

Meaning of Education

In recent years, India has witnessed increasing number of crimes and scams. What's more shocking is that in most of the cases, the accused are "well educated" be it the case of bonded child labour, rape, corruption and the list can just go on. Most of the cases of dowry deaths and foeticide take place in the high earning and well educated families. Incidents like these really make me stop and think: what is education? And how does it affect people's life?

To solve my doubt, I consulted the Oxford dictionary and one of the three meanings of education stated in it that further deepened my doubt is: development of character or mental power because today education has become a synonym of literacy. People attend primary school and learn how to read and write, attend secondary school and learn basics of each subject and then move on to specialised education. In the process we somewhere forget to focus on the character of students. All school care about is the score of students in exams and the importance and need to instil sanskaars is overlooked. May be this is the reason a student can crack an aptitude test successfully but is clueless about how to behave when guests come over. Most of the children just say a quick namaste and hide in their room instead of asking the guests to sit or offer them something to drink.

Many even don't know how to control their anger, don't have the guts to say sorry and accept their mistakes. They behave oddly, passionately when they face complicated situations of life and sometimes commit crimes that they don't intend to.

The problem here lies again with the educational system and the perception of education in minds of people. Education is perceived as an instrument of getting a job and earning money. The essence of education, the part that focuses on character development is not known to many. Psychological fact is that a child can be taught good manners only up to the age of 6 only. School curriculum cannot help much in this case. From play school only, they have to be taught regularly how to behave in public, how to talk to strangers, adults, friends, and when they should say sorry. They have to be taught while they are interacting with their friends and not through grades or tests.

Kids learn from their homes while observing their family members. So, parents have to take the time out for their children and have to tell them off whenever they do something wrong or say something bad. They should be very careful about their language and the way they react to various situations in their lives. Schools might take help from special programs being run by various organisations like 'Sanskarshala' (an initiative by Jagaran Prakashan Ltd) which attempt to contribute to this holistic learning process.

The ideas of grown-ups cannot be changed however much we try. That's why, it's imperative that we start this development process right from childhood – so that the kids of today become aware, responsible and confident young citizens of tomorrow.

