

# Knowledge

Go., get it



What is wrong with the  
Education systems?

Poor are misled to believe that  
Education will make them prosperous.

**N>Natarajan**

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Author: **N Natarajan**  
**natarajan.naga@gmail.com**

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## **PREFACE**

The strength of any country is the aggregate knowledge of a society. This knowledge reflects in technological progress of the nation and well being of the individuals. Thus, an organized education occupies a very important attention in every country.

Education system in India is one of the largest in the world.

The developed countries have education system which are far ahead of ours.

It is a natural phenomenon that every weak person (or a country) will be enslaved and exploited by those who are stronger.

We sell our products and services for a pittance while paying a fortune for importing a product, from any of the developed countries.

### **Elementary Education:**

Our education system was palmed off by British. We started with elementary

education. That had a goal, that is **literacy for all**. We reached the targeted goals, in reasonable time. We have no complaints about it.

We stepped into middle and high school education. That was the logical thing to do. Then followed creation of institutions for higher learning to impart Science, Engineering and Technology. Here we failed, miserably.

A detailed analysis points to the fact that (1) these institutions grew organically from elementary education. (2) The objectives and deliverable were not defined. (3) Processes necessary were not of thought of. (4) Modelled on Elementary education, it had all ingredients for failure.

It is no surprised that our Higher education, produced dignified clerks instead of power-packed professionals.

### **Need for action with a sense of urgency:**

There is an urgent need to effect structural changes to education system so that the public money invested do not go waste.

The average citizen of our country (as

well as many other societies) are largely learning disabled. This makes them poor readers.

Poor, seeks to white collar jobs through higher education. They imitate middle class, who are closer to them.

Middle class, through white collar jobs, is assured to receiving two square meals a day. The poor, who form more than 75% of our countrymen are not assured of.

The problem is that, there are not as many white collar jobs as poor seeks to get. The result is many (99% of those) taken to higher education are jobless and frustrated.

### **Education, not a panacea to solve social ills:**

It is unfortunate that leader after leader, mislead the poor that education can elevate them socially and economically. It is possible, who gave dead lines for eradicating poverty could not deliver. Now they show that Education is a way out of poverty.

The poor spends a fortune and chase white collar jobs. Hardly one in every hundred reach their targeted jobs. The

ninety nine other, tun poorer

It is possible, an education system that delivers knowledge can not only solve social ills of poor but also turn the nation into a formidable power among the few powerful nations.

### **In discussion with Mr Kandasamy**

This book contains largely some of the edited conversation between me and Mr Kandasamy.

True to his appearance, Mr Kandasamy is an absolutely simple person. He had his education till class X, in a village school. The school, like most village schools, had very few teachers and most of them would disappear from the school for long spells.

He did not set his foot into any college or university. Kandasamy, joined army. During his 30 years of service, he lived in various parts of the country that gave him the opportunity to learn many languages. its poor, the riches, and its rich cultures. He also knew the strength and weakness of every society in our country.

He is a great learner. It is a sad commentary that I cannot think of any one, even among highly qualified professionals whom I came across in my 40 year long career, who would match Kandasamy's ability to learn.

We debated: (1) If everything alright with education? If not, what ails education system? (2) What all are required to be done to set it right and on its right course?

I am sure that, as you read through the following pages you will realize how correct I was in my judgment about my friend Kandasamy.

His name abbreviated in this book as **K:**

N Natarajan.

# **Introduction**

## **I thank Justice Lahoti.**

I read an article in Times of India on our education system more than four years ago. It was written by a past CJI of India Justice LaHoti. He had questioned why the educated people are not knowledgeable. He had raised a doubt if British had handed down a defective education system to us?

This made me sit-up and undertake a systematic investigation, from the basics.

I spent some four years into understanding education system around the globe, including past and present times. I went through poetry and prose which discussed knowledge and education. I have given the essence of my learning in this book.

While most of us talk about the short coming in our education system but

no one came closer to Justice Lahoti in defining the problem and questioning the root cause.

I found a lot of information on education and knowledge in Tamil Literature. I am not sure that there are so many in other languages / societies.

Chinese Philosophers, who lived some thousand years ago, have left behind some treasure that come handy to define new goals for improving the processes for our education system.

I tried to share my learning with several professionals working in education space only to receive a cold response. I can trace this to Resistance to change.

I wish that every stake holder in education in this country the teachers, students, parents and leaders give some time to examine the content of this book. Those who have the power to bring about changes may do so with greatest urgency as we have moved long way on a wrong track.

## Chapter 01

# Education systems Past and Present



From several thousands of years, education was conceived as a tool to impart knowledge.

There were two kinds of Knowledge. So, there were two kinds of schools.

### **Schools Within their homes:**

The domain knowledge was imparted by father to his son. Typically the knowledge and skills were confined to

a community of people living by one particular trade. That knowledge was guarded as secret. It was a matter of economics. So, the castes were born.

These schools produced artisans who in turn, delivered services and products to the society, for a living. One could compare it to domain (specialized) knowledge.

### **Schools Away from homes:**

The other is the elite schools. Sought for and received by rich and powerful in the society. The royals, courtiers, merchants received it from away their own homes. The school was, the home of a Guru also known as man of knowledge.

There were several knowledge workers in the society and often known in different names.

Ordinary mortal, generally, do not seek this kind of education. If there is one it would be an exception. Ekalavya was one.

The students from these schools do not receive specilized knowledge or skills. Instead, they were taught to THINK.

The students and enabled to Learn along their lives. Because the students are no finite knowledge or skills to deal with. As a ruler, a public administrator or a globe tottering trader encounter new situations which is not knowable in advance. So they need to learn from the present, extrapolate into future.

An artisan is living in a limited and known world that would affect his life or affecting in other's lives, unlike public men.

Public men are required to be problem solvers or solution providers.

### **Modern Education:**

A good news about modern education is that it has broken the caste barriers of professional knowledge into open and accessible to all. Any one pursue a profession closer to his heart.

If this was the objective of education then we have met more than adequately. If the whole world is into an agrarian economy this is more than what is really needed. Unlike the long past, nearly every citizen of our country is literate. In today's international scnerario, it is not enough.

## Chapter 02

# Education Systems produces glorified clerks

Times have changed.

Societies across the globe have come closer to each other. Growth of science and advancements in technology made that possible.

All over the globe, nations and individuals compete with each other. This makes it impossible for societies to remain static. Society need to be dynamic to remain competitive. This is possible only when the members of society are both **skilled** and **learning enabled**.

Powerful societies have individuals in them have higher levels of knowledge

and good at physical tasks. Israel is an example.

In our foregoing discussion, we found that the **schools away from homes**, imparted domain independent knowledge - mainly the ability to Learn.

Our education system appear to address both types of knowledge in one go - domain specific and domain independent - but sadly, does not succeed in both.

### **Reasons that our society lagging behind many:**

Societies are classified today as per their economic strength. The economic strength stems from scientific knowledge and technological advancement in that society.

### **Research Institutes that deliver nothing:**

We have several government funded research institutions (both State and Central) which produces nothing but fancy reports year after year. Such institutions have no accountability to the investment made from tax payer money. The only exception is Indian

Space Research Organisation.

### **The universities delivering glorified clerks:**

The universities, dime a dozen, produces glorified clerks who are neither capable of providing solutions nor contribute to technological feats.

In short we are producing lowly skilled clerks at a huge public exchequer.

We seek to hire people for high public offices for our society based on the higher education imparted in our universities.

We figure it out they are just no good for any of the task that the nation is in need of. At best, we produce, in our education system, clerks. Dignified clerks.

The good thing about Clerks are that neither they are required to think nor expected to have learning abilities. One can see a clerk in every top rung of our society instead of solution providers.

The result is that there is an ever increasing gap between the poor and rich. Never before there was so much of unrest among people. Anti-social activities and terrorism on the rise.

## Chapter 03

# LEARNING, KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM

I recall from the article of Justice Lakoti, (an ex CJI of Supreme court of India) where in he has observed that our education system did not deliver knowledge. He doubts if British handed down the education system had handed down a defective education system, perhaps deliberately. For, he observes that those educated are not knowledgeable.

It could be observed that British delivered us primary education. It had an objective that was, the literacy. We know now that that objective was adequately met.

**Where did we go wrong then?**

All the way from Secondary education to higher education the methodology adopted for primary education is flawless. The children have to store in their mind and recall subsequently a large volume of images called **letter** and **number**. There is no logic or reasoning involved in any of them. The student needs to remember them throughout their lives.

The letter and numbers along with the grammar and mathematical tables form the foundation for, for high school to research - the higher learning.

When our educationalist planned the secondary and higher education, they did not realize that a change in approach to teaching is required.

Secondary and higher education should involve a process called thinking.

So the education processes was limited REMEMBERING and RECALLING lessons.

### **The absence of a goal:**

Elementary education had a goal. To impart the ability to read, write and count. The higher education has none.

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