
COMPREHENSIVE PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR COLLECTIVE FUTURES

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ABSTARCT

One face of the Janus is on the lookout for the future, and the other is learning from the past. So, if I begin my premise with a prophecy (that is more plausible than not), then, our future rests on the past learning that a lopsided development of the individual will result only in partial growth of the human society. Attainment of complete and a full growth graph of the entire globe rest altogether on a holistic individual development. Enhancement and expansion of humanity can become an achievable dream only with harmonious collaboration of experts of different fields; and experts can be born only if give an unprecedented boost to holistic personality development. Holistic does not imply being “Jack of all trades, master of none.” In fact, holistic is used for a uniform and integrated development of all the capabilities of the individual; where one aspect of personality is not compromised for the other; where all the faculties – mental, intellectual, physical, emotional, lingual, and spiritual – are polished uniformly and simultaneously so that when the individual takes up a responsibility or is assigned any task, they accomplish the task with strategy, finesse, and, expertise. All aspects of the task would be given due consideration by an individual whose own personality is holistically developed, resulting in success in particular cases and societal growth in general. Such individuals would prove to be leaders and problem solvers; and when they would collaborate, the global village would certainly progress forward. This paper would attempt to study the various aspects of holistic personality development, its factors and its branches. In addition, the emphasis would also be on the need to rigorously introduce holistic personality development at the level of higher education in India.

Keywords: Holistic, Personality development, Collective, Future, Higher Education

“If everyone is moving forward together,
then success takes care of itself”

- Henry Ford

In the current scenario “collaboration” has become the key word. An enterprise of any type is incomplete and runs the risk of failing, if there is an absence of combined forces. A joint venture is always less in danger of losses as the all powers of individual parties are at work, in coalition. In the same manner, if we dream of a better future we must apply combined efforts to attain that. However, the pooled efforts can prevail and can become powerful only if the individual contributor is a force to reckon with. Each individual’s mettle will determine the strength of the global capacity. So, before setting out to fix the larger problems and turning the faces of the galaxies, we need to fix our own attitudes and ensure a holistic development of the self. This is possible through a comprehensive personal growth, where an individual seeks to develop and grow, not in just one direction, but holistically.

We live in an era where teachers or parents or guardians are not able to spend a lot of time with their wards. The reasons can be multifarious. Paucity of time, demands of the job, generation gap, or simply, lack of congeniality. The increase in anxiety levels and the alarming rise in aggression found in people today have rendered the idea of mutual learning a myth. Furthermore, with the way technology is advancing and education methods changing, the parents are now interested in making their children more engaged and involved in almost all facets of learning. Right from the very beginning, a child is exposed to a variety of sports and activities that enable him/her to learn new things. This has resulted in a complete change in the way students are taught in schools as well. With the advent of new-age technologies and teaching methods, the overall holistic development of a child in pre-schools has become a necessity. To cut a long story short, holistic personality development is the need of the hour. It is a one-stop solution to many of our problems. To top it all, it is an idea strongly supported by everyone alike – the parents, educationists, policy makers, trainers, and the learners.

Holistic development is the social, emotional, physical, mental, and intellectual growth of a person. Each aspect relates to important needs or states that we must achieve to be holistically developed and well. The integration of all aspects, forming a cohesive whole, will serve people well

in sustaining a healthy and happy life and effective professional practice. As stated earlier, one person's growth will then, eventually, lead to the proverbial "giant leap for the mankind."

Taking a holistic approach to education means focusing on all aspects of a child's growth, not just their academic advancements. Most importantly, it's about establishing the child's overall wellbeing. Without well-being, learning becomes impossible. Broadly speaking, holistic personality development encompasses three processes: biological, cognitive and social-emotional.

1. The biological process involves bodily changes, like brain development, physical growth and weight increases. It is how small people physically transform from children to adults.
2. The cognitive process includes thinking, intelligence and language skills. It is how the youngest members of society intellectually graduate from simple to complex ways of thinking.
3. The social-emotional process comprises personality, emotions and interpersonal connections. It's how individuals' behaviors progress from being childish to being mature.

The three processes influence and impact each other and none are mutually exclusive.

Schools and pre-schools these days have adopted this approach and are competing with one another by making tall claims of imparting holistic education to their respective students. While majority of the private schools in India have been successful in this venture by attaching equal weightage to academics, sports, co-curricular as well as extra-curricular activities, curricula trends in higher education institutions have a different story to tell. At this juncture, I would like to state a few cases from my own career experiences:

Case 1: (though I am quoting only one incident, but, year after year, this episode has been repeated giving me a sense of déjà vu every time.

Some of the questions which I ask during PKT sessions are mentioned below.

"How many continents are there in the world?"

"Where is the Mediterranean Sea?"

"Name the capital of Italy."

“Why is the Revolt of 1857 significant in Indian history?”

“What is the native language of the British?”

“Are *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* epics?”

“Can you name a few European countries?” and many other questions on similar lines are raised by me while doing a discussion on history of literature, textual analysis, or during any interactive session. My questions are usually answered by blank looks.

Case 2: I encounter blank looks again if I mention ‘Dodge Ball’

Case 3: Too delicate for any change in the weather. Fall ill easily and frequently.

Case 4: Very few students have something to say in response to a query like “Who is your favorite author/ poet/ book etc.?”

Case 5: Illustrations from literature or even cinema fall flat.

Case 6: Never been to flower shows

As a result, a discussion centered on Literature metamorphoses into lessons in geography (with map drawing on the board), politics, economics, psychology, and general studies. It is an established truth that Literature is the confluence site of all branches of learning and such digressions are intrinsic and inevitable in a literature class. Nevertheless, the charm of such discussions would augment if they are not one-sided. It would be beneficial to both the parties if the tutor’s monologues are replaced by mutual exchange of ideas, leave aside a conversation based on the dialogic principles.

In the past decade, it has been observed that the standard of education has deteriorated manifold and is falling still lower, at a much faster rate. The first mistake was when some school boards in India decided not to declare any failures in 10th and 12th examinations. However crude it may sound, but it must be stated that such policies marred the confidence of the next generations in their own abilities. Furthermore, the disoriented lot amongst them received additional license for their irregularity, insincerity, and callous attitude. The original policy of checking the defaulter and rewarding the sincere was a corrective and a reformative measure. There was nothing wrong in differentiating the serious from the non-serious; in fact it was obligatory and mandatory on the part of policy-makers to identify such students who would have strengthened the foundations of their nation and not be

responsible for rotting the very roots of India. Why did we frame the rule of “not failing” any student? Why are we afraid of calling a spade a spade? Why the non-serious should benefit on equal plane as the hard-working, rightly-oriented student? Why create Frankensteins when we have the power to shape the future and mould the youth? The theory of appeasement resulted in the corruption of the young minds.

It is these young minds, emitting oodles of confidence, which enter the arena of higher education, with fake, ‘un-true’ certifications. Their whole lives revolve around the lies of their ‘capabilities.’ The truth is that the very bedrock of their education is shaky, and with that background they aspire to become experts of subjects and gain super-specialization in their field. The problem is that such students expect a lot and are not willing to give to the society. Their contribution is minimalistic while their demands never end.

In order to bring about a transformation in our society and to set the wrongs which have transpired in the last few decades, we must change our methods and techniques. The answer, perhaps, be found in holistic approach. Holistic approach focuses on an individual caring for their mind, body, and soul through various methods. The holistic approach takes into consideration a whole person versus mainstream medicine of looking simply at presenting symptoms to diagnose. Today, many individuals will utilize holistic care to identify and treat the root cause of illnesses, diseases, or other health problems. For those of us familiar with the holistic care and the various approaches, we know the benefits, but for many, these benefits often cannot be heard enough.

Through the holistic approach we often learn vital education to our health. We gain a better knowledge about how our body functions and how to achieve our body for the best results. We gain awareness of the importance of holistic approaches throughout several areas of our lives – beauty, home cleaning products, lifestyle choices, and much more. Even stress regulation by using holistic treatments is important for advancing along the way to wellness and eventually to better learning, as stress triggers mental health issues.

Moving to physical activities, a balanced diet can be extremely effective in eradicating symptoms of anxiety, depression, and mood swings, and can boost sleep quality. People suffering from depression and anxiety need to deal with many emotional and functional challenges regularly. Being capable of

identifying these difficulties is one of the major advantages of a holistic approach to mental health. Regular exercises and yoga sessions must be organized in educational institutions. Apart from physical fitness and stamina building, the students will improve their concentration levels and retention powers. The students perform not only well in the academic but also face life challenges bravely. They learn the right approach to deal with the obstacles. Holistic education promotes social-awareness and a sense of responsibility with self-confidence among the students. It helps the students to develop strong critical thinking abilities and makes them exceptional at problem-solving. Students respect their individuality that ultimately results in the reduction of violence and abuse. The students are generally encouraged to excel in a world of constant change. We should try to create an environment that helps a child think out-of-the-box ideas and enhance the learning power. We should prepare students to develop rational thinking. Some schools always make sure to familiarize their students about the various dimensions of analyzing a problem. With this approach, the students become creative and innovative. Also, they teach sportsmanship to their students that ultimately bring up leadership qualities in them. Too often, education curricula focus on academic learning and forget about arts and music. Arts can involve embracing the value of painting, drawing and pottery. But it might also involve learning to build huts in the woods (like in the forest schools approach) or learning an instrument. It may similarly involve going on bush camps, joining a Scout troop, or taking up sport.

Holistic development is a comprehensive approach in learning which aims to develop multiple facets or abilities of a human brain. Conventional educational and learning systems aim at the development of intellectual capabilities only. But holistic growth aims at the development of physical capabilities, intellectual abilities, cognitive or mental abilities, emotional abilities, and social skills. The development of personality and intelligence is a very complex process that involves the influence of both nature and nurture. Improvements or development in an individual's personal life increases his commitment to the overall objectives of the organization. Holistic education focuses on the "whole child" rather than strictly on academics or performance metrics. This dynamic approach to teaching uses experiential learning, which involves a hands-on approach, and self-guided learning where teachers utilize personalization in the learning models based on each student's suitability. Unlike traditional classrooms, where the focus is on product and results, holistic educators work closely with students to discover and determine how class time can best be used. These classrooms include a range

of experiments, projects, discussions and student-centered activities within a real-world context. This educational approach incorporates encourages students to explore their passions and interests, achieve their goals, and better understand themselves. Holistic learning will benefit students by teaching them to be aware of and appreciate their potential, and encourages learning as a lifelong experience. What starts as an educational journey involving personal discovery through formal education will continue throughout the learner's life.