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Paradigm Shift in Education

JAGDISH KOHLI*

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Our current education system is over two centuries old. It has served the society well over its existence. Our overall life environment has changed significantly because of a number of scientific, technological, political, social, cultural, and environmental developments. Apparently the education system has not kept pace with the changing needs of the society. It has reached to a point of diminishing returns and has almost become irrelevant to address contemporary life problems.

Life on planet earth is in a constant state of change. In 1850 around 1.2 Billion people inhabited the planet. Today there are 7.2 Billion souls vibrating together. Our society has gone through many revolutions and is currently in the midst of a fast moving information technology revolution. We see explosion of information/knowledge in every field of human endeavor.

Here we observe many signs of current crisis in the education system and investigate an emerging "Integrated Conscious Education Model". Its implementation will prepare and empower the current generation to solve ongoing human and planet problems. The new paradigm will fulfil the real purpose of education of "Personal Human Well-Being" and "Planet Well-Being".

Current Crisis in Education

Our current leaders in politics, business, industry, intellectuals and researchers have proved to be incapable of solving major challenges of our time. At the root of this is their distorted perception of life build by formal and informal education. The following are some of the points to illustrate our current education paradigm paralysis:

- **Youth unemployment:** Youth underemployment and unemployment is a tragedy of our time. This waste of

national/international resource brings out the misalignment of human capital generated by our education system and its utility to the society.

- **Corruption:** Many corrupt practices have become prevalent in several societies. The root of all this state is the type of formal and informal learning in the formative years of early growth of the youth.
- **Growing Violence:** Organized and random violence is being practiced by many people and organizations today. Criminals are being locked up in overcrowded prisons with no means to reform them. Unsupervised young kids carry guns to schools inflicting harm to teachers and fellow students.
- **Toxic Relationships:** Our fragmented perception of material attachment and disrespect for unity of life is creating daily problems in human relationships. Many children growing up in this environment learn negative life traits.
- **Poor Planet Health:** At present we are facing a major global problem of climate change. In many parts of the world we have polluted our air, water and soil. This ecological imbalance has resulted in major health hazards.

Emerging Paradigm

Education is the process of receiving knowledge from a learned/higher source. The wealth of knowledge acquired by an individual after a sustained personal commitment leads to a deeper understanding of some selected aspect of life on the planet.

"Consciousness is the cessation of the fluctuations of the mind and thus creates stillness and clarity of mind."

"Conscious Education" creates a system whereby an individual acquires knowledge/technical skills with a calm mind and a sense of purpose. An individual trained in "Conscious Education" system achieves personal well-being and contributes to the well-being of life on the planet. Consciousness and education are intimately intertwined. Learning consciously is the only meaningful module to create a balanced life on the

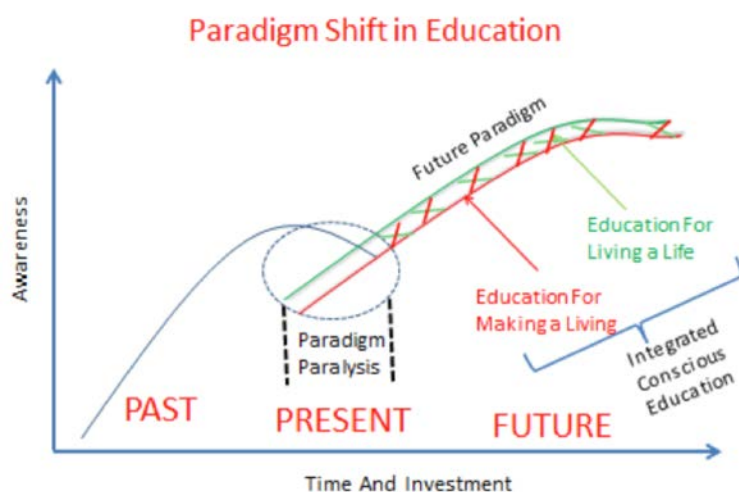
*Corresponding Author

Jagdish Kohli

22 Lava Falls Ct, San Ramon, CA, USA.

Email: jagdish_kohli@yahoo.com

Figure 1



planet. This emerging “Integrated Conscious Education Model” is summarized in Figure 1. This model is based on an ancient Vedic education model where a teacher imparts knowledge about science, art, music etc. and cultivates a sense of interconnectedness of life.

- **Individualized Learning:** Conscious learning uses all available powerful learning technologies to promote individual learning based on personal interest. It enriches life experience by learning being polite, respectful, helpful, gracious, peaceful and compassionate.
- **Life-Long Learning:** Conscious education inspires life-long learning as a means to stay current, healthy, vibrant and ready to address short-term and longer-term challenges.
- **Wholesome Actions:** People trained in this system conduct all actions with full awareness. Their actions are Total actions for the benefit of all-around life.

Implementation Challenges

Education reform is a global challenge to incorporate Consciousness in Learning. The following points identify some key implementation challenges along with ways to pick up momentum for change:

- **Educating the Current Educators:** A Community of Educators with diverse background are involved in educating and preparing the next generation to solve ongoing human and planet problems. Their role creates a blueprint for ever-changing society. Most of the resistance to change comes from the current establishment of educators. These include; policy makers, administrators and many teachers. Some of these insiders are aware of the problem. Their participation in a national dialog through local, national and international conferences should inspire many others to get involved in this endeavor.
- **Involving the Youth:** Today’s youth is interconnected through social media networks and has a vital role to transform education. Some motivated individuals can investigate and document current limitations of prevailing education system. This insight can be shared with many others to create a consensus and upward pressure for current educators to expedite change.
- **Aggregating Current Efforts:** For the past two decades some efforts are underway in different parts of the globe to reform the current system. These are spread out in K-12 schools, colleges and universities. These programs incorporate some form of Yoga practices to calm the mind for meaningful learning. The challenges faced by some selected programs and their outcome needs to be analyzed as an input to design the new system. This investigation can be easily undertaken by some education departments as a part of graduate study.

Successful implementation of “Integrated Conscious Education” has far reaching implications. It can pave the way for a more proficient, harmonious and peaceful social order.

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