

Editorial

In the Name of Education!

These days the so called educated classes are too much careful about education of their children. Even the grandma scarcely has time to read holy books or weave wool. The family is after the child – he has to be the best in everything: ‘Come what may, we are determined.’ There is a big deal of social prestige involved. ‘We have to tell everybody that our child is the best all rounder you have ever seen.’ Those who are at lower social strata are also trying to join the race.

The poor child has no way out. He has to carry a bag-full of books to school, go to a number of private tutors, and bear such stress for achieving excellence that often leads to depression. Perhaps he has to attend coaching classes of games, dance, music, and art as well. For small breaks, including lunch and dinner time, the idiot box is there for a bit of fun. Not just cartoons, they watch various sorts of programme. This is one of the reasons of wide-spread *attention deficit syndrome* among children today. Then, grow up a little, and you have a mobile phone – 3G enabled, if possible. No problem if these technological marvels bring in a whole lot of rubbish to your life. You must be *smart* enough to compete in this mad rush for money, position, and a variety of enjoyments!

No free time for the child to call his own! No time to play, swim, and run with other children. No time to build mini-hillocks with mud. In cities there is no park around. Many schools do not have a playground. Gifts come like floods, but the child would hardly get a book that may give him the touch of a noble life lived for others. How unlikely it is that he would actually come across such a life!

As he grows up, he is already conditioned to reject all noble ideals as ‘heavy stuff’ or simply ‘rubbish’. He cannot think out of the box. He does not come to know anything about the immense possibilities life holds for him. How far, far greater human life can be than pomp and pelf can make it! In the meantime new energies of his body and mind start coming up and he does not know how to handle them. Misguided here and mistrusted there, he struggles to build an image, however hollow, for himself. Without a high ideal in life, he cannot go to the depth of life’s problems. That is just the beginning. With aging, torn apart between uncontrolled desires and social restrictions, he becomes a musk personified, as it were.

Why does such a destiny await so many? Because we do not bother about *character building*. Do we ever think about it? Many would give a straight answer: ‘In this modern age, this is an impractical idea. You would scarcely find one man of principle around. These are only empty words. We want our children to be *practical* and succeed in life.’ We beg to differ. There are indeed many men of principle in our society. Though outnumbered, they are the only guarantee for our future. If we give all possible education to a child, without character building education, the child may succeed in competitions, but he will unfortunately grow into a thoroughly selfish coward, and the guardians would soon bear the brunt of such upbringing.

Our Motherland has to bear the brunt of it too. People with such upbringing occupy many, many important positions in the country. They are causing havoc for the poor, the

illiterate, the oppressed. Whether in the private sector or in the public sector, the opportunists are taking away the wealth of the Motherland at the cost of the hungry millions. This must change.

And no amount of educational reform would be able to do anything about it, unless and until the main stress is given on character. The social tension caused by men of no principle will also not be resolved by the brutal force used by the State and by the non-State actors, unless and until there are many men of character in our country. Elections and changes of governments are simply non-issues to those who understand the fundamentals of real change. In the words of Swami Vivekananda, 'No nation is great or good, because Parliament enacts this or that, but because its men are great and good.' And it is character-building education alone that can make men of us, make us great and good, not the madness that going on in the name of education.