

# A vision for Indian Education System

*"The education system has completely failed us"* ~ a student that recently passed out.

*"It teaches us facts and figures that we will not remember either ways and have no use for"* ~ a student from a well off private school.

*"Our teachers are least interested in teaching us; half of the time they aren't there and when they are all they do is scream and hit us"* ~ a student in a rural school.

*"I don't like going to school as I cannot understand anything"* ~ a student in an urban government school.

Interactions similar to those mentioned above, with students and recent pass outs, paints an abysmal picture of the education system. The traditional Indian educational system and its practices were borne in the light of the industrial revolution and designed to create technicians. A very different system is required as of today; a system focused on quality rather than access and that propels students to think, respect other people's perspectives, work and live together and to deal with the 21st century issues.

Children and youngsters are key stakeholders in education and have never been listened to although they have the most detailed information of what really goes on in a school; the positives and the negatives. Their perspectives hold a lot of value; although possibly not be completely formed it is the role of others in the society to help them articulate it and convert them into actionables. I believe the young adults, which make up nearly 65% of the Indian population will have to play a significant role in the transformation of our current educational system. Other countries including China, Singapore, USA and Malaysia have large contingents of organizational leadership teams made of youth given their energy levels, optimism and lack of fear to try and fail.

In this article I hope to explore ways to motivate and work with young adults to bring a change in the educational system. I am quite wary about stereotyping young adults and their attitudes although the nature of this article requires the same, I would ask the reader to not take whatever is written word for word.

The current perception of the society of many young adults, if not all, would be that they are narcissistic, self-interested, lazy, impatient, never happy and always looking for instant gratification... which may be true. Though instead of blaming the youth for the same I believe it is crucial to understand what kind of education shaped them into so. Parents, teachers and society put together have molded these youth, provided anything and everything that the child asked for, modelled behaviors through either their own behaviors or through TV and from the very beginning pushed them to only appreciate the final results, to be number 1 and not appreciate the process or care for what happens to others in the process of becoming number 1.

I would also like to highlight that the many of the current young adults have other quality traits to balance the above; they can be highly innovative, possess strong communicational skills and at times possess a strong drive. One thing that I have commonly found, more strongly in the youth population as compared to anyone else in the society is a desire to make an impact or give back to the society. They are looking for a form of fulfillment and haven't been able to find it in the current society.

I believe good leadership could create systems that make the most of the youth's capacities, energies, motivations and potentials. One of the common mistakes that the Indian society as whole makes, as compared to other international societies, is to treat the youth as children and in not treating them as adults and equals we deprive them of the respect that they deserve and the attention that they may need. The role of good leader would be to create a space where the youth would be treated equally, their opinions respected and built on.

Given that most of the youth that I have seen either want to make an impact of sorts and are seeking satisfaction allows a unique opportunity of molding their drive towards education reforms. Orienting them towards a specific purpose becomes easier when they are treated equally and shown the larger picture or goal of any given activity. Once imbibed into the vision and the purpose of the activity / program the youth tend to be quite responsible.

In my opinion and experience, I have heard some of the best ideas for change from young adults. They have strong capacities of coming up out of the box ideas especially since all through their lives they have tried to come up with quick fixes or doing 'jugaad'. Additionally a space (physical, mental and emotional) that allows them freedom of thinking and to expression would promote their capacity for innovation. Given the depth of the educational problem multiple out of the box ideas would be the only way to create any form change.

I believe mistakes are a part of the learning process be it at school or at work. The freedom to make mistakes is highly motivating for promoting innovation. A good leader would essentially guide the team members through failures, to learn from them and to ensure that they remain motivated. A very important role of a leader leading the current young adults, apart from creating a safe space of mutual respect and innovation, is to help the young adults focus on long term gains rather than instant gratification and help them develop patience, love and forge real bonds with people.

An optimistic unsaid personal belief that lives through the whole article is that intrinsically everyone is good and circumstances have carved people into who they are but at the same time an alternate environment and leadership could potentially remold anyone. I would like to remind the readers that I am an education researcher and not a management expert and through this articles am sharing my perspectives and experience through leading a team of youth for a relatively short time.

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