniently forgets, in his day-to-day activities, that his body is not immortal and that, in fact, nothing in this world, including his worldly possessions, friends, relations, etc. is ever lasting and that everything is transitory and subject to constant change. Consequently, man hankers after the ephemeral things of this world which yield nothing but transitory sensuous enjoyment he thus identifies these with happiness and feels miserable when he cannot have them.

The third form of ignorance is the adoption of wrong perspectives and view-points in identifying real values of life. This inevitably leads to commission of wrong acts and sins. People, today, labour under the false belief that world has made tremendous progress as a result of which it has become a much better place to live in, whereas, actually, it is not so. The world has, on the contrary, become unrighteous, irreligious, corrupt and vicious.

Hence knowledge enable one to distinguish between right and wrong, vice and virtue, what is moral and what is immoral, in short, between what is worth striving for and what is worth summary rejection.

The fourth kind of ignorance is to regard as happiness what in fact, is a source of unhappiness.

Knowledge Explosion Based on Materials and Information

All the material desires and its fulfillment are considered as the source of happiness in life whereas it is found that material cannot give happiness rather it soothes and satisfies only the sense organs. Man is caught today in the satisfaction of sense organs. The satisfaction of mind and soul is absolutely neglected. Our present system of education guides the new generation to attain material gains. It has made them sensuous based on the satisfaction of sense organs. Dr. Abdul Kalam says, "Science and Spiritualism seek some divine blessings for doing good for people..... Science tries to provide solution for a better material life while spiritualism looks at answers on how to lead a righteous life." This statement of Dr. Kalam clearly indicates that knowledge explosion as a result of our present curriculum in school and higher education should include the "Satyam Vada" (speak the truth), dharam chara (treat the path of righteousness), service towards others and faith in God.

This inclusion will combat the terrors of knowledge explosion which may prove to be more catastrophic than nuclear explosions. Evidently, we find that social, religious and moral viabilities of present day education are far from the real essence of education which is becoming instrumental only in satisfying the primary needs, i.e.,

physiological needs, need of security and self belongingness as mentioned by Abraham Maslow whereas the secondary needs of self-esteem and self actualization are widely underestimated or we can say violated making man volatile and self-centered in the contemporary society.

Trailor of Knowledge Explosions

Educationists and also those who teach say that the atmosphere in schools and colleges has undergone a sea-change during the last decades or so. One major problem is the indiscipline and violence. During the examinations, one notices the malpractice of mass-copying. Even the parents and the invigilators help in this evil. There is also the evil of tampering with the results, either by the examiner or in the office where the results are compiled and records are maintained. On any pretext, the students may gather into the form of mob, threaten their teachers, destroy the school or college property and gherao their Principal or Higher Authorities. There is the ugly practice of ragging and there is also absenteeism. Eve-teasing and drug-addiction are on the increase. On the occasion of certain festivals there is hooliganism. In short, we find that the majority of students do not have any regard for the teachers and they are giving up the traditional value and following the new T.V. and film culture. The parents also are worried about the future of their sons and daughters because they are aware of such unhealthy and degrading atmosphere prevalent in academic institutions and they are afraid of their young ones falling into bad company.

Blend of Knowledge and Value: Our Prime Need

We should realize that there is need to give grounding to the children and youth in such values as simplicity, obedience, respect for elders, responsibility, discipline and honesty. Without inculcation of these values, the society will go down and all developmental efforts will be put to naught. It is to point out that there is need to equip students with such knowledge as can prepare them to face allurements, temptations, provocations, aggravations and aggrievements in life and to have equanimity, peace, civility and grace under all circumstances.

The knowledge must include the ancient spiritual and cultural heritage and the age-old value system and the holy wisdom available in the country for the sake of protecting the new generation from the aftermath of knowledge explosion.

The parent, the teacher, the planner, the student and the society cannot be segregated. They interact with each other. The parents cannot forget their responsibility and put all burden and blame on the teacher or the school or college, nor for the same reason can the teacher shirk his responsibility, claim freedom from all responsibility and put it on the shoulders of the parents or the family. The society too cannot say that it can hardly do anything in the matter. All should join hands to attain one goal together.

We must know that the seven major Evils – sex-lust, anger, greed, attachment, pride, hatred and laziness are born by identifying the self with the body which is materially achieved through the knowledge and information boom today. All materialism also is based on body-consciousness. So, this knowledge of the self also must form a part of

education, for, this forms the foundation for moral values and counters the forces of materialism or so-called knowledge boom based on informations.

It is the self or soul which has a moral dimension and if we do not realize these moral values, if acquired by any other means, will not stay for long because all else is material, transient and ephemeral. The law of karma also is based on this and without faith in the law of karma, one is likely to be stranded from the path of values and uprooted from the moral ground by storms of temptations and provocations. This knowledge of the self, must, therefore, form a part of the education because it is undeniably true that the present situation is the result of the "identity crisis" for every individual in this world where knowledge consists of materialistic knowledge far beyond the realization of soul consciousness.

Twelve Wonder Values to Combat Terrors of Knowledge Explosion

There are twelve wonder values which need to be inculcated through education so as to protect new generation from terrors of knowledge explosion.

- i) Dignity of the human individual, based on his spiritual identity through meditation.
- ii) Love and goodwill for all, based on the concept that the world is a family.
- iii) Self-respect and regards or respect for others.
- iv) Humility
- v) Honesty and integrity
- vi) Purity and cleanliness
- vii) Equanimity, peace, tolerance and non-violence
- viii) Concern for the well-being of all; sympathy and service
- ix) Unity and co-operation
- x) Effort for excellence
- xi) Contentment
- xii) Yogi life style, i.e., Sattwa, simplicity-sincerity-trusteeship

Conclusion

Knowledge explosion has enormously influenced the culture, the life-style and the ways and means have ushered in a new civilization. It is also said that besides doing many good things, it has unleashed the trends of consumerism, commercialism and self destruction due to lack of soul consciousness.

Undoubtedly, it can be said that the contributions of knowledge booms are many and great in deed in many respects, it has made the world better. But the forces of materialism, consumerism and commercialism and also some indiscriminate use of things it has been doing with the result that the environment has been greatly damaged. Knowledge booms have done a disservice to its fair name. If knowledge booms were value-based, the results would have been much better. If knowledge and spirituality had played complementary roles, the world would have become a paradise. Knowledgeable men themselves say that they want to know the method and ways of peace and emotional stability. They also want to know what consciousness is or the

self is. They wish to get rid of some odd habits and shortcomings in their personality. It is here that spirituality can help them. They wish to know human engineering which can bring constant happiness and satisfaction in their life and can liberate them from pride, jealousy, anger and sense of insecurity. If knowledge is supported by meditation, power of value-judgement would be greatly enhanced, also intuitive faculty and ability of innovation would be used through constructive means for only the well-being of the society. Meditation will fill minds with peace and compassion and would reward with deeper insight and also foresight. It would be blessed with the third eye which is no less useful and important than the telescopes, microscopes or the power of reflection. Understanding the secrets of the spirit and the original human nature would give added abilities to understanding the working of nature. Thoughts are neither physical, nor chemical or mechanical energy. Understanding of thought, which is the very tool for inventions, would enable man to solve the enigma of life. So, spirituality, peace, compassion, meditation and judgement, based on values can make knowledge more compact with soul rather than the evils of body consciousness and destructive materialism.

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