

HOLISTIC PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT AND ROLE OF HOLISTIC EDUCATION

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Abstract

Human personality plays an important and significant role in one's life. By holding a good and balanced personality one can easily adjust, adapt and live in one's environment. A balanced and holistic personality is a composed phenomenon. It is combination of internal and external attributes and education contributes much towards the development of human personality. Gandhi (1937) advocates the role of education as, "By education I mean an all round drawing out of the best in child and man-body, mind and spirit". Certainly, the true education works for all round progress of human beings, the education that emphasizes equally on body, mind and spirit. No doubt, as a paradigm approach holistic education is only answer to the process of holistic personality development. It covers all the significant aspects of an individual's life and meets to all the requirements of all round personality development programme. Holistic education may be considered as the most powerful weapon which can be used to nurture and nourish the child's personality and to prepare him for his corporate world.

Keywords: Personality, Holistic Personality, Education, Holistic Education.



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The Concept of Holistic Personality

The concept and issue of balanced personality is becoming a highlighting concern in educational scenario in the present era. There was a time when human's intellect or I.Q. is considered most important for his success in life. But the whole concept of intelligence got a new momentum with the work of Howard Gardner who introduced the idea that traditional types of intelligence, such as IQ, fail to fully explain cognitive ability. He propounded the concept of multiple intelligences which included both *interpersonal intelligence* (the capacity to understand the intentions, motivations and desires of other people) and *intrapersonal intelligence* (the capacity to understand oneself, to appreciate one's feelings, fears and motivations).

Now the days when researches proved that IQ is not a single responsible factor for ones all round personality development. Human personality is composed of his inner and outer attributes. Our inner self is more powerful than our outer domain. To know this inner self is

only a way to get eternal happiness. Indeed, proper knowledge of our hidden potential can give us immense confidence and credibility throughout our life. Continuous exploration of inner self makes us more competitive, capable and complete and in this way one can establish better relationships with his outer world. To grow inward means to grow outward. By knowing the strengths and weaknesses of the self one can enjoy the life successfully. Development of the inner self is actually the development of personality in holistic sense. The term **Holistic** is concerned with wholes rather than analysis or separation into parts. Whereas **Personality** includes the pattern of collective character, behaviour, temperamental, emotional, and mental traits of a person.

Psychology describes personality as a sum total of all the behavioral and mental characteristics by means of which an individual is recognized as being unique. In the words of **Allport** (1937), "Personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his unique adjustments to the environment." Personality Development is the growth and development of the thinking, perception, attitude, nature, mood, behaviour and activities that differentiate among people. It is a tool to bring out one's abilities and powers for making himself aware of his inner self and become more confident to face the outside world. Personality means uniqueness, individuality and appearance of a person and his/her reflection of thinking, emotions, behavior, communication skills and corporeal characteristics.

In this way personality development is always referred to as a 'psycho-social task' the process that serves a dual function. It is not only a psychological but also a social endeavor. The individual starts to develop a value system right from his childhood. It encompasses character building qualities such as accountability, honesty, integrity, trust, choices, responsibility, anger and especially self-esteem. On the basis of these he goes on to build relationships in the work place and in the society. At the social level he has to fit in various roles such as familial, occupational and societal. In order to meet the differing requirements of each sphere he has to have an inherent ability that is consistent, comprehensive and systematic so that in the external world he is able to prove his worth by carrying out his commitments and thus establish himself and create an image by which he is recognized.

Holistic Education for Holistic Personality Development

Now the burning question of our times is; what type of education is needed to wrestle and cope up with the ever-changing and challenging scenario of the world. Educationists and the thinkers

across the Globe are very much conscious of emerging roles of education and the new demands made on educational systems. No doubt, the role of education is becoming very tough and challenging day by day. The true education works for a complete and holistic man. It starts its work from human body and leaves it with the highest attainment of spiritual growth. “Education shall be directed to the full development of human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and human freedoms”. (Universal Declaration of Human Rights)

Today there is an urgent need for positive social change and we need to create a better world, where everyone can live peacefully and freely. Many of our problems originate when human development programme is taken into fragmentary parts rather than as a whole. “There is a general erosion of social values in today's society. Signs of social disintegration are evident everywhere and are continuously on the rise.” (Hue yen News Service, 2012). Today the erosion of values in practically every aspect of human life is a matter of universal anxiety and concern. The pattern of social change, modernization and development that had taken place under the impact of westernization and globalization of education brought a general decline in values in public life. Even the role of education cannot be neglected in the degradation of values. Erosion of values is mainly due to non-conducive environment present in our schools. It is due to the reason that our education is merely oriented towards the development of mental faculties that created a generation of disintegrated personalities. We have badly failed in fulfilling the dreams of our great educationists and thinkers who targeted to create such type of classrooms where harmonious and balanced personalities can be nurtured and nourished.

There is no denial that our educational institutions are presently aimed to equip our youngsters with all those capacities and competencies that are needed by them to live in their corporate world. They are fully laced with the most excellent technological and scientific knowledge to work efficiently in their modern world. But a far more important purpose than this is to create the right environment so that they may develop fully as total human beings. (Krishnamurti, 1981)

‘Total human being’ means a man who can make a balance between his inner and outer world. Krishnamurti (1981) further elaborates it as, “That is the real issue in education: to see that when the students leave the school, they are well established in goodness, both outwardly and inwardly”.

Holistic Education focuses upon wholeness and it covers almost all the significant aspects of human experiences (intellectual, physical, spiritual, emotional, social and aesthetic experiences). It is a new emerging movement which came into discussion in the mid – 1980s in North America. (Miller, 2004)

Miller (1992), one of the prominent leaders of this movement states, “Holistic education is not to be defined as a particular method or technique, it must be seen as a paradigm, a set of basic assumptions and principles that can be applied in diverse ways.”

According to Singh (1996), “Holistic education addresses the broadest development of the whole person at the cognitive and affective levels.”

Holistic education aims for the fullest possible human development enabling a person to become the very best or finest that they can be and develop fully ‘those capacities that together make up a human being’. (Forbes, 2003)

Martin (2002) distinguishes the concept of holistic education from its other forms as “ At its most general level, what distinguishes holistic education from other forms of education are its goal, its attention to experiential learning, and the significance that it places on relationships and primary human values within the learning environment.”

Obviously to deal with the holistic personality development process we require a holistic education programme that can consider a child as a total human being and prepare him for his inner as well as his outer world. To fulfill this great purpose, our ancient Indian educational system are of great help in facilitating the production of a creative, ethical and a learning mind, which will concern itself not only with greater ‘progress’, but primarily or more importantly with the inner transformation of the human consciousness. The main underlying element of holistic education is its focus on the interconnectedness of human experiences and existing reality. It enables the individuals to explore within self, to find out their capacities, capabilities, potentialities and other hidden talents and then make the proper utilization of all these for the betterment of their society.

Conclusion

In the words of Bhatta (2009), “A programme of holistic development provides an effective approach to make students more socially concerned, compassionate, liberal, inclusive, ethical and humane”. Therefore our educational programmes and policies should be designed in such a way that can enable the students mentally wise, emotionally balanced and spiritually blossomed. Jafari, Nasrabadi and Liaghatdar (2012) layouts some basic and broad

characteristics of holistic education as: 1) it nurtures the development of whole person; 2) it revolves around relationships (egalitarian, open and democratic relationships); 3) it is concerned with life experiences (instead of basic skills); 4) it “recognizes that cultures are created by people and can be changed by people” (instead of conforming and replicating a established culture); and 5) it is founded upon a “deep reverence for life and for the unknown (and never fully knowable) source of life.”

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