"The things taught in schools and colleges are not an education, but the means of education".

- Emerson

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CHAPTER IX
CURRICULUM AND EVALUATION

I CURRICULUM:

(1) Basis of Curriculum:

The curriculum presented in the Gita is not in the form of various subjects. Sri Krishna presented the entire life and its problems as one subject. We generally go to the books for knowledge and not to its real source—Nature and Life. We derive the knowledge of the books after depriving ourself of the knowledge of the world. The result is that the mind is growing up in an unsocial and de-humanised climate. The book-laden sophistry of man takes him away from the coolstewart of life and loses him amid burning sand dunes. The spirit of unity permeates the whole universe. It is visible in animate as well as inanimate objects—in the human as well as vegetable existence. It is only through the companionship of nature that one can learn this great secret and feel the universal consciousness in every tiny leaf and in every blade of grass. Nature is a great teacher. It teaches us to feel the sense of oneness and to see fire, air, water, land and the whole universe as pervaded by a universal consciousness. The identification of the individual spirit of man in a Spirit that is everywhere is possible through the profound interaction of man and nature. There is unity in diversity. Diversity brings richness and beauty. Unity holds depth and strength. Hence the curriculum should be
framed in such a way that pupils see this unity in diversity, whatever be the subjects or the courses they study.

The law of natural selection applies itself best in the educational field which opens out innumerable vistas. The curriculum should enable the children to choose for themselves the line through which they can manifest their abilities best. Given the opportunity all children evolve on lines congenial to themselves. Curriculum should provide scope and opportunities to each individual from the infant standard to graduation considering the innate talents. One may graduate as a poet, another as a musician, a third as a sportsman, a fourth as an agriculturists and fifth as a mathematician and so on. If each individual is encouraged to evolve and express his talents, the best can be obtained from every citizen.

Even though the professional courses offered to individuals are different, they should not make them to see the differences. Knowledge must enable them to see the unity underlying the diversity. The present system of education creates differences among the human beings in the name of specialization. The secular sciences describe and magnify the differences. Philosophy or the knowledge which unifies all subjects into a whole is real education. Sri Krishna says, "I am philosophy among all sciences".

Every science or art in which the pupil acquires knowledge and skill should develop in him a sense of oneness.
Textual or superficial knowledge is not education. Curriculum should include all courses of study catering to the needs and capacities of the individuals. But through all branches of knowledge they must feel the oneness of the entire knowledge of the universe. Physical and natural sciences observe the different manifestations of God and discover the hidden truths. Geography helps the individuals to look at the world beyond their understanding and to get the widest possible outlook. History reveals the fulfilment of God's will in the world through individual men. Mathematics take the individuals from the concrete to the abstract, from the finite world to the Infinite Spirit, from the manifested world of time and space to the Unmanifested Brahman. Similarly all the arts are the ways to the attainment of the highest goal. Music gives not only the immense Bliss, but also is an instrument with which the devotee sings the glory of God. The literature reveals the truth that words and sentences are only symbols to express the ideas in different languages. Literature also helps the devotee to praise the glory of God in different ways and to sublimate his emotions from physical level to the spiritual level. Any science or art could reach its perfection only when it is dedicated to the Lord.

Curriculum should also give scope for the creativity and freedom among the students. Whether it is in sciences or arts, the pupils must develop the creative talent. They have to discover new things which have not been brought out from nature so far. Music and dance provide such freedom and creativity among the students. Any subject that is offered
must be judged as good not only from the economic point of view, but also from its capacity for full expression of individual talents. Though education should be a practicable affair we should not think that the practicability of a thing consists in what is called 'succeeding' in life in any political sense of the term, because one may manoeuvre to succeed for sometime, but be extremely unhappy within, in spite of the so-called practical success. This happens because here we have only a soulless practicability of affairs, bereft of the sap of life that sustains it. Such a practicability should not be a criterion for any curriculum. A curriculum should have not only economic value, but also intrinsic value. It should give not only skill in the work, but also a large heart to use it for the good of the world. It should enable the pupils to see not only the diversities of beauty, but also the essence of oneness in them.

(2) Knowledge for national type:

The educationists of all the nations have been discussing the controversial point of theory versus practice, or knowledge vs action. Some educationists say that knowledge is supreme and some say that action is more important than knowledge. Gita says that there are two main types of people, namely, contemplative type and active type. "Two fold faith has been declared for the human race; the way of knowledge for the rational, and the way of action for the active people". So both knowledge and action are necessary. A student must secure the theoretical knowledge from the teacher and also
practise it in the world. In whatever field of life an individual wants to shine, he must first get the theory of it. If he thoroughly understands it, he will be able to carry on the work successfully. Praising the knowledge, Krishna says:

"You will cross all sin by the boat of knowledge alone, (IV. 36). Even as the blazing fire burns the fuel to ashes; so the fire of knowledge burns to ashes all actions (IV. 37). There is indeed nothing so purifying here as knowledge. One perfected in Yoga attains that automatically in himself in time", (IV. 38). A pupil who concentrates his mind on the knowledge would certainly get it in course of time. Yoga or uniting the mind with the studies is necessary, for acquiring the knowledge. "The man of faith, zeal and self-control attains knowledge" (IV. 39). Faith on the field of his pursuit and on the teacher and self-control or attention on the subject are necessary. A pupil must be confident that the knowledge which he is pursuing will give him happiness and that he will surely succeed in getting it. He must have full confidence on the ability of the teacher. Then only he can be free from bias and sincerely follow what the teacher instructs.

Gita distinguishes the knowledge of the secular sciences from the real wisdom. The textual knowledge is futile if it is not properly understood and practised. "The secular sciences deal with subjects coming under three gunas, they do not lead to the Truth". (II. 45). But a man of wisdom gets all the pleasures that the secular sciences fail to give. The real knowledge is very comprehensive. "All the purpose that small reservoirs serve is served by a vast lake entirely filled with
There are three types of knowledge in this world. The knowledge by which one sees the One undivided Imperishable substance in all beings, which are divided is known as Sattvika. (XVIII. 20). But the knowledge by which one sees as distinct in all beings, different entities of various kinds, is Rajasika (XVIII. 21) That knowledge which is confined to a single product as if it were the whole, which is irrational, not founded upon Truth, and trivial, is declared as Tamasika. (XVIII. 22) Gita refers to only Sattvika type of knowledge as the real knowledge, because it enables the individual to see the unity in diversity. The delusion or ignorance is due to our identification with petty differences and prejudices based on nationalities, religions, races and languages. But, "Acquiring the knowledge, you will no more be deluded, by which you will see all creatures in yourself and them in Me. "IV. 35) This is real education and this is real wisdom.

What would be the conduct of the person who gets this knowledge. Mere memorisation of books, securing many degrees and living in the aggrandisement will not make the man educated. Gita gives a very clear definition of knowledge, the possession of which makes one really educated. "Humility, unostentatiousness, harmlessness, forbearance, uprightness, service to Guru, purity, steadfastness, self-control, dispassion for sense objects, absence of egoism, seeing misery and evil in birth, death, old age and sickness non-identification and non-identification with son, wife, home etc. always
being even-minded whether good or evil befalls, unswerving in devotion to Me through the Yoga of non-separation; resorting to solitude and aversion to company; always being devoted to spiritual knowledge, perception of the aim of the knowledge of Truth -- all this is knowledge; what is different from it is ignorance". (XIII. 7 to 11). Thus knowledge is not the acquisition of textual knowledge, but it is the wisdom by which man could see his Self in all beings and conduct his life as a human being.

(3) Action for active type :

The active type of persons follow the action. Some students like to take up the subjects in which intellect is involved. But there are some students who are interested in manual and technical sciences. Gita says every one has to take up some action or profession without which even the maintenance of the body is impossible. "Action is superior to inaction, even the maintenance of the body is impossible by inaction". (III. 8). The whole world is bound by work. Every individual has to work. Work-oriented education makes the country prosperous. But the work done in spirit of sacrifice is supreme. A student who works in the laboratory for the discovery of Truth, a pupil who plays with other teams in order to secure victory for his school are the examples of the doers of Yagna. Gita enumerates twelve Yagnas; participating in any one of these activities brings success. There are many subjects offered in a school. Some are Physical
sciences, some are social sciences, some are arts and some are crafts. Man can make his livelihood and contribute his might to the society by acquiring skill in any of these courses. So education must train the individuals to get the required skill in some professions for which he is capable.

Knowledge and action are not different. Men of wisdom and workers are necessary for the progress of the society. A scientist contributes to the society as much as a labourer or industrialist or a farmer does. Gita says: "The ignorant say that knowledge and selfless action are different, but not the wise; practising thoroughly even one, a person attains to the fruits of both. (V. 4). The status which is attained by men of knowledge, is also attained by selfless action. (V. 5) "Where ever there are men of wisdom who see all beings with the same eye and treat them equally, and where ever there are selfless workers, there is progress and happiness. This idea is conveyed in the last sloka of the Gita. "Where there is Sri Krishna, the man of wisdom, and where there is Partha, the man of action, there are sure fortune, victory, prosperity and statesmanship". (XVIII. 7).

(4) Devotion to duty:

Service to all creatures and through them to God is the highest ideal. Those who serve the world either by the knowledge or by their work without attachment or selfish motives are the real devotees. "I am the same to all beings, there is no one hateful or dear to Me, but they who worship
Me with devotion are in Me and I am also in them*. (IX. 29) Possession of all the qualities of a Yogi or a man of wisdom and service to the society with a spirit of sacrifice are the characteristics of a true devotee. The students have to cultivate the attitude of selfless service to the nation. This does not mean that they will have to renounce food and other necessities. Selfish action means that they should not crave for the results. If they are attached with the results they can not perform their actions with a spirit of service. Work done with the Money-motive makes people greedy and selfish.

Gita stresses the recognition of the individual differences due to their natural dispositions, temperaments, aptitudes etc. Even though all men are equal, they are not equal in their potentialities which have to be harnessed properly for the welfare of the society. Gita's classification of men into four types is more scientific and rational, for it caters to the four types of the needs of the society. The teacher has to treat the children equally. But he can not ignore the individual differences. So a sound and thorough guidance programme is indispensable in a school. Teacher has to find out the aptitudes of the children. Those who are naturally disposed to intellectual and scientific pursuits can be trained in subjects like Philosophy, Natural and Physical sciences, Mathematics etc., which sharpen the mental faculties. Those who are strong in body and are interested in social problems can study Social sciences like Economics,
Politics etc., and Physical education. Those who are suitable for the professions which deal with the production and distribution of wealth, can get good training in commercial and industrial arts, business management, agriculture etc. Those whose intelligence is normal and wish to be trained in some crafts can have training in handicrafts, like carpentry, tailoring etc. Thus education should cater to the needs of all the types of children and the demands of the society. Whatever type of training they get, the pupils must cultivate the attitude that they are serving God and His creation by their knowledge or work.

(5) All Sciences and Arts - instruments to Serve God:

Philosophy discusses the problems of Universe, God and Creatures and thus deals with all the problems in which the human beings are interested. Hence Krishna says that he is the Philosophy among all the sciences. Physical and natural sciences observe the different manifestations of God and discover the hidden truths. Geography helps the individuals to look at the world as beyond their understanding; thus the pupils get the widest possible outlook. History reveals the fulfillment of God's will in the world. Mathematics takes the individuals from the concrete to the abstract, from the finite world to the Infinite Spirit, from the manifested world of time and space to the unmanifested Brahman. Similarly all the arts are the ways to the attainment of the highest goal, Musdi gives not only the immense Bliss, but also is an instrument with which the devotee sings the glory of God. The
literature reveals the truth that words and sentences are only symbols to express the ideas. The ideas are one expressed in different languages. Literature helps the devotee to sing the glory of God in different ways and to sublimate his emotions from physical level to the spiritual level. Any Science or Art in Indian Culture could reach perfection, only when it is dedicated to the Lord.

Gita gives freedom to the individual to put forth his efforts and develop himself. The teacher is a friend, philosopher and guide. But it is the sincere effort on the part of the pupil to achieve his ultimate goal. "One should raise oneself through the Self." (VI. 5) Gita gives guarantee that those who strive will certainly reach their goal. There is no loss or wastage of the efforts. "In this there is no waste of any understanding, even the least bit of this saves one from great danger. (II. 40). There is no destruction for him who does good". (VI. 40). Sincere efforts will always give fruit. But the pupil has to work hard, without attachment to the results. Indian sciences and arts have much scope for free thinking and imagination. Indian music, drawing, painting, dance, sculpture and literature reveal the individuality of the artist. Leopold Stakowski, quoted in facets of Indian Culture, says:

"One of the great characteristics of the Music of India to my mind is its flexibility and freedom. While giving due consideration to traditions stemming from the past, Indian Music is free and improvised so that all powers of imagination
in the musician are brought into play. In this way the Music of India is always creative, never a reproduction of what is written or played, as sometimes happens with the Music of Western Countries”.1

This is true in case of all arts in India. They have much scope for creativity. The spectacular features of Indian Education are forgotten today and more importance is attached to the instruments and other external things than to the three aspects of education, namely the teacher, the pupil and the content. The methods suggested by Gita are the most modern, yet ancient; traditional yet progressive, and aims at the development of all the faculties of human being for his uplift and the material progress and emotional sublimation of the nation. The Educational System suggested by the Gita is more significant to-day than at any time.

(6) Evaluation:

The evaluation of the achievement of the student should be about his performance, but not about his memorised textual knowledge. Arjuna would have been a successful student, if his abilities were assessed on the basis of his more repitition of what he has learnt. He possessed the scriptural knowledge which he repeated efficiently, but failed in his performance miserably. So Sri Kishna pointed out the hollowness of his arguments and all knowledge. "You have grieved for those that should not be grieved for; yet you spoke words of wisdom" (II.II)

1. R. Srinivasan; "Facets of Indian Culture"; Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay: 1964, p. 204.
The so-called educated people talk big words, but do not practise. They are hypocrites.

So the student's work has to be assessed not by means of verbal tests, but by his actual performance in the field. Though Arjuna, out of faint-heartedness, could not perform his duties, when his delusion disappeared, he fought bravely and defeated the enemy. Sri Krishna was not satisfied with his big words. He wanted actual performance in the battle field. So the teacher also should evaluate the actual performance of the individual students in laboratories, playing field, on the stage and in the class rooms, but not his achievement in the examinations. Mere theoretical knowledge does not bring happiness. It should be converted into practice. This has been repeatedly stressed by the Gita. The teacher, in addition to encouraging the students to find out the truth by experiment, should also assess their work by their performance. Even though memory is a faculty to be improved through education, mere memorisation of textual information without reference to actual life is worthless.
REFERENCE:

1. R. Srinivasan: "Facets of Indian Culture"
   Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay; 1964.