

December 3
is observed as the
International Day of Persons with Disabilities

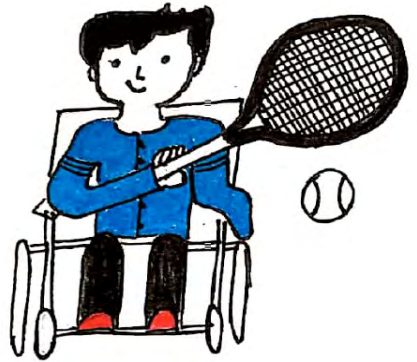


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IN DEFENCE OF SCHOOLING

- Shamin Padalkar

Savitribai Phule, along with her husband Jyotirao Phule, started the first Indian girls' school in Pune and the couple fought against caste and gender discrimination. We will celebrate her 189th birthday on 3rd of January. After a struggle of about 170 years the importance of mass education is now well established in India. Thanks to the efforts of many progressive educational reformers, the Right to Education ensures that every child between the ages of 6 to 14 should be in school. However, many people are now questioning the relevance of the school system. The most common arguments are as follows:

1. School system is bad. It does not prepare students for future life, does not inculcate creativity. It adds unnecessary stress and tensions in children's lives, or it is boring and a waste of children's time.
2. Since all the information is available on the internet, children can just use the computer and learn whatever they want.
3. Many of the successful people did not go to school (or did not do well in school).

I get such videos and quotes on WhatsApp. You will find many on YouTube if you search. Unfortunately, some of them come from eminent personalities in different fields. Before this opinion captures our imagination and starts influencing policy, we must think about it seriously. Also, it is sometimes a worthwhile exercise to question the purpose of established systems and evaluate their relevance. While acknowledging that the schooling in India is far from ideal, and urgently needs to be improved, I would like to point out some of the important functions schools serve. In this article I put forth my arguments in defence of schooling. At the end I will suggest two principles which can guide the reform in the school system.

My arguments in defence of schooling come from two strands: *findings from educational psychology and current social situation in India.*

I will respond from an educational psychology perspective on the issue of technology that seems to be gaining popularity. The main aim of schools is considered to be passing the knowledge from earlier generations to the next. Now we know that there is a difference between information and knowledge. For learning to happen, a learner needs to construct his or her own knowledge (remember Jean Piaget). It cannot be transmitted from computer to learner. Moreover, Knowledge construction is a social process (as pointed out by Lev

Vygotsky). So even the people who promote the use of technology in education, put a lot of emphasis on collaboration and constructing knowledge which is personally meaningful (see Seymour Papert's constructionism). It is actually a process of enculturation, i.e. familiarising the new generation to the culture of education or learning. And that requires not only teachers but an entire system of education which includes, well functioning schools, bodies which take care of well being of schools and teachers and institutes which can create pedagogic forms of knowledge I will illustrate this last point with an example: most what we learn as human physiology in schools is discovered more than 100 years ago, However, what is given in the textbooks is quite different from what was originally reported in the research articles. Someone has created digestible forms of scientific knowledge for learners at different levels.

Knowledge has many aspects, information is of course one important aspect, applying that information to solve a real life problem, analysing information (and further, developing critical thinking) and translating it into different, more useful forms are some of the other aspects (Taken from Bloom's Taxonomy, if anyone wants to know). To take a simple example, when someone says that students need not know how to do calculations because calculator can do them for you, that person is forgetting that, 1. children need to know what calculator is doing, 2. Children first need to understand how to mathematise a problem (what information is given and which operations are necessary to get the answer) calculator cannot do that for them. 3. How to operate a calculator and 4. mental exercise is as important as physical one, just for its own sake. Many people solve puzzles not because it is of any use, but because they derive pleasure from the exercise of solving it.

There are other, less studied aspects to knowledge, such as knowing how that information is acquired (this is very important in natural and social sciences), learning skills involved in acquiring that knowledge (skills involve motor (e.g. measurement), mental (e.g. solving mathematical problems) and social (e.g. collaboration) and ethics around that knowledge (what it stands for, what are the social implication etc.). There is another large area of affect domain (developing patience to find something, sharing the joy of knowing something, inspiring others and so on).

Thus, knowledge is constructed by human beings and with all its nuances, only human beings can pass it to the next generation. We can use technology and other tools to improve the process, but this great endeavour of helping the little ones to create meaningful knowledge of their own is a complex task and cannot be replaced by technology.

Now I will address the point of discrediting the school system because schools do not prepare children for the real life ahead of them. Proponents of this point seem to believe that the best way to prepare children is to immerse them in real life situations. Research in cognitive psychology has shown that intelligent species have longer periods of learning and dependency on parents. It is not advisable to throw young adults in the world out there, if we want them to realise their maximum potential. It is a common observation that more education typically ensures better jobs and higher payment which is why children from low socio-economic background, who usually have to start working early, remain poor. I am not against exposing children to real life situations, but it has to be selective and under adult supervision.

My second set of arguments from the current social situation in India is as follows: One of the reasons why schools are so disliked is the stress and tension they create on young minds. It is true that school, especially in urban areas, put a lot of pressure on students for academic achievements. This hampers comprehensive development of students and they experience stress. But firstly, this is a problem for only a small percentage of urban children. A large number of Indian children (and children from other developing countries) are and should be in school because they get fed, they are comparatively safe there (from violence, drug abuse, sexual exploitation and so on) and because they don't have to work in dangerous environments. Being with a peer group of the same age and the possibility of getting exposure to knowledge is (unfortunately) a bonus! Secondly, the solution for the stressful situation of schooling is not to close down the schools but to change them. But we will come to this point later .

Some people who propose that children can learn at home with the help of computers (and probably sometimes with other means) assume that parents will help their children to educate themselves. Parents can't be tasked with educating their children. Firstly because in that case, what would children from disadvantaged backgrounds do? Secondly, parents can teach their children everything the child needs to know. Parents' roles are different. To provide physical and emotional security, providing opportunities for socialisation and learning and to ensure their moral development are some of the important responsibilities which occur to me. Teaching requires specialised training and preparing for that should not be taken lightly (some do learn them on the go, just like some learn to sing or draw, but that is a hard way!).

People who promote technology based education are usually dependent on the internet to access knowledge. Many countries, including India, do not have universal internet access. During our experience of working in the Connected

Learning Initiative (CLIX) which uses technology to improve the quality of learning, we found that internet connectivity has been one of the main challenges. Scarcity of electricity, updated hardware and human resource which can put together, operate and maintain the technology are other major problems.

Finally, people who are promoting technology-based education at home should conduct a systematic study of children who, because of some extra-ordinary conditions, are being educated at home. Any responsible person would first analyse what these children learn and where they lag behind and only then promote such a thing in public. Such opinions should not be expressed based on single or a few cases, especially if the person expressing them is using his or her own case!

Now the larger, and most important point. Capitalism (or probably any modern civilisation) is based on large and complex institutes or systems. If the schools are to perform their function of stabilizing the society and enculturation, school is the first place where children are (or should be) gently institutionalised. However, some philosophers, such as Ivan Illich, have questioned the institutionalisation in general (e.g. marriage, nation) and schooling in particular (see Deschooling Society). The possibility of less institutionalised, liberating society is indeed fascinating. And in accordance with another function of education, namely agent of social change, if we make schools more flexible, we can hope for a more flexible society! In any case, schools should play the role of teaching how to use one's own liberties and ensure others' liberties in whatsoever flexibility is available in the system.

This brings us to my last point: what should be reforms in the school system. I think the reform should be based on two principles: Trust and Equity.

1. Trust: We know that the current school system does not trust teachers, teachers do not trust children. This has led to an extremely mechanical educational process and an overall atmosphere of mistrust. This has bracketed the flexibility in teaching and evaluation. It is of utmost importance that evaluation should be more flexible and holistic, and teachers should be trusted and equipped for that. This will automatically reduce the emphasis on rote learning which in turn will allow teachers to respond to specific needs of every child and make sure that each child explores his or her own path and eventually improves.
2. Equity should be manifested in two ways in education. One is to ensure that every child has equal opportunity through inclusive practices and positive discrimination, which is a well recognised as articulated point in literature and most of our policy documents. Second is, giving equal importance to

different subjects (or areas of development). We know that emphasis on mathematics, English and, to some extent, science is increasing and the importance of social sciences, humanities, arts and sports is continuously decreasing in Indian school curricula. If, at a broader level, we treat different professionals with equal dignity, it will be automatically reflected in our schooling. Unfortunately that is not the case. Which is why we should bring the side-lined subjects to the centre. We may even have to add some new subjects, since they are not traditionally represented in the school but are playing a very important role in contemporary society. That might ensure a more balanced distribution of wealth and dignity in future society.

Finally, it needs to be reiterated that the money, time, resources and best minds need to be put in to improve the education system. It is a large and complex task, taken much more seriously than, arguably, any other task of nation building.

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INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITY

- Utkarsha Chaudhary, 1st Year MA student

“People with disabilities are vulnerable because of the many barriers we face: attitudinal, physical, and financial. Addressing these barriers is within our reach and we have a moral duty to do so..... But most important, addressing these barriers will unlock the potential of so many people with so much to contribute to the world. Governments everywhere can no longer overlook the hundreds of millions of people with disabilities who are denied access to health, rehabilitation, support, education, and employment—and never get the chance to shine.”

- **Stephen Hawking**

Third December every year is observed as International Day of Persons with Disabilities. This was in an effort to enhance the quality of life, promote and protect the rights and dignity of people with disabilities through local, national and global efforts. This day aims to increase the understanding of the issues around disabilities and to direct attention to the dignity, rights, and well-being of persons with disabilities. It also aims to increase the awareness of the gains of everybody if disabled persons are integrated into all aspects of politics, social, economic and cultural life and raising money for resources for persons with disabilities. This raises a need for authorities about making people with disabilities self-reliant in every aspect of life. On a very primary level, this can be achieved by getting children with disabilities into mainstream schools and there are also several studies that have suggested including disabled children in mainstream classrooms improves academic achievement, self-esteem, and social skills of the children in the long term. According to the 2011 census in India, out of the 121 crore population, about 2.68 Cr persons are ‘disabled’ which is 2.21% of the total population. In an era where ‘inclusive development’ is being emphasized as the right path towards sustainable development, much-concentrated attention for the welfare of disabled people is essential. The National Policy for Persons with Disabilities 2006 recognizes that persons with disabilities are a valuable human resource for the country and seeks to create an environment that provides equal opportunities for them, protection of their rights and full participation in society. For the accomplishment of that India is a signatory to a number of international commitments and guidelines have come into effect in the recent past targeting

the welfare of disabled persons.

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is the main program for universalizing elementary education for all children between 6-14 years of age. Its overall goals include universal access and retention, bridging of gender and social category gaps in education and enhancement of learning levels of children. SSA focuses on providing inclusive education children with and without disabilities participate and learn together in the same class. Under the Rights of a person with a disability act, 2016 it is stated that “**inclusive education**” means a system of education wherein students with and without disabilities learn together and the system of teaching and learning is suitably adapted to meet the learning needs of different types of students with disabilities and it is the duty of the state and local authorities to ensure all educational institutions administered by them provide educational opportunities to learners with disabilities.’

The inclusive education program mandates that block-level inclusive education resource teachers (IERTs) have to conduct door to door surveys to identify children with disabilities who are out of school and then get them enrolled in government or aided schools. Despite these commitments, implementations, and monitoring, children with disabilities are experiencing ongoing segregation from mainstream school education. Private institutions often do not accept such students on grounds of not having appropriate provisions to cater to the special needs of such children or even when they do enrol such students, statistics show that in 3-4 years they try to persuade parents into enrolling their child in schools for special education. Most children with disabilities, especially from lower-income backgrounds, are more likely to go to the government or government-aided schools. While these schools don’t usually deny admission to children with disabilities, ‘they too often don’t have the capabilities to support the education of these children and it’s mostly observed that the authorities choose to fail the students before 10th standard to maintain their pass percentage’ stated by one of the parents in the interview mention in the article by **The news minute**. ‘Initially, the concept of shadow teachers was introduced in few of the public schools in Karnataka.’ A shadow teacher is a person who is good with communication skills, would be sitting beside the child during the entire school hours in mainstream schools and guide them. Later CBSE issued a circular in 2015 mandating the schools to appoint a special educator to cater to children with disabilities too.

Inclusion is not just about education. It’s about the joy of coming to school. It also shows other children that children with special needs have the right to sit with them in class. A majority of times parents prefer mainstream schools not

just because of the obvious benefits of inclusive education but also because special schools can be quite expensive. Even after these flagship programs and rights, there are barriers at every level for the children with disabilities to get enrolled into and sustain themselves in mainstream schools. There are challenges to be faced at every level by the parents of children with disabilities and the children themselves and only by addressing these challenges, education would become truly inclusive.

“Disabled children are equally entitled to an exciting and brilliant future”

- **Nelson Mandela**

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AFGHAN CHILDREN NEVER LOSE HOPE

- Rohullah Rohani, 2nd Year, MA TEMP

Every child in the world desires to wake up with the sweet sound of his/her mother's call to wake up for school early in the morning but it is to the horrifying sounds of bombing that our children wake up. They rise from their bed hearing the sounds of explosions accompanied by fear and worries, a small gossiping among the children takes place "where is the armed clashes going on, the sounds seem to be closer". The discussions end by the mother by giving courage to the children, "don't worry it is far away, just go and prepare yourself for going to school it is getting late!". The mother arranges breakfast for her children and lets them go to school with the hope that one day the situation will be good and her children will get an education for a better life.

The journey from home to school is not an easy task for the Afghan children, especially the girls. The cultural and social barriers make the distance hard for them. First of all, the negative beliefs of the societies regarding modern education and schooling, especially for girls are prevalent in Afghan context. Some people disrespect children going to schools and create problems on their way to schools. Second, the girls are faced with the bad behavior of the illiterate young boys, the possibility of abuse and harassment is present on the way, but the girls never lose hope and continue going to school, suffering the present condition for a better future.

Afghan children attending schools face many challenges, according to the report titled, "I Won't Be a Doctor, and One Day You'll Be Sick" Girls' - Access to Education in Afghanistan, dated October 17, 2017. The report states that "discriminatory attitudes toward girls by both government officials and community members; child marriage; insecurity and violence stemming from both the escalating conflict and from general lawlessness, including attacks on education, military use of schools, abduction and kidnapping, acid attacks, and sexual harassment; poverty and child labor; a lack of schools in many areas; poor infrastructure and lack of supplies in schools; poor quality of instruction in schools; costs associated with education; lack of teachers, especially female teachers; administrative barriers including requirements for identification and transfer letters, and restrictions on when children can enroll; a failure to institutionalize are the main challenges to the students. But still a large number of students are going to school and they don't lose their hope. According to the National Education Strategic Plan (NESP 2017-2021), the

number of children in school has risen almost nine times. There were more than 9.2 million students in 2015, of which 39% are girls. The number of schools has increased from 3,400 to 16,400. School Shuras have played a key role in community participation in the education of children at the local level.

In many cases the students going to schools on the way have lost their lives, the roadside landmines have caused casualties recently in Takhar Province in northern Afghanistan. Aljazeera News reported on 02 November 2019, “Nine children killed in Afghanistan landmine blast. The blast took place in Darqad district of Takhar province when the children stepped on a landmine as they walked to school”. But still the children are continuing their education and going to schools, they never lose hope.

Besides the presence of too many challenges, still the hope is present and this is the responsibility of every Afghan family to support their children and admit them in the schools. Every Afghan should take responsibility to enroll the children who don't have caretakers along with their own children in the schools, support them and encourage them to get their education.

The hope of education of Afghan children can be alive when the political personalities, businessmen, religious scholars, community elders, and the whole nation take the same responsibility for ensuring the security and accessibility of the education to every afghan child.

Children are the hope and foundation of a nation, the children should be educated for a better and safe community, so every afghan should work to educate children, support schools, provide positive feedback to the children, support the orphans and poor children and educate them. The parties involved in the war in Afghanistan should respect the children and keep the schools safe and should not take advantage of the school as a military shelter.

In the end, I hope that one day there will not be any afghan child who does not have access to education and their hope of education will be translated to reality, Inshallah.

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SKILL INDIA: EMPOWERING OR DISEMPOWERING YOUTHS?

- Sathya Narendran and Dinesh Yadav, *Doctoral Students, SoE*

The link between education and empowerment though seems obvious is a lot more complicated than our common perception. The importance of education for liberation have been widely acknowledged, at the same time, education is used to reinforce and reproduce existing social norms, dominant codes of behavior, politico-economic hierarchies and power structures (NCF, 2005). Since education has this conflicting potential, there is a need to understand how education can be empowering, and what is the role of existing vocational education in empowering or disempowering of youths. The paper discusses the idea of empowerment through skilling, which include theoretical position of skilling through education as well as practices recommended through *Skill India* policy. The paper problematizes the skilling opportunities that the Indian State encourages in a socially stratified society where the livelihood of people by and large depends on their social positioning.

The first section of the paper establishes the idea of education as empowerment which many thinkers have proposed and how skills gained through formal education are important for quality education and social upliftment. The next section discusses the skill India policy, its problems and the questionable role in empowerment of youths. Some of the key questions raised in this paper about the policy include, what is skill India program 2015? What are the main objectives of the program? What is the nature of training, employment and socio- economic empowerment of the marginal groups?

Education as/for empowerment

Historically education has been the site of contestation for the marginalized groups for their empowerment. B. R. Ambedkar realized the revolutionary potential of education in conceptualizing a just and equal society. It is thought of as an instrument with which the Hindu caste patriarchy could be removed. Ambedkar argued that if social equality did not precede political equality then the political system of democracy would not sustain (Ambedkar, 1990). Ambedkar's struggle was aimed at bringing social equality, and education was an important aspect for such an advance. It was both a means to an end and an end in itself (Velaskar, 2012). He proposed education for both men and women to get new occupation as opposed to the traditional caste based ones and thereby

enter in politics for the upliftment of the dalit community.

While for Ambedkar, education was for social equality, Amartya Sen envisioned political equality through education. Sen has argued that education can build capabilities that can provide functions such as employment, health, participation in politics and civil society movements etc. He believes that well-being in one's life can be ensured only by providing agency and freedom to that person. Both agency and freedom are attained through skills gained from formal education. The more number of skills they have, the more opportunities they can make use of and empower themselves (Walker and Unterhalter, 2007). Empowerment, therefore, according to Sen, is about making use of the structural opportunities and measures provided to each individual for progress and development in life. Therefore education should develop new skills and abilities that will equip the marginalized to access new occupations and material resources.

Similarly, in terms of quality in education, many have proposed a combination of work and education in the school curriculum. In order to make education in village schools "of the greatest good to the country," Jyotiba Phule recommended that, apart from reading, writing, accounts, history, geography and grammar, "lessons on technical education and morality, sanitation and agriculture, and some useful arts, should be interspersed among them in progressive series" (Phule, 2002). Mahatma Gandhi, in *Nai Taleem* (1937) emphasized work-centric education with technology accessible locally. It is essentially a mass education approach to minimize alienation of masses from education with centrality on socially useful work and was expected to create a national system of education. The basic idea behind Gandhi and Phule's recommendation is to ensure dignity of manual work, to remove the gap between physical work and mental or intellectual tasks. Further it was meant for all people in the society irrespective of their caste or class. However, since education has the conflicting potential to empower and disempower people, we need to keep in mind that the aim of education must be for equality. Although skilling in some form through formal education has been considered important by thinkers and scholars, if it is not designed for empowerment and social change, it can reproduce the class structure of a capitalist society by insuring that children inherit their parents' social class positions (Bowles and Gintis, 1976). It is in this aspect that policies on vocational education become problematic.

The socio-historical aspect of vocational education

Sarada Balagopalan highlights the effect of colonial education policies on the street children. She argues that vocational education, in colonial times, was considered ideal for poor children as they have minimum literacy and are

required to earn income for the family. In a caste ridden society where the division of labour is based on caste, the manual work was the dharma of the lower caste. The colonial state instead of erasing this inequality institutionalised this divide through their educational policies. The colonial state did not make vocational education compulsory for all, although they were promoting education for all, because of the discourse constructed around poor that they are unsuitable for higher education and has the desire to earn income as early as they can. Already existing social hierarchy in India was used by the colonial government for its own benefits (Balagopalan, 2002). Even today, the manual/labor work, as opposed to the mental work, is considered inferior. This, therefore, makes it hard to believe that skilling through formal education is in anyway empowering the poor as there is already a prejudice against the labor work. In addition, in India, we have an educational system that maintains and reproduce this hierarchy right from the primary level. We have government municipal schools and low cost private schools for poor children and elite private English medium schools for the rich. The poor children, therefore, are likely to perform poorly and thus will be hard for them to make it to the merit based higher education (Balagopalan, 2002). These children are then the target of vocation education policies. This sociological aspect is invisible in the rhetoric of the policy.

Skill India Policy, 2015

Background

In the year 2009, National Policy on Skill Development was launched that targets to train 500 million people by 2022 by the Ministry of Skill Development. There is no clear data on how many were trained by February 2014, but during the same period approximately two lakh people got the job according to the Ministry of Skill Development. On July 15th, 2015 Government of India launched a massive program ‘National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship-2015’ commonly known as ‘Skill India’ policy or Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojna (PMKVY). It aims to skill 402 million youths by 2022. ‘PMKVY’ 2.0” phase two launched in July 2016 with target to skill 10 million during 2016-2020, setting aside outlay of 12000 crore.

The background which leads to planning of this huge skilling program is that skilled workforce in United States is 52%, in United Kingdom 68%, Germany 75%, Japan 80%, South Korea 96% and China 24% whereas India has just 4.96% skilled workforce although India is one of the youngest nations in the world with more than 62% of its population in the working age group (15-59 years), and more than 54% of its population below 25 years of age. Its population pyramid is expected to bulge across the 15-59 age groups over the next decade. To reap this ‘Demographic Dividend’ which is expected to last for the

next 25 years, India needs to develop its workforce with employable skills and knowledge, so that they can contribute substantially to the economic growth of the country (NPSDE, 2015). This policy was launched to meet the challenges of skilling at large scale with speed, standard, and sustainability. Its vision is to create an ecosystem of empowered youths on a large scale at a high speed and with high standard through innovation-based entrepreneurship to employment and livelihood.

Claims and Contradictions in the Policy and Empowerment of Youths

Condition of employment and training

By analyzing the data provided by the Ministry (MSDE) itself, it is found that in 2009 it targeted to train 500 million by 2022. There is no data available that shows how many were trained till now. However, data for 2014 shows that it provided jobs to 2 lakh individuals. In 2015 new target of training 402 million by 2022 was set and finally in 2016 it was re-modified to train 10 million youths by 2020 (NPSDE, 2015). There is hardly any clarity on how many got employment after undergoing the training. The online portal 'Labor Market Information System: Skill Exchange is meant to provide all the information related to skilling, employment opportunities in different sectors and data on workforce entering and retaining in the market. Data on number of trained individuals (around 99 lakh trained individuals in different professional and occupational courses) in different sectors is available on the website but not about employment status of candidates (NSDA, 2019). International Labor Organization (2013) report says that Labor Market Information System in India provides information on quantity of trained individuals, not quality.

Basic question of discussion in this paper is not how many got employment, rather if those who are trained for the jobs or got the job through these skill training programs have empowering experience through it. With increasing control of private sector in designing and executing training, providing training and forcing certification in informal sector without taking care of intricacies in which individuals work put a question mark on the idea of certification in informal sector.

Sector Skill Councils (SSCs) are corporate lead bodies which are responsible for designing industry specific training program, standardization of specific skills, assessment and certification of skills. The National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF) was designed to set national parameter of standardization of specific kind of training program. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is the most alarming concept in NSQF as it is concerned with certification of skilled labors involved in the unorganized sectors from a long time. They will be tested on National Occupational Standard (NOS), global parameter for 'performance

outcome' of skilled labor. It is possible that the 'skilled' laborers who have not received formal training cannot qualify the certification criteria; hence they will be excluded from jobs even though they are quite skilled in their work. This can lead to disempowering of masses who have been earning their livelihood based on it (Sadgopal, 2016).

Another problematic concern regarding the policy is loosening of labor laws, reducing wages and kind of training given which focus merely on specific job skills rather than equal focus on skills on critical thinking, labor laws and labor rights. Sadgoal (2016) writes that *Make in India* will make available labor force if it reduces labor wage and labor laws for foreign investors in India, if this labor force is not utilized in India, then the plan is to export them to the International market. Ultimately, according to him, it is compromising with conditions of our youths who have to struggle throughout the life in continuously raising inflation. Saraf (2016) says that such vocational training will offer quick fix opportunities in low skill service sector jobs that feed the growing informal sector and lead to even lower wages. Sadgopal (2016) further asserts that they have to learn about skills suitable for job without developing other skills such as critical thinking, creativity, social consciousness and information regarding labor laws for their protection. This then severely affects their personal and social mobility. This exclusion and marginalization under control of influential corporate denies them a voice in a politically situated form of "critical literacy" (Giroux, 1988) and weakens a struggle needed for "achieving the types of schools and economy that serve the broadest needs of our society and citizenry" (Carnoy & Levin, 1986, pg.44).

Conclusion

Education must develop ability among individuals to think and act critically and equip them with skills needed for social and economic mobility of themselves and their community. Training individuals, especially the poor, in a traditional or medium category jobs in a rapidly changing technological modern society and thereby excluding them from higher education in the name of skilling or vocational training is mystifying and inhibiting their upward mobility through education. Apart from being viewed as an inferior stream, it suffers from poor infrastructure, obsolete equipment, untrained or under-qualified teachers (often on a part-time basis), outdated and inflexible courses, lack of vertical or lateral mobility, absence of linkage with the 'world of work', lack of a credible evaluation, accreditation and apprenticeship system, and, finally, low employability' (NCF, 2005 pp 116- 117). The idea of skilling through 'Skill India' Program have good objectives of preparing workforce according to need of market, providing employment to youths and ensuring the empowerment

(especially economic empowerment) of the youths. But the analysis based on design and execution of policy and socio-political context of individuals for whom the policy is meant for, raises serious questions. Does training in medium category jobs without changing the working condition, without ensuring meeting of labor rights and training in life skills ensure empowerment? If skill training could be a balanced combination of training in work skills, life and social skills, along with ensuring a non-exploitative and empowering working condition, then it could lead to better and viable alternative.

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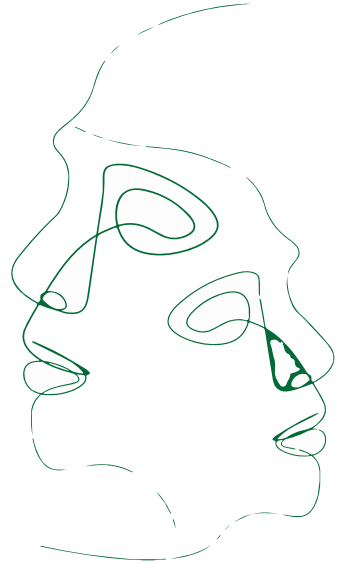
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हर चेहरा कुछ कह रहा

- शालिनी सोनी, *1st Year, MA Education*

हर चेहरा, कुछ कह रहा,
किसी की आँखों में थकान,
तो किसी की आँखों में सवाल।
किसी की आँखें चश्मे के सहारे धुंधली दुनिया देखने की कोशिश कर रही,
तो किसी की आँखें खिड़की से बाहर जीवन का सच ढूँढ़ रही।
हर चेहरा कुछ कहा रहा।

किसी की आँखें तेरी नजरों से दूसरों के शब्दों में अपनी दुनिया ढूँढ़ रही,
तो किसी की आँखें किसी ओर की आँखें पढ़ रही।
किसी की आँखें तजुबों से मिली समझ से चमक रही,
तो किसी की कुछ जानने की चाह से।
कोई सवाल ढूँढ़ रहा, कोई सवाल का जवाब,
तो कोई जवाब में जवाब ढूँढ़ रहा।
हर चेहरा कुछ कह रहा।
हर पल जीवन कुछ सीखा रहा,
क्योंकि कक्षा में बैठा हर बच्चा कुछ कह रहा।



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