



PARENTING KNOWLEDGE AS HUMAN CAPITAL FOR NATION'S PROSPERITY: THE ROLE OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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Introduction

To be precise, the prosperity of any nation is destined not by its immense economic capital or the mammoth physical capital but astutely with its brilliant human capital interwoven through its ardent social capital. To foster and sustain growth worth of impacting the lives of its entire populations of any nation, in the most fruitful manner permeated by widespread wellbeing of its constituents, the semblance of the prosperity of any nation in its mature and finest form, what is needed is laying foundation for human capital robust enough to unleash productivity to take the nation forward in all areas of human excellence, be it engineering, medicine, agriculture or domains like trade, commerce, business and industry or for that matter any conceivable domain of human activity.

That means, we need human excellence in the form of good engineers, doctors, agriculture scientists or workforce in all domains of human activity, who give their best in fructifying the fortification of productivity in its most vibrant manner leading to the creation of wealth or prosperity of today where by its fruits can be enjoyed not only by the present generation but also by the generations that come in future. But, how this human excellence in an all pervading mode is possible?

This human excellence in an all pervading manner is possible when societies invest their time and effort in laying foundation for a healthy and happy augury of new generations by strengthening their institutions of marriage and family where the seeds of new generations are sowed in an eternal mode. Some of the developed nations that made remarkable advances in their human capital are known to have had made much headway in this particular direction.

Younger people in such societies are being sensitized and made aware of the imperative of healthy lifestyles and the importance of the institutions of marriage and family. Youth are being prepared for future roles of parenting and socializing their young toddlers with positive mindset so that the children imbibe the qualities of achievement motivation, grow with self esteem and progress in the direction of self realization and actualization. Even though such an initialization was visibly evident in



the grand old culture and traditions of ancient India, the cotemporary India lost that heritage in the transition from tradition to modernity with the gradual erosion of the rich legacy of the institution of Indian family. Hence it is now high time that we should make renewed efforts in keeping in place the parenting education in a steadfast manner to lay foundation for robust future human capital in our society in the form of happy and healthy children.

The role and importance of Parenting Knowledge

There is a direct relationship between effective parenting and healthy child development and the extensive research forthcoming across the globe is a valid testimony to this fact. As rightly pointed out by National Effective Parenting Initiative of America (NEPI), children thrive when parents provide not only affection but also respectful communication and listening, consistent rules and expectations and safe opportunities that promote independence. Successful parenting fosters psychological adjustment, helps children succeed in school, encourage curiosity about the world and motivates children to achieve and become more productive.

The growing realization in America, through the NEPI, on the imperative of ensuring every child, as a matter of birthright, to be raised effectively and humanely by loving and skillful parents who receive the best parenting education and support is worth emulating by any progressive society. This is possible when parents commit themselves to being the best parents they can be and so seeking out and receiving the best possible parenting education. The American experience shows that this can be achieved by honoring parents for the contributions they make to their children's growth, health and happiness through effective parenting.

There should be efforts to create and support effective parenting initiatives at national, state and local level where governments commit themselves for facilitating the opportunities for every parent to receive the best parenting education. The governments at different levels should initiate projects that bring parenting education opportunities into every pre-school, child care centres as in the case of Integrated Child Development Centres, and workplaces and schools. In addition, reaching the goal requires more individuals trained as parenting instructors, family life educators and so on.

The benefits of parenting knowledge are very many such as the emergence of stronger and stable families, healthy and confident children, lower child abuse or neglect, fewer problems of health or mental health and greater learning abilities on the part of children, lower rates of delinquency or crime by children, better schools, lesser incidence of substance abuse by youth, safer neighborhoods and ultimately greater employee productivity.

Role of Educational Institutions

Educational institutions have an onerous role to play here. First of all they can



directly impinge upon their own students and sensitize them with the needed knowledge transfer in this regard. They can make use of the available models of parenting education or they themselves may develop their own models and transfer the knowledge, first of all to their own students who are mature enough to receive such knowledge. The second level of action is to work in neighborhoods in which they are embedded and working with the parents of the families on this vital aspect. The educational institutions can make use of its vast human resource and available infrastructure to capacitate the parents in positive parenting.

The third and higher level involvement could be development, review, production, and dissemination of context specific and culturally appropriate parenting knowledge. In an era of information technology, the best ever viable option could be to make use of the World Wide Web for cost effective large scale dissemination, apart from making it available in a print media, through the local news papers, magazines, brochures or pamphlets. A kind of repertoire of parenting knowledge may be created by the educational institutions and hosted into the Web for easy and inexpensive access across the nation. Likeminded institutions and individuals may be encouraged for its wider dissemination and use. Educational institutions may facilitate collaborations, partnerships and networks to consolidate the efforts of transferring the parenting knowledge. They may also approach organizations like ICSSR in supporting such initiatives on a larger scale and in a sustained manner.

Educational institutions should organize events like 'Parenting Weeks' 'Exhibitions and Fairs' whereby they can take the message of parenting knowledge deep and wide into society so that the anticipated benefits will become known and as a nation we take care of our children. This would eventually enable us to reach the overarching goals of making our communities safer and better places to live, schools and other institutions become more effective and productive, our children will reach their full potential and the nation progresses well on human capital and thereby the nation becomes more prosperous.