

# Role of Higher Education in Creating Social Awareness

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**Abstract:** Education pursues to foster the innate hidden capacities of man. By educating an individual we attempt to give him some desirable knowledge, understanding, skills, interests, attitudes and critical thinking. As an individual in the society, he or she has to think critically about various issues in life and take decisions about them being free from bias and prejudices, superstitions and blind beliefs. Thus, he has to learn all these qualities of head, hand and heart through the process of education. Social Awareness today is a concern that entails due attention and awareness itself. It is noted that we are less aware about the term although there have been so many social issues prevailing in our society. The university is a microcosm of the larger community. Therefore, the manner in which it carries out its daily activities is an important demonstration of ways to achieve environmentally responsible living and to reinforce desired values and behaviors in the whole community. The social role provides the link between the intellectual and educational role of universities on the one hand and the development of society on the other. Higher education is all about learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together which gears to be the important contributors to forces of social change. This paper attempts to study as to how best all the stakeholders in the education system can contribute to the promotion of social awareness among the student community for youth empowerment.

**Keywords:** Higher Education, Social Awareness, Emotional Factors, Social Factors, Teachers personality Peer Group and Family

## I. INTRODUCTION

The role of education plays as a powerful instrument for social awareness and the consequent social demand for the various levels of education. There are many tools like parents teachers classroom climate, which helps a learner to know and describe socioeconomic problems such as poverty, gender, religion, caste and class. A man lives in a society, studies from the society and gets himself educated to work for the society. He completes his primary education to attain secondary education and after getting through it enters the college for higher education. Though the main aim of a person is to get a suitable degree for placement in a better society, he has to take part in extracurricular activities and various social activities in continuation to his academic fulfillment of the curriculum. The subjects like science, arts languages and social science prepares him for social awareness. Society is concerned with its good as well as bad activities prevailing everywhere in the public. It is the college which has to play a valuable role to teach about the social concerns for the betterment of the society. Higher education institutions bear a profound, moral responsibility to increase the awareness, knowledge, skills, and values needed to create a just and sustainable future. Higher education plays a critical but often overlooked role in making this vision a reality. It prepares most of the professionals who develop, lead, manage, teach, work in, and influence society's institutions. It has unique academic freedom and the critical mass and diversity of skills to develop new ideas, to comment on society and its challenges.

Social awareness results in social change which is possible through social relationships. Social relationships are social processes, social patterns and social interactions. These include the mutual activities and relations of the various parts of the society. Social relationships are understood in terms of social processes and social interactions and social organizations. The universities and institutions of higher learning play a crucial role in promoting social awareness among the students and accordingly involve them in societal activities. An individual with adequate social awareness along with the routine academics can turn out to be a perfect leader tomorrow. Social awareness is defined as consciousness shared by individuals within a society. It refers to the actual knowledge about vital aspects of social system and its associated problems. It also refers to the capacity on the part of the individual to make proper diagnosis and thereby develop an attitude of mind. Social awareness speaks a lot about attitude and personality. The time has come to promote social awareness as an important area of education. The various Stakeholders like universities, administrators, teachers, parents, peer group etc., play a vital role in community-based learning, which refers to the practice of connecting what is being taught in colleges or universities to its nearby community, which may include local history, literature, cultural heritages and to follow the rule of law with true integrity in all walks of life. As citizens of this country it's our moral and social responsibility to be aware of social issues like child Labor, caste discrimination, dowry system, women abuse, cyber crimes among others. This conceptual paper attempts to study as to how best all the stakeholders in the educational institutions can contribute to the promotion of social awareness among the student community for youth empowerment.

As a human being, we are a part of nature and we accept changes happening around us and in our society. To change and to develop with every change is our natural responsibility as a living being offered with senses to think and act rationally. Emotional and social factors play a pivotal role in deciding the attitude and personality of students. Personal factors, such as instincts and emotions, and social factors, such as cooperation and rivalry, are directly related to a complex psychology of motivation. It is a recognized fact that the various responses of the individual to various kinds of stimuli are determined by a wide variety of tendencies. Some of these innate tendencies are constructive and others are harmful. For some reason a pupil may have developed a dislike for some subject because he may fail to see its value, or may lack foundation. This dislike results in a bad emotional state. Some pupils are in a continuing state of unhappiness because of their fear of being victims of the disapproval of their teachers and classmates. This is an unwholesome attitude and affects the learning process to a considerable degree. This is

oftentimes the result of bad training. Social discontent springs from the knowledge or delusion that one is below others in welfare. The expanding knowledge and the growing power which it places at the disposal of modern society must be combined with the strengthening and deepening of the sense of social responsibility and a keener appreciation of moral and spiritual values. Factors influencing the Learner to promote social awareness are as follows.

### **Educational institutions**

There is necessity to reconsider the roles of colleges, curriculum and methods of teaching and evaluation in promoting the social awareness by preparing programs which promote the social awareness and to design courses that enrich the student's humanistic knowledge in different fields that suit their social status. Innovative method of teaching involves dialogue, discussion and problem solving so as to develop the student's ability of analyzing and criticizing issues of the society. The updating curricula should suit the student's cultural, social and behavioral activities compatible with the requirement of present and future. The institution program should aim to deal directly with the student so as to strengthen their loyalty towards the society. The institution should encourage number of social activities and provide enough time to practice them and support the activities that assure the freedom of speech, thinking and constructive criticism. Institution should alert the students about the social problems in the society, and prepare them to face these problems. The institutions can activate the youth political awareness for current and future situation. The youth at college level are characterized by maturation, realization and awareness, but this does not indicate that they all are equal in their social awareness, because there are many variables that control the awareness. The educational institutions should play its role in making the students aware of their health problems and ways of treating them by providing health programs and services. The educational institutions have a clear role in developing student's social awareness, in order to enable them to behave well in different situations

### **Teacher's Personality**

The teacher as an individual personality is an important element in the learning environment or in the failures and success of the learner. The way in which his personality interacts with the personalities of the pupils being taught helps to determine the kind of behavior which emerges from the learning situation. The supreme value of a teacher is not in the regular performance of routine duties, but in his power to lead and to inspire his pupils through the influence of his moral personality and example. Strictly speaking, personality is made up of all the factors that make the individual what he is, the complex pattern of characteristics that distinguishes him from the others of his kind. Personality is the product of many integrating forces. In other words, an individual's personality is a composite of his physical appearance, his mental capacity, his emotional behavior, and his attitudes towards others. Effective teaching and learning are the results of an integrated personality of the teacher. Generally speaking, pupils do not like a grouchy teacher who cannot control his temper before the class. It is impossible for a teacher with a temper to create enthusiasm and to radiate light and sunshine to those about him.

Pupils love a happy, sympathetic, enthusiastic, and cheerful teacher. Effective teaching and

Learning is the results of love for the pupils, sympathy for their interests, tolerance, and a definite capacity for understanding. The teacher must therefore recognize that in all his activities in the classroom he is directly affecting the behavior of the growing and learning organism.

### **Social and National Service**

Social and national service should be made obligatory for all students at all stages. It should form an integral part of education at secondary school and university levels. This programme will prove an effective instrument for building character improving discipline, inculcating a faith in the dignity of labour and developing a sense of social responsibility. Labour and social service camps like N.S.S and N.C.C helps in social welfare through education and health programmes, improvement in life situation, increased safety, freedom and opportunity and equal distribution of the fruits for the all-round development of society.

### **The family**

The child's first world is that of his family. It is a world in itself, in which the child learns to live, to move and to have his being. Within it, not only the biological tasks of birth, protection and feeding take place, but also develop those first and intimate associations with persons of different ages and sexes which form the basis of the child's personality development. The family is the primary agency of socialization. It is here that the child develops an initial sense of self and habit-training eating, sleeping etc. To a very large extent, the indoctrination of the child, whether in primitive or modern complex society, occurs within the circle of the primary family group. The child's first human relationships are with the immediate members of his family like mother, siblings, father and other close relatives. Here, he experiences love, cooperation, authority, direction and protection. Language is also learnt from family in childhood. People's perceptions of behavior appropriate of their sex are the result of socialization and major part of this is learnt in the family. As the primary agents of childhood socialisation, parents play a critical role in guiding children into their gender roles deemed appropriate in a society. They continue to teach gender role behaviour either consciously or unconsciously, throughout childhood. Families also teach children values they will hold throughout life. They frequently adopt their parents' attitudes not only about work but also about the importance of education, patriotism and religion.

### **College Environment**

After family the educational institutions take over the charge of socialization. In some societies, socialization takes place almost entirely within the family but in highly complex societies children are also socialized by the educational system. Colleges not only teach reading, writing and other basic skills, they also teach students to develop themselves, to discipline themselves, to cooperate with others, to obey rules and to test their achievements through competition. Schools teach sets of expectations about the work, profession or occupations they will follow when they mature. Schools have the formal responsibility of imparting

knowledge in those disciplines which are most central to adult functioning in our society. It has been said that learning at home is on a personal, emotional level, whereas learning at school is basically intellectual.

### Peer group

Besides the world of family and school fellows, the peer group and playmates highly influence the process of socialization. In the peer group, the young child learns to conform to the accepted ways of a group and to appreciate the fact that social life is based on rules. Peer group socialization has been increasing day by day these days. Young people today spend considerable time with one another outside home and family. Young people living in cities or suburbs and who have access to automobiles spend a great deal of time together away from their families. Studies show that they create their own unique sub-cultures like the college campus culture, motorcycle cults, athletic group culture etc. Peer groups serve a valuable function by assisting the transition to adult responsibilities. Teenagers imitate their friends in part because the peer group maintains a meaningful system of rewards and punishments. The group may encourage a young person to follow pursuits that society considers admirable. On the other hand, the group may encourage someone to violate the culture's norms and values by driving recklessly, shoplifting, stealing automobiles, engaging in acts of vandalism and the like. Some studies of deviant behaviour show that the peer group influence to cultivate behaviour patterns is more than the family. Why do some youths select peer groups which generally support the socially approved adult values while others choose peer groups which are at war with adult society? The choice seems to be related to self-image. Perhaps, this dictum works—"seeing is behaving". How do we see ourselves is how we behave. The habitual delinquent sees himself as unloved, unworthy, unable, unaccepted and unappreciated. He joins with other such deprived youths in a delinquent peer group which reinforces and sanctions his resentful and aggressive behaviour. The law-abiding youth sees himself as loved, worthy, able, accepted and appreciated. He joins with other such youths in a conforming peer group which reinforces socially approved behaviour.

### CONCLUSION

Higher education creates social awareness and makes the citizens more responsible. Educational institutions play a vital role in promoting social awareness taking into consideration the government policies towards national development. The ideal educational administrator, systematic planning, innovative implementation strategies and target oriented goals will definitely create a conducive environment for the national development by creating social awareness and by fulfilling the needs of the present situation. It will definitely lead towards personal, social and national development of the country. The colleges must contemplate about their policies and should come forward with the positive academic, political, economic and social attitude for promoting social awareness to make India more developed and advanced country in the world. The role of higher education will definitely boost and motivate the young generation to make India a superpower in the world. By inculcating the behaviour of understanding the emotions of others, by making the young to let their ears, to hear the views of others, to encourage young minds to reflect back, what one has witnessed and developing the tendency of sharing of views. If these qualities are sowed in the mind of young generation by way of various social awareness programs, the outcome it gifts our nation is incredible.

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