

MYTH,
MYSTERY AND
MISERY

PRINCIPLES, PRACTICE
AND PROBLEMS OF
HOLISTIC EDUCATION

RASIKA ABEYSINGHE

Also by the Author

*Ecclesiastes, Ecclesia and Existentialism: Some Experiential Permutations on the Essence of Being.

* The Last XV: Reflections on the Concept of the 'Religious Utopia' in the Private School Tradition in Sri Lanka.

* A Theology of Anxiety: Biblical Stories on How God makes Sense out of Worry.

* The Local Foreigners: Legacy of Socialization of the Ecclesia Anglicana

*Christian Worship and Liturgy: History and Modernity.

*The Architect: Basil Jackson and the future of Theological Education in Sri Lanka.

*Anxiety in Existential Psychotherapy and in Buddhist Counselling: A Comparative Conceptual Study.

*Tentmaker Ministry Revisited.

* Chaplaincy in a Multi Faith Context.

* Church Administration: A Simple Guide to the Task of Church Management in the Sri Lankan Context

PRINCIPLES, PRACTICE AND
PROBLEMS OF HOLISTIC
EDUCATION

RASIKA ABEYSINGHE

THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF
LANKA PUBLICATION
CREATIVE PRINTERS KANDY
2020

ISBN

PRINTED BY

CREATIVE PRINTERS

ADDRESS

2020

EMAIL –

rtbabeyasinghe@gmail.com

Copyright @Rasika Abeysinghe

Dedication

To the Many who have tired for
Holistic Education in Sri Lanka

Contents

1. What is Holistic Education	1
2. Philosophies in Holistic Education: Holistic in Variety	6
3. Holistic in Approach	12
4. Holism based on Sustainability of the Future	18
5. Holistic based on Personality	24
6. Holistic Education based on Context	29
7. Modern thinking	35
8. Summary of Thoughts	41
9. What is and what is not Holistic Education	47
10. History in Classical Antiquity	53
11. History in Antiquity	59
12. Holism in Sri Lankan History	65
13. Private School Education Review	71
14. Marks of a Christian School	78
15. Theological College of Lanka Pilimatalawa – Holism	83
16. Reception of Holism	91
17. Challenges to Holistic Education	95

FOREWARD

PREFACE

It was hoped to bring out another aspect of the Private School Tradition in Sri Lanka, after the publications of *The Last XV: A Reflections on the Concept of the 'Religious Utopia' in the Private School Tradition in Sri Lanka* (2016) and *The Local Foreigners: Legacy of Socialization of Ecclesia Anglicana* (2018) so as to have a trilogy on the subject. The first and the second books reflected on the Religious and Social aspects of the Private School tradition and this book to reflect on Education related material.

The Private School in Sri Lanka with its post-colonial interpretation has weathered many storms in this country and holistic education a hall mark of the system has being part of the school ethos and character for centuries. It has produced well rounded ladies and gentleman across the island, promoting holism in ministry in the world of work and committing for this philosophy even times when most other schools have shifted into academic orientation alone. In a way these schools maintain the misery of Holistic education with fervent prayer for the mystery that it is the way ordained for us.

Owing to the few number of researches that have been conducted on this subject, this book is by no means an

outright text book on the subject. However, the dearth of material from third part researchers and to our surprise even from private schooled writers has been a cause of alarm. Hopefully in time to come there will be more material and reflections which will allow for a better grasping of the subject.

I thank God for the guidance and motivation provided to see this writing to its end.

Must gratitude is given to all persons who collaborated in this project from the private school tradition

I also thank the Theological College of Lanka Pilimatalawa and Principal for his assistance in this regard.

Also, many thanks to my family, friends and many well-wishers especially those who spent time on reading and giving advise on it.

Creative printers have assisted me in more than half of all my publications and many thanks are due to them.

R Abeyasinghe

Feast of St Mark 2020

CHAPTER 1

WHAT IS HOLISTIC EDUCATION?

What use of education if it is not holistic? Do different educations make it whole? Why would anyone opt for education which is not holistic?

These are some of the questions one may ask when being introduced to the concept of holistic education. As a matter of fact, we might also think of writing the word 'holistic' as 'wholistic' which may shed much light on the matter. By using 'wholistic' we understand the total person in the total context.

When we talk of education we are drawn to think of exams, grades, books, papers, writing etc. The idea of education as book related and exam related have been drilled into our minds from quite some time. And we live in an age where, increasingly the 'other' education is discarded as ethical teachings which become optional.

In that regard Holistic Education becomes a suspicious new philosophy that makes headway into an established set up. What does it mean? Simply the term denotes an all-around education. However, in this collection of

essays we will discover that there was actually no other education than holistic education throughout history and merely book knowledge came about for the satisfaction of certain sectors in the 'world of work' in which written knowledge was of essence but which spread across.

The only issue is that even when such philosophies were present the infusion into the education system itself was not realized. In modern curriculums in the one third world we might see some push for this but in countries like the SAARC we seem pretty much engrossed on book knowledge alone. Being under foreign leadership would have had some say against this as mainly the British envisioned such training. However, for reasons we might never discover education systems have not been able to inculcate this philosophy satisfactorily.

We will work out a few definitions in the coming chapters of exactly how philosophers have framed the term. However, to get started it means an overall education which emphasizes on all aspects of development. All aspects of education would mean knowledge, skills and attitudes. In another light it would be head, heart and hands. In another manner it can be educating the student on other aspects that are beyond the examination and academic level. This will include

one's relationships with the world and apart from the world. This will include attitudes and behavior present and future.

The predicament in modern education is that all of these aspects now seem to come 'parts apart' and finds its place as extra or co curricular activities. Even spirituality finds its place not as something that becomes integrated with education but something that becomes evaluated at an exam. While we tout the 'extra' qualifications, the major determinants of the pathway to success and the 'good life' remain academic achievements.

This is to the detriment of this nation and any other which may determine education to be such a 'one way' ordeal. We use the word detriment in that there seem to be a whole lot more inclusion on this subject in academia and in the education of teachers, yet the political will if we may call it so, has proven that this country is far from recovering the 'brainwashing' it has undergone over the years. Unlearning this has been confined to some aspects of education but certainly it has not stemmed the flow of one-way education.

In a way the educational system becomes hypocritical when it promotes the curriculum but does not recognize

its importance at the major evaluation. In fact, the world of work has been pivotal in informing the educational system that book knowledge alone has been eliminated as requisites for job openings. This in the world of work would have been a natural outcome of being stuck with persons who were good at parroting material but lacked almost every other virtue needed for transformation of the organization or society.

In that regard the 'behindness' we see of a country like Sri Lanka in regard to creativity, service for the other and progressiveness can all be routed back to this and in the same manner the progressiveness we find in countries in the one third world could also be reflected upon as by the openness they have on this subject. For an example an artist in a county such as ours may not be able to progress to hold one's own unlike in a Scandinavian country, where your Z score which is determined mainly through exams becomes the one and only criteria for occupations which become ranked as better.

However, as we start discussing this matter, we also draw attention to other aspects that influence this sort of philosophy. One of these would be academia itself which seem to have a hold on how well the entrants must be

moulded. As education becomes industry the image they must maintain becomes of vital importance. Another aspect is the untested results in holistic education. While we want people to be all rounders they may not necessarily perform well in each occupation. They might be better citizens and family persons but not the former. A third aspect, is the insistence that some occupations are heavily knowledge based and in the pursuit of other aspects you may fall down by the way side. This is especially true for fields such as medicine and engineering where there seem to heavy syllabuses that must be by hearted or else to face the failure at examinations. Another one aspect is that the society itself seem to have fixated on the idea that educated would mean more certificates rather than the in- built formation for a better character.

Thus, we begin defining and formulating a philosophy of holism in the thought of great thinkers and educators, also we will look at holism in terms of education styles employed across the world in space and time. We will also dwell on the Sri Lankan experiences and the new trends present both here and elsewhere in confronting the book knowledge only education.

CHAPTER 2

PHILOSOPHIES IN HOLISTIC EDUCATION (HOLISTIC IN VARIETY)

It would surprise many of us that even for a word which is being used quite frequently, holistic education does not have a definite meaning. This could either mean that it is a work in progress or that there is a multitude of philosophies which come into play when we try to define it.

In the following paragraphs we will see how Holistic education can be categorized according to its different definitions. Our first turn will be to see Holism in variety.

What we imply here is that Education in total is given by different subjects, through which we hope the child will get a grasp of the entirety of what is meant. In almost all curriculums around the world we find that the same subjects occur over and over again such as science, mathematics, aesthetics, civics, health, language etc. In each subject there may also be practicals that are involved, however we term all these under academic.

We quote Friedrich Fröbel(1782- 1852) as an example for this sort of understanding. He insisted on the activity of the child in learning. He was an initiator of the kindergarten system and spent much time on pre- school education. He suggested a curriculum of singing, dancing, gardening, and self-directed play with the Froebel Gifts which were an accessory resembling play material.¹Here we attempt to bring the child closer with all forms of education in the hope that he or she will be able to comprehend the broader perspectives of education.

Another philosopher was Bronson Alcott (1799-1888) who experimented with many multi-leveltraining. His emphases were on environmental relations as well as developing a spirituality. It also includedart education, music education, acting exercises, learning through experience, risk-taking in the classroom, tolerance in schools, physical education/recess, and early childhood education.² Therefore the child becomes educated through different aspects. And in this hope, we aim to give holism its respect. Here we see even characteristics

¹ Fröbel, Friedrich (1900) *The Student's Froebel*: adapted from "Die Erziehung der Menschheit" of F. Froebel, by William H. Herford. 2 vols. London: Isbister, 1900–01

² Bedell, Madelon (1980). *The Alcotts: Biography of a Family*. New York: Clarkson N. Potte

such as tolerance which really do not have any similar counterpart in modern curriculums being advocated almost two centuries back.

We have anyway in this country tolerated the 'other aspects' in terms of discipline. If someone gets angry or abusive, we term it as not having discipline, but far away from the truth is that we don't recognize that that is also a part of education. By knowing of the world, of people of situations this ability for temperance can be managed.

One may argue that in the current education as well, we do have subjects such as civics, health and agriculture but the issue is that we do not evaluate them based on what they learn and contribute in the subjects themselves but merely through an exam at the end of the term. We will look at the following examples as well to boost the idea.

Rudolf Steiner (1861- 1925) who initiated the largest private school network in the world called 'Waldorf Schools' had a curriculum which had science, information technology, spirituality and practical artistic training as well as the first introduction of a multicultural

education.³ It is quite amazing to see that even two centuries ago emphasis with such far part subjects were thought of as making a person whole. Here we find science, arts and religion upto some extent being part of a curriculum.

The most important component we find here is multicultural education. This is light years ahead of Sri Lankan syllabuses which introduced this aspect only after the end of the war. We realize that most countries who are actually multicultural always have issue with the concept, while those who ‘learn’ of it such as the west seem to strive on it, as we can see clearly. Unless there was a mechanism of evaluating the ‘other’ side of academic training even subjects alone will not suffice.

And as we develop this concept, we will see that the major aspect that must change is the political will at the top to recognize that each component is as important as any other. The works of Francisco Ferrer Guardia (1859–1909) a thinker who developed secular schools and libertarian curriculums gives us insight into this matter. He rejected punishment and rewards emphasizing the need of practical examinations rather than the traditional.

³ Seddon, Richard (2004). Rudolf Steiner. New York: North Atlantic Books.

Science, history and sociology formed a part of his all-round curriculum. ⁴

A diversified curriculum not only gives a rotation that will be interesting to children but will also focus them to think that education itself is diversified. One of the main problems with academic orientation is that it presupposes that, such is the only way available for achievement. We will never be able to produce a person with potential on arts and crafts with this system. And even in the end the person may not be recognized as having achieved something.

What can be the implications that can come from this and be translated into modern curriculums. The first will be to make sure that each subject becomes accessible to children by different modes, this will itself instill a sense of how education can be found to be different than books. Next, modern basket subjects can be categorized as having effect on different aspects of relationships a person will have such as with the science world, with the community and with the artistic. And finally, there can be a benchmark in all these areas so that true

⁴ Abbott, Leonard Dalton (1910). Francisco Ferrer: His Life, Work and Martyrdom. New York: Francisco Ferrer Association.

achievement becomes possible by attaining the benchmark.

In what little we may learn from this is that diversification in education is indeed positive, and thinkers much before the day and age of the present have discussed its validity. Its another thorn in the side of book knowledge but which gets assimilated with the entire discussion being settled on discipline and formation.

CHAPTER 3

HOLISTIC IN APPROACH

As we know from the above, the mere diversity in subjects alone may not suffice in holism. It would be sufficient to present to an outsider that students undergo variety but it may not go the full distance in making an all-rounder.

Another group of thinkers presented the idea of approach which can be diversified. And we will look at a few of those examples.

We have come to know of Blooms Taxonomy of the Cognitive(Head), Affective (Heart) and Psychomotor (Hands) approach which appear mainly in lesson planning at school level. However, the precursor to this method was Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827) who came up with a three-tiered system of approaching the child in learning.

His curriculum was aimed at language (ancient and mother tongue), physical education moral and intellectual education. His education was centered on relationship development starting with the family and

leading towards relationship with God.⁵ In approach we look at subjecting the teaching learning process in making sure that each activity (or even special activities) are used to develop a certain skill or attitude.

Henry Thoreau (1817-1862) suggested that education must be liberal. It must be liberal up to the point that thinking is not regulated even by the state. He proposed close relations with the environment., equality and freedom to pursue education.⁶ This ideology which became a platform for the development of the free nature, with the human to expand, also looks at how through a different approach we educate the child. When we don't frame education as being structured and always to serve the policies at the top we are able to spend more time on having different ways in which we provide education.

For an example we must question, do children like to learn the way we teach especially in the mode we operate now? If they did have a free hand in answering we might receive much more negatives than the

⁵ Dieter, Jedan (1990), "Theory and Practice: Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi", *Vitae Scholasticae*.

⁶ Harding, Walter. *The Days of Henry Thoreau*. Princeton University Press, 1982.

positives. Perhaps we leave the most important aspect of leading the child and give him or her varied approaches to be ‘learned through’.

One of the most famous of these approaches became realistic in Maria Montessori (1870 –1952) who was famed for her namesake method which we find commonplace in primary education stressed on sensorial and practical elements on education. She was a strong supporter of natural development and spontaneous discipline which she attributed to the teacher being a facilitator for the child’s progress. ⁷Especially in primary education we find this freedom given expression through the practical exposure to different aspects of education.

It is very discouraging to note that when primary education is passed, we slowly move onto the structured curriculums which leave almost no room for holistic education. While we do applaud persons, who are well rounded we are not so interested in making them so. One of the best examples we can see of this is when we appreciate an educated person for being a good communicator or when such a person may voice injustice.

⁷Lillard, Angeline (2005). *Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius*. New York: Oxford University Press.

We do surprise ourselves when this happens as it means that we do want to produce a holistic person but we get so much caught in syllabuses, that we usually forgo this commitment.

Kieran Egan (born 1942) is a philosopher who studied Imaginative education a new form of instruction which involves rational thinking, socialization and self-discovery which is revolving around the curriculum.⁸ This approach when used in education, we realize that we give much more exposure to students to learn in a holistic manner.

In this country at least we leave this exposure to either the family of the student him/her self. If we meet a student not well versed in general knowledge or unable to make a cup of tea, we usually start the blame game with the family background. This is up to some level possible but we fail to understand that the education system itself could be used for this purpose.

Let us once again look at the implications of such a model for the modern curriculums. Having different

⁸ Kieran Egan (1997). *The educated mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

approaches will involve more exposure to environments outside the class room. It will involve more hands-on work and it will definitely involve evaluation through different methods. For an example we might have a session on practical training skills which can also be linked into lessons on sociology, economy and technology.

In the recent past we see some measures which come into practice based on this. This is sometimes the marks which are afforded for university admissions become based on different 'extra activities done' or in the school-based assessments which try to inculcate more approaches at least in academic knowledge. Some private schools have made it their mission to bring out holistic education through modes which will include set times for these associations or clubs and even some recognition for progress in the school.

These are of course hearty positives but also it proposes very little in terms of a policy change at higher levels. While we will look at this later, we can assume that much of what needs to be done in this regard will be to link how approaches can also be made viable within the schooling period. This will allow for the time and energy issue that educators may face. It can be easy as a field

trip in which time and assessment can also be taken into the syllabus. While individual teachers who maybe enlightened on the subject this also needs more reception at school levels. If results alone are considered to be termed a 'good' teacher or student the very few who may really want to make a change will also be discouraged.

CHAPTER 4

HOLISM BASED ON SUSTAINABILITY OF THE FUTURE

The current education system is indeed focused at the future. Such is being said that the curriculums leading from the junior secondary level are motivated for certain job descriptions.

When we consider the basic subject taught amounting to around eight without the newer basket subject which were a recent introduction, it possibly proposed eight areas of expertise. In a common sense we might see that jobs may fall in to certain clusters but there was no preparation for students than what was observed. The introduction of Information Technology and technological subjects was in fact a luxury a few decades back of private schools and it is now only a feature in the senior secondary level.

Apart from the academic training, do we allow the formation of the mind to necessarily see the other opportunities that offer as future job ventures? There has been said that most children today learn for almost fifty percent of jobs which are not in operation at the moment.

These could be from technology related areas into newer platforms of past occupations.

Thinkers even centuries back did exactly imagine these possibilities. It is in a way disheartening to see that these thoughts merely took place in certain areas of geography or at certain times but did not become realistic in many others.

We cite the example of Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) who was also a strong proponent of natural beauty and environmental awareness in education. He together with others who were branched in 'transcendentalism' recognized the divine in everything. Spirituality was also an important aspect in his thought and it closely related to transcendentalism.⁹ Here we see two aspects one was the context of environment and on the other the spiritual.

We would be lucky to see a modern classroom where a teacher would be cheering on students either to be an environmentalist or a religious philosopher. It is however not only the absence of leading student towards these but also the recognition that must be afforded to these

⁹ Emerson, Ralph Waldo (1983). *Essays and Lectures*. New York: Library of America.

spheres which have not become vital components on human existence.

Even as early as Ibn Sina(980 AD – 1037 AD) who refers to the secondary education (stage of maktab schooling as the period of specialization), when pupils should begin to acquire manual skills, regardless of their social status. He writes that children after the age of 14 should be given a choice to choose and specialize in subjects they have an interest in, whether it was reading, manual skills, literature, preaching, medicine, geometry, trade and commerce, craftsmanship, or any other subject or profession they would be interested in pursuing for a future career.

He wrote that this was a transitional stage and that there needs to be flexibility regarding the age in which pupils graduate, as the student's emotional development and chosen subjects need to be taken into account.¹⁰

We see when perusing the subject offered, it by far surpasses our modern curriculums, and it further gives us evidence of what thinkers envisioned the world to be explored of, even in times when they did not face issues

¹⁰M. S. Asimov, Clifford Edmund Bosworth (1999). *The Age of Achievement: Vol 4*. Motilal Banarsidass. pp. 34–5.

such as sustainability, eco justice, ethical considerations, microbiology etc.

Some thinkers even went beyond the contextual approach and proposed that the strict curriculum does not in fact endorse children to think of what they would want to do in the future.

John Caldwell Holt (1923 –1985) and Ivan Illich (1926 – 2002) were radical in that they supported deschooling which was the stripping away of the traditional community learning and he proposed home schooling. This they believed led to much greater freedom and reforming of schools according was fruitless.¹¹

Reforming of schools was considered useless owing to the matter that it reflected the policies that were introduced by the policy makers at large. In a way schools cannot be blamed if they not given the leeway to look at the world out there and make curriculums to suit it. The issue in a country such as ours is that we may earmark some professions such as engineering, medicine or law and then promote all children to be part of this

¹¹ Dickerson, A. (2016). John Holt, in J. Palmer-Cooper (ed.), *The Routledge Encyclopaedia of Educational Thinkers*, London: Routledge.

stream. When we cramp students, teachers as well as syllabuses into a minor space with lesser freedom we may end up with this sort of undue competition and arrangement.

George Dennison (1925–1987) proposed smaller teacher to student ratios as well as smaller schools. He emphasized on relations between the school community and empowered teachers to learn the art of teaching rather than the pedagogical perspective.¹²

Having a small ratio will at least allow a teacher to spend more effort on widening the horizons of the child. This will make it possible for the child to learn of the more and varied opportunities out there for personal contribution.

Let us now see the implications of this method for our current context. Here we are not trying to equate context with the world of work. Context in a broader sense is more than what the jobs prepared by some industries. It must encompass any that the human mind can envision.

¹² Dennison, George (1999). *The Lives of Children: The Story of the First Street School (Innovators in Education)*, New Hampshire: Heinemann.

These opportunities to learn of the world may appear to the student maybe at the undergraduate level, but certainly the streams are quite narrow. The current system does offer freedom to choose between streams and newer technology streams have been introduced. This of course is a positive. Yet we must question whether the prioritizing of the fields as from importance of science to the less importance to the arts also become part of the problem rather than the solution.

CHAPTER 5

HOLISTIC BASED ON PERSONALITY

Another stream of thought in holistic education can be defined as catering to the individual person. We might even say that in our competition filled era this is probably what we lack the most. We seem to have arrived at a certain book with a certain time frame attached to it and we feel comfortable that through this education or change of knowledge, skill and behavior has occurred.

In many thinkers this was a reoccurring thought. However, the definitions and terms of same may have been missing due to the non-availability of developed vocabulary we possess in modern times. One of the pioneering agents in this field of catering to the person was Howard Gardener (1943).

He popularized his thinking of multiple intelligences and emphasized that not all students learn or excel in the same manner. His thinking has been revolutionary and has been adopted to teach and evaluate under different conditions¹³He brought out eight and later nine paradigms

¹³ Kincheloe, Joe L., ed. (2004). *Multiple Intelligences Reconsidered. Counterpoints v. 278*. New York: Peter Lang.

on which students learn and can be evaluated upon. These far stretched from mere mathematics but also introduced natural environment, kinesthetics, music and the like.

As was mentioned above he was more leaning towards catering to one based on one's talent. However, for this topic we may see that such can be used to cater to one based on what is missing as well. It makes a tapestry of all skills that are possible and the one who may be lacking in something can be brought to that level.

Another pioneer especially in child education was Jean Piaget (1896 –1980). He is well known for his cognitive development approach. Further on, his work has been used for teachers to work with children.

Teachers who use a learner-centered approach as a basis for their professional practices incorporate the several dispositions. They provide experience-based educational opportunities. These teachers also contemplate the learners' individual qualities and attitudes during curriculum planning. Educators allow learners' insights to alter the curriculum. They nourish and support learners' curiosity. They also involve learners' emotions

and create a learning environment in which students feel safe.¹⁴

Unless students at whatever level, feel that their education becomes in threat of being discarded there is no safe environment. This made stand true more at the earliest stages. Therefore, it is the work of the teacher to make sure that such an all-round curriculum is present and that all may be empowered to work upon and for it.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712 – 1778) was a strong supporter of the freedom in education. He suggested that that was the main key in the learning of human beings. He also indicated equality and respect as founding blocks and emphasized the importance of the natural environs in learning.¹⁵ If at all we do find this freedom Rosseau talks about, are we convinced that such is present within the educational networks?

We must only observe the child as he or she makes reality of the world by the experiences that he or she possess. If we make it impossible for a child to break

¹⁴ Henson, Kenneth (2003). "Foundations for Learner-Centered Education: A Knowledge Base". *Education*. 1124 (1): 5–16.

¹⁵ Damrosch, Leo (2005). *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Restless Genius*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

free, then is it possible for the child to progress in this regard? We might end up with people who are specialist in one aspect alone and would not be able to make any connection with the rest of the world.

John Locke (1632 –1704 a famous philosopher has insisted on the same even many decades back. If men are for a long time accustomed only to one sort or method of thoughts, their minds grow stiff in it, and do not readily turn to another. It is therefore to give them this freedom, that I think they should be made to look into all sorts of knowledge, and exercise their understandings in so wide a variety and stock of knowledge. But I do not propose it as a variety and stock of knowledge, but a variety and freedom of thinking, as an increase of the powers and activity of the mind, not as an enlargement of its possessions.¹⁶

To break down what he proposes here is that there is ‘all sort of knowledge’ not in hierarchical order otherwise this would be futile knowledge. But it becomes possible to stretch one’s mind by being able to understand it. For an example an engineer’s knowledge is also vital as that

¹⁶Locke, John (1764). *Locke's Conduct of the understanding*; edited with introd., notes, etc. by Thomas Fowler. Oxford: Clarendon Press. pp. 44–45

of a cook. According to Locke if an engineer's knowledge becomes what is only available that would be a certain hit upon those who may look at other experience even those which are so practical such as cooking.

In Sri Lanka catering to the person is not a definite process of theorized work. It can occur in small setting classes with more resources, possibly in international schools. In the local setup there has been an attempt to develop such skills as vocational or artistic when considering the mainly drop out candidates from the main stream. And we are yet to confirm how curriculums can give us an impression of matters such as character, loyalty, virtues etc and those who may excel in same find at odds with the education system of the present.

However, with the label of not passing the 'curriculum' it is very problematic about the recognition that a nation may afford them. While we hear of drop outs in other regions who may attain global success such time has not arrived at this country at the moment. Another positive we have seen will be the accelerated opportunities which are present though private networks but with a very narrow view of these private educations and the cost of

same, it is doubtful if any of these will succeed as a platform to cater to the holistic nature of the child.

CHAPTER 6

HOLISTIC EDUCATION BASED ON CONTEXT

Once again, we will look at another perspective on holism and why it should take place. Context become as important as any other on this list. This can also be roughly translated into the world of work connection. However, here rather than what the world may think of as work, we also go beyond to think of creative and innovative ways in which education must take form and style.

If we talk of creativity and innovation, we must not look further than John Dewey (1859 – 1952) who was a pioneer in what is called progressive education. His thinking and action were impressed that learning to live and achieving full potential should overshadow subject content.

He emphasised on hands-on learning and professionalized the teaching vocation which he reflected upon as been a facilitating role to give the best environment possible for students to thrive.¹⁷

¹⁷ Martin, Jay (2002). *The Education of John Dewey*, New York. Columbia University Press.

We are called to again consider our current set ups in a bid to counter such a progressive line of thinking. When we think of the US as the canvass on John Dewey presented his ideas in the sputnik revolution, we find how much their education has progressed, in that education has become an industry and others must ‘pay’ to be part of the greater institutes that contribute in great strides to the world of knowledge.

It is no secret that we in this country at least jam much more knowledge rather than skills or innovations. What we also miss is that by doing this we make creativity a by word of the entire process. When we think of it as hugely essential to memorize facts and figures we see how this will totally limit the thinking out of the box attitude.

Francis Wayland Parker (1837–1902) who was a pioneer in child centered education proposed independence and creativity as corner stones of instruction. He rejected standardized tests and promoted science and communication.¹⁸ While we all agree with the first premise of the statement, we are hardly immune to getting schools out of the second premise. It is here

¹⁸ Cavanaugh, M. P. (1994). A history of holistic literacy: Five major educators Westport, CN: Praeger.

that a so-called phenomenon titled the ‘diploma disease’ gripped the Asian countries. But we also see more progressive economies such as Singapore and Hong Kong who may think of the 21st century in much a different light and lens.

Therefore, we must critically evaluate the happenings that have led into the Sri Lankan context which does seem to limit innovation and creativity of the human mind. In a way less is more in terms of knowledge in this style of education where there is more room for practice of the knowledge learnt.

The innovations must not necessarily be in economics, science and business but also must fall into line in juxtaposition with what we have been discussing under context. When the child knows that he or she has a larger view of the world one will look at creative manner in which his or her knowledge must become more realistic.

Another aspect we must also consider under the above care for the fellow human and the world, is now becoming part and parcel of ethics with or without religion on many discussion platforms. If we merely make robots without values, we fail to make even the robots do what they were meant to do.

Here we also talk of the certain degradation of values in our society which makes it impossible for persons to be bothered about what may happen to the other or the world. We see such exploitative thinking become realistic in the poverty and work exploitation of the world. Such also becomes hard and fast in the ecological concerns that face the world at the present.

JidduKrishnamurti(1895 –1986) was an Indian thinker who founded schools in which emphasis was on global thinking, concern for the fellow human being and the environment as well as the religious spirit.¹⁹

Unless humanity learns to be sustainable and to think good of the other, we might remain in the warfare, rule of the jungle type of societies and would make us realize that we have not progressed at all. In that regard we must break the vicious cycle of occupations which decide education and vice versa. In the modern west however, this is similar knowing a doctor is a higher paid job and the most selective might achieve it. However, with a more flexible understanding of class intertwined with

¹⁹Jayakar, Pupul (1986). Krishnamurti: a biography (1st ed.). San Francisco: Harper & Row.

occupation it is at least favourable for a student to choose to think differently.

Furthering this thought we see Paul Goodman (1911 – 1972) suggested that education in the contemporary school sense had no meaning in the lives of children and he suggested that learning takes place in the real world in real environments.²⁰ This is valid in the fact that when the classroom becomes the only source of context available the student loses out on actually ‘why to be creative’.

Fast forward to our modern context the class and occupation relation continues to grow strong. The recognition of the class as the environment has been challenged with the input of technology. This may prove to be a key point but again if there is guidance on what can be imagined in the world out there it is hardly of consequence to a child on youtube who may look at the same videos of how to make a million rupees.

Here the teacher does become important and so maybe also the family. As unlike in other perspectives they might have much to offer in terms of counselling and

²⁰ Goodman, Paul (1970). *New Reformation: Notes of a Neolithic Conservative*. New York: Random House.

motivation which are the pillars in which students become free to think and act creatively and innovatively.

When such creativity becomes actionized in the world of work there is progress of all life aspects pertaining to our existence. This will put us at a safer and rather utopian perspective where the dignity and sustainability of life becomes concern over any other.

CHAPTER 7

MODERN THINKING

Modern thinking on the subject is not complete without the two Millers who have pioneered this approach in the present times.

Firstly, Ron Miller a teacher- educator at Goddard College in Vermont and an historian and activist in holistic, progressive, and alternative education movements. He founded the journals *Holistic Education Review* and *Paths of Learning*, and his previous books include *Free Schools, Free People* (SUNY Press, 2002) and *What Are Schools For?* (Holistic Education Press, 1990).

In the following statement we will see how he views this philosophy. It is a philosophy of education based on the premise that each person finds identity, meaning, and purpose in life through connections to their local community, to the natural world, and to humanitarian values such as compassion and peace. Holistic education

aims to call forth from people an intrinsic reverence for life and a passionate love of learning²¹

His thinking caters to even the great questions of human life of why and what we intend to do on this earth. In a way this can be called spirituality, but even for the ones who may not be religiously motivated we do ask the questions. Are we here to have a good life? Are we here to act the survival of the fittest? Or are we just present because its life's manner? Or do we have more obligations to the world and our own members to leave the world in a better condition?

These are questions that might appear in books of philosophy. Yet in education, the foremost tool of formatting of people, we must consider the same. He proposes an over whelming broad aspect on what education must be; it must cater to one's own search as well as to the locality, the world and human values. And such must be for any able minded person what the formation and development of children must be.

Holistic educators are convinced that the further evolution of civilization and human consciousness

²¹Ron Miller, Holistic Education: An Introduction, retrieved from [infed.org/infed.org › mobi › a-brief-introduction-to-holistic-educ...](http://infed.org/infed/org/mobi/a-brief-introduction-to-holistic-educ...)

requires a renewed measure of respect and reverence for the inner life of the growing person.²²

In the event we have lost this we see competition and violence of life taking place. We see how much hate in the world is present rather than harmonious well-being. We also question on whether we still remain ‘animals’ even literarily. Therefore, in the case that we are unable to treat people with respect and dignity we ourselves face the imminent risk of being extinct in time to come.

Next John P. Miller has been working in the field of holistic education for over forty years. He is author/editor of holistic learning and contemplative practices in education which include *Education and the Soul*, *The Holistic Curriculum*, *The Contemplative Practitioner* and most recently, *Love and Compassion: Exploring Their Role in Education*.

We will briefly at how his thinking has shaped holism in education.

Holistic education challenges the present approach to education and its obsessive focus on standards and

²² Miller, R. (2006). Educating the Child’s “Inner Power”. [Online] Available: <http://pathsoflearning.org>

testing. Holistic educators see this approach as reflecting a materialist and consumerist culture that has reduced schooling to the training of individuals to compete and consume in the global marketplace. In fact, the present thrust can be seen as abandoning any attempt to educate the whole human being. It reduces schooling to training for the workplace that can be easily accessed through standardized tests.²³

This is the crux of this entire essay so to say when we look at how much inner struggles of the educational system are motivated by the marketplace competition. Some rationalistic ideology may even question this as this must be the mirror image. And we agree with it that the world must provide for the backdrop of which we draw the canvas of education.

Yet the issue here is that the entrepreneur knows only this trade, the researcher may not value anything else, the lawyer is motivated more on how many cases one might win etc.. and here the system becomes hijacked. In that regard we isolate the training of some elements in education and not the whole.

²³ Miller, J. P. Ed. (2007). *The holistic curriculum* (2nd ed.). Toronto, Ontario, Canada: OISE Press.

Holistic education focuses on the relationship between the whole and the part and suggests that teaching and learning approaches need to be rooted in a larger vision. If techniques are isolated and unrelated, they can become traditional education tends to be static and fragmented, ultimately promoting alienation and suffering. Within this holistic perspective, the student is positioned as an active, participatory and critical learner who perceives and understands him/ dysfunctional. The holistic vision includes a sense of the whole person who is connected to his or her surrounding context and environment.²⁴.

In a country such as ours we would be challenged to see how much the civil unrest, clashes, war, division and hatred has been motivated by the inability of wholistic education.

Of course, this does not say that the west with all its progressiveness is immune to this. It must not be so. Yet we also see that we model for most times on the peaceful countries index for an example on countries who do not necessarily become the most intelligent or the mot

²⁴ Miller, J. P. Ed. (2006). *Educating for wisdom and compassion: Creating conditions for timeless learning*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press

hardworking for that matter but rather those who seem to give a wider picture of the being of humanity.

To consider one Norway who had a hand in negotiations in Sri Lanka is always quoted as peaceful country and for them war and conflict are a strain of madness which could be avoided at all costs. This makes its citizens safe and free. Mostly it gives more energy to innovate and live.

This isolation training from the world of work could have had its genesis with capitalism and free markets. This must be discussed later. However, we also juggle with our own culture and history on which we pride. In that regard we have failed miserably to capture this ethical consideration in our education system and merely presuppose that through the five minutes religious observation and group work we have done enough for holistic education.

CHAPTER 8

A SUMMARY OF THINKING

Holistic education is thought to be the outcome of many years of critique at the orthodox education. And as in many places the west has led this critique. Holism has become an alternative education in America and also spread to Europe probably owing to the fact that it was present in their philosophizing through the years.

As it became a more viable ideology which was also practicable educators have had much to set in motion. A most common feature of the philosophy rests heavily on that each person finds identity, meaning, and purpose in life through connections to their local community, to the

natural world, and to humanitarian values such as compassion and peace.²⁵

When we look at the tools, we usually use in education such as books, internet, teacher etc we fail to see that almost neither of the above are present in these tools. Unless a book talks about the love for animals a person may not find it relevant. Can we imagine a time when this will become possible unless the industry realizes its connection with the usability? In a time when we really do not take care of the animal resource, we find it can be hard pill to swallow.

In the same way technology has made huge gains in education. Yet can we think of technology teaching students to respect a person with regard to colour, language, ethnicity or background? A student must consciously reach out to see it. If there is no impetus from another source towards it how can this be realistic?

Then in Holism recent thinking gives attention to experiential learning, and places significance on

²⁵Johnson, Andrew P. (2019). *Essential Learning Theories: Applications to Authentic Teaching Situations*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. p. 120.

" relationships and primary human values within the learning environment"²⁶

Not merely for the sake of recognizing these elements but also that you become an agent of interaction with it. Far too long under theories of competition the educational system has been swayed only to recognize personal or character development as mere supplements. We have neglected this to the extent that we are not able to even consider this aspect as education itself. We might leave it to the pre school years which is also now in jeopardy or to matters of 'life' one might learn.

We have also seen the dangers of students who are caught up in this individualistic thinking and are unable to get rid of it for the mere reason that the 'world' might not allow it. We fail to realize that the 'world' here is made up only to satisfy the over excessive and exploitative purge of a few markets.

"In holistic education the classroom is often seen as a community, which is within the larger community of the

²⁶ Robin Ann Martin, *Alternatives in Education: An Exploration of Learner-Centered, Progressive, and Holistic Education*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New Orleans, LA, April 1–5, 2002)

school, which is within the larger community of the village, town, or city, and which is, by extension, within the larger community of humanity²⁷

If this can be achieved, we may end up with a society and world which might not require this rat race at all. Such is said that humanity in its long existence have always made the world as it has gone on. From times of kings to wars and from religiosity and power, we humans have been capable of making sense of the world and for this we make our education system work. In the next few chapters, we will see how this has happened all over the world.

When the world outside has at least in some manner worked on holism, we find that Sri Lanka is still on the lower end of the ladder. It might take man more years for us to learn that such ignominious competition leads only into self-destruction. Unless our education systems are able to think afresh on aspects of teaching and learning we will only survive at the low level of motivation according Maslow's theory.

²⁷Forbes, Scott H. Values in Holistic Education. Paper presented at the Third Annual Conference on Education, Spirituality and the Whole Child (Roehampton Institute, London, June 28, 1996).

According to his well-known articulation the first level is merely survival but as the pyramid builds up self-actualization or what one's real potential becomes possible as the last stage.

Therefore, when we think that by giving syllabus and checking merely on its repeating, we fail to develop a student's full potential. Even in terms of science which we categorize as a possible agent in this struggle why people compete, we find that many intellectual students who abandon this field in the hope that business is more lucrative as a field of study.

In almost all societies this has become the highest earning category.

Therefore, holistic education is not merely an experiment into alternative education but it is simply the best option for a society which is in harmonious existence and collaboration. Under this we do not say that exams are not necessary nor ranking based on it is futile. This will always be necessary for different occupations. However, this does say that the part which is left out now cannot be miraculously learned awhile only looking at rigid

syllabuses. Much imagination then is necessary to motivate children toward self-actualization.²⁸

Just because time is of an essence this part of integration, care, concern for the other and the world cannot be discarded. It must be part of the ‘syllabus’. We will see whether this has made some inroads into our education in the present times in later chapters. Yet we as a developing country still remain in the hope that our system becomes dictated by a few for who have also become established in certain fields and the reception level for each continues to sway in this direction.

²⁸ Nielsen, Thomas William (2004). *Rudolf Steiner's Pedagogy of Imagination: A Case Study of Holistic Education*. Bern: Peter Lang. p. 18.

CHAPTER 9

WHAT IS AND WHAT IS NOT HOLISTIC EDUCATION

In this reflection we are going to press upon a few points that we have surveyed above and try to code these according to its merits.

Firstly, holistic education is something apart from academic training. When we look at academic training in Science in a modern-daysyllabus, we find book knowledge and we also find practicals on it. For this

purpose, we also consider that the teacher or facilitator will take students on field trips and will involve the students in an array of teaching methods.

Under holistic education this does not amount to what the name signifies. It is actually a multitude of approaches that is being used to teach academic knowledge. For another example in the health class we will discuss that food conservation has been a long-time practice and we must respect food and be mindful of the people who are in need of the basic items for survival. This is also not holistic education in that sense that this all takes place in the comfort of the class room.

In recent times teachers have been asked to prepare lesson notes which cater to the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domain. Therefore, each lesson recognizes the need to give knowledge but also attitude and skill. However, this also does not amount to what Holistic education is all about.

Holism is that we make sure that there is a supplement of education which is not either ranked more or less than the academic but becomes of key to learn, to act and to be tested upon. Therefore, academic training with all its

different and modern aspects become only one part of education.

What therefore are the other components through which education can be imparted? Here is we look at three areas in which we develop the child' s potential.

Firstly spirituality. This was what has been negated all along when it becomes ritual during school hours. Here spirituality means that there is always a programme in school which is there to support and motivate children into adapting spirituality as a part of their life.

In that sense even the time spent alone does not suffice. It must also become practiced. And this must also be tested almost as well as academic training.

Secondly, we look at what is currently termed as co-curricular activities in modern thought. Actually, the co – curricular terming itself is a great leap for the Sri Lankan academic community rather than term these as mere extracurricular work. What is insinuated here is that all these activities such as sports, clubs, associations add outreach activities all become as important as academic training. Here while schools may impose certain regulations for participation, we still don't have a

system where we are able to discern a student's ability after being in an activity of change.

It is not uncommon for the critic to query whether students might be overtaken in their selected interest and thus lose focus on academia. This would of course be the aim of an alternative education. It consistently makes a wandering mind free in its search. This is also why freedom appears quite a few times in the above passages in that it demonstrates why such latitude must be given to students to explore life.

The third is an even broader concept and that is engagement with the outer society. In time past this was not much of an issue when children would grow in much freedom. Yet with urbanization, pressed for time and even stricter measures in education we have long past departed from the education children enjoyed with taking walks and playing among the locality.

In the modern era even the touch with reality is orchestrated by the e-media platforms and that also if any. More and more children grow in isolation with the affairs of the society or the world. Further on children seem to be groomed more into isolation and

individualization through this as they are unable to attach to another reality.

When this happens, it is inevitable that we end up with students who are merely non sensitive. If their stimulus to become whoever they want to be in the future is either money or power or a better life then these generations will not be restricted only in looking at these aspects. And so, we have made a race that leaves behind the many and the country is at another quest for either winning or losing.

When winning is not possible this scar as it seems to be is made intolerable to minds that can only think of success. This might lead into them into harm or getting back at different avenues of how success can be gained again. It is not fair in a way to blame this merely on education itself. Considering that it is also an industry which seem to have suffered at the hands of this race. In today's circumstances being in education itself is a lowly task. It is not to be the respectable or noble calling it once was but a profession which now goes behind the few of those occupations which are recognized as the best in the country.

It seems to be a sanctuary for them who either fail in other aspects of achievement or who have decided that they are not to progress any further on the scale of life. While blanketing all from this thought is not once again fair, it is not merely the educationists who struggle with this image but rather it is what has been projected on them. When the newer revisions came in for curriculum changes it probably could be to change the teacher's role by enlarging it as they were lax in it rather than to help children through it.

Then to sum up our initial query. Holism must then be an aspect which is promoted the overall outlook of the child. This even if afforded to the child but if not given as a wider view then a failure has occurred again. Unless the world at large and the society feels that this must be so children and parents will totally discard this sort of reasoning and we might end up with pseudo holism which could be a largely misleading substitute.

CHAPTER 10

HISTORY IN CLASSICAL ANTIQUITY

While we may not be able to capture the entirety of education in its holistic form in this work, we will try to identify certain strains throughout history.

The history of education is intertwined with the history of writing and hence reading. This itself was not holistic education. But in Mesopotamia (3100-539BC) this also led to the vocation one will choose law, agriculture etc. hence we can project that what was written and read also had with its vocational training.²⁹

What this could imply is that while academia was always open as the main source of education, practical training also accompanied it. Its not really clear whether this was holistic education but it proposes that there was a path that made it possible for each student to further in life. And we must also understand that this would not necessarily mean compared to the situation at present. Without knowing the class system that was present during that time it would not be in order to present any

²⁹ Thomason, Allison Karmel, (2005)"Luxury and Legitimation: Royal Collecting in Ancient Mesopotamia".Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd.

conclusions. However, we get some more glimpses from the quote below.

One prince of the Mesopotamian empire suggested that this be part of his learning oil divination, mathematics, reading and writing as well as the usual horsemanship, hunting, chariotry, soldierliness, craftsmanship, and royal decorum.³⁰

This points into a rather holistic by subject kind of training. Here of course princely education probably was holistic and we will trace it even into our civilization in this country. But owing to the array of subjects which swings from the sciences to ethics to arts to physicality it is indeed a remarkable overall disciplining. One of course might question as to where this would lead to in terms of relationships with others and the World. One way of looking at it would be that people and the natural world were easily much closer than it is to our student's millenniums later. Yet this can also be discussed in the following manner where even personal training based on what one needs for living was taught.

³⁰Wiseman,D.J.(1999, 4 May). Ashurbanipal KING OF ASSYRIA. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ashurbanipal#accordion-article-history>

In ancient Israel in the first century A D the education was a compendium of arts which stretched from agriculture to law to personal matters. It was instructed as basic foundations for living.³¹

The Israelites have much prominence to their Law which governed all their aspects. They also had a classless society apart from priests and this made it possible for the law to make its learned be moulded according to a certain degree with regard to spirituality and the relationship with the world.

Further consolidating the above point of the closeness humans had with the world we cite another example from a different locality. This intimacy so to say with the natural surroundings paved way into the sciences stemming from astrology into medicine into chemistry.

In the Islamic civilization, schools opened as early as in 1066 with free tuition. They were instructed in literacy but also on 'exploring' the universe.³²

³¹Compayre, Gabriel, Payne, W. H., (1899)"History of Pedagogy ", Translated by W. H. Payne, (2003), Montana: Kessinger Publishing

³² Al-Hassani, S. T. S. (2011). 1001 inventions: Muslim heritage in our world. London. Foundation for Science, Technology and Civilisation Ltd.

Today's predicament is that students would grow up mainly being masters of mistresses of their own trade. One might question why this is such a bad thing? The answer is not what one gets but what one loses in the pursuit of this knowledge. The intricacy of relationships in life has been developed in the above essays and we know humanity when in their quest to survive alone makes a mess of these relationships and this brings them back to square one. And education has such a vital role to play in this process of leaning.

One of the very specific changes in education that took place in terms of ideology change in recent years has been the Russian experience.

The curriculum was changed radically. Independent subjects, such as reading, writing, arithmetic, the mother tongue, foreign languages, history, geography, literature or science were abolished. Instead school programmes were subdivided into "complex themes", such as "the life and labour of the family in village and town" for the first year or "scientific organization of labour" for the 7th year of education. Such a system was a complete failure, however, and in 1928 the new programme completely abandoned the complex themes and resumed instruction

in individual subjects. All students were required to take the same standardized classes. This continued until the 1970s when older students began being given time to take elective courses of their own choice in addition to the standard courses.¹³³

So, with such a concrete example of failure modern educationists might be set back. Nonetheless the underlying intention of this systems in communist minds was more of an origination of society in which they had not much of say in affairs. In that sense sometimes the failure of the system canbe routed into the reasoning of honesty.

Mere revisions do not make effective changes. Consequently, in this country we have touched lightly on how some educational frameworks appear but with its relationships to the larger affair of matters missing. This of course leads to the detriment of the country. In a way student then would be compelled to follow one of the two and in almost every case they would go behind the one that gives them the good life.

³³Grant, Nigel (1979). *Soviet Education*. Harmondsworth: Penguin. pp. 39–40.

Ideologically speaking what we envisage is not an educational revolution but rather clarity on who the system relates to the world at large. Rather than the world at large dictating terms on education, education itself can become a force to reckon with. We find ourselves in a situation where the dichotomy between the two, the realistic aspiration and pseudo framework is almost not felt in the student until he or she becomes part of society. And then everything one was nurtured upon will change such transformation will not be sufficient for real change.

CHAPTER 11

HISTORY IN ANTIQUITY

As we continue this search for strains within the history of education for Holism our next venture takes us back to the oriental Indian landscape. India has had a rich history of education but it has been rather categorized for different classes. Yet we may be able to get a few glimpses of the thinking by exploring it.

In ancient India, during the Vedic period from about 1500 BC to 600 BC, proper pronunciation and recitation of the Veda, the rules of sacrifice, grammar and derivation, composition, versification and meter, understanding of secrets of nature, reasoning including logic, the sciences, and the skills necessary for an occupation. But this was limited only to the caste allowed. In Gurukul while it was later expanded to a wider audience included Religion, Scriptures, Philosophy, Literature, Warfare, Statecraft, Medicine, Astrology and History.³⁴

³⁴ Gupta, Amita "Going to School in South Asia", 2007, Greenwood Publishing Group; ISBN 978-0-313-33553-2; at page 73-76

The curriculum even so many decades ago included such diverse subjects such as versification and meter, environmental concerns and skills for occupations. Even for the later wider audiences the curriculum stands as outstanding with the list including fields we would today only find at the best departments in universities.

While a thorough search need to be done on exactly how curriculums were made we must go forward with the intention of these educational training at this moment. For today's student populations these may not be possible as they may not have such an all-round selection of subjects.

Again, the critic may question whether the syllabuses we have today are not corresponding with a similar syllabus. One may equate science with medicine, war craft with health or physical training and philosophy with mathematics. In a way admission must be made that the syllabuses we all share across the world in secondary or senior secondary are very much similar. However, the issue here being that academic training ensued working capacity. The following quotes explains how women in education made it possible for them to be groomed for future. We must realize that this is a very olden interpretation of the role of women and much

development has undergone over the years. Yet the key gap still remains and it must be overcome.

Educating the women was given a great deal of importance in ancient India. Women were trained in dance, music and housekeeping. The Sadyodwahas class of women got educated till they were married. The Brahmavadinis class of women never got married and educated themselves for their entire life. Parts of Vedas that included poems and religious songs required for rituals were taught to women.³⁵

It is a difficult task to make a link with formation which was all-round and the curriculum. The only thing that can be supportive of this link is if the all-round training was valued at a later time by society. And we know for a fact that in Vedic India ethical standing was of great importance and it alone represented an educated person.

Also going back farther, we encounter the education system in China which was all well rounded. In all these geographical brainstorming we must also include the aspect of culture. Culture also plays a very important role in education. And the well roundedness of education

³⁵ Jain, Richa. "What Did the Ancient Indian Education System Look Like?". Culture Trip. Retrieved 2019-12-28.

becomes thorough when it is inbred with the culture that surrounds it. The following quote may give us a glimpse into the education that became possible in China against the cultural backdrop.

The first education system was created in Xia dynasty (2076 BC to 1600 BC). During Xia dynasty, government-built schools to educate aristocrats about rituals, literature and archery etc.

In that time, aristocrats' children studied in government schools. And normal people studied in private schools. Government schools were always built in cities and private schools were built in rural areas. Government schools paid attention on educating students about rituals, literature, politic, music, arts and archery. Private schools educated students to do farm work and handworks³⁶

Another interesting place to study about educational history is Greece which has an even richer history on the subject than the previous. The education of the child was a plethora of experiences in which the child immersed even in the status of poverty.

³⁶ Jing Lin, Education in Post-Mao China (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1993)

By around 350 BC, it was common for children at schools in Athens to also study various arts such as drawing, painting, and sculpture. The richest students continued their education by studying with sophists, from whom they could learn subjects such as rhetoric, mathematics, geography, natural history, politics, and logic.

Most parents, even the poor, sent their sons to schools for at least a few years, and if they could afford it from around the age of seven until fourteen, learning gymnastics (including athletics, sport and wrestling), music (including poetry, drama and history) and literacy.³⁷

This is a rich selection of curricula to be studied by student as it combines both intellectual and physical elements. The spiritual elements came into India and the Islamic world. A systematized version was give birth by cathedral schools in England.

Prior to their formal establishment, many medieval universities were run for hundreds of years as

³⁷ Cordasco, Francesco: "A Brief History of Education: A Handbook of Information on Greek, Roman, Medieval, Renaissance, and Modern Educational Practice", 1976, Rowman & Littlefield; ISBN 0-8226-0067-6, ISBN 978-0-8226-0067-1; at pp. 5, 6, & 9

Christian monastic schools in which monks taught classes, and later as cathedral schools; evidence of these immediate forerunners of the later university at many places dates back to the early 6th century.³⁸

Spiritual formation became the norm in early England with the schools founded by the Church. This would eventually lead into spiritual formation in schools in colonial post around the world.

³⁸Riché, Pierre (1978): "Education and Culture in the Barbarian West: From the Sixth through the Eighth Century", Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, ISBN 0-87249-376-8, pp. 126-7, 282-8

CHAPTER 12

HOLISM IN SRI LANKAN HISTORY

The pre-colonial history of Sri Lankan education began as early as 543BC with the arrival of Prince Vijaya to the island. Education at that time was the sole privilege of the princely classes under scholars gathering them into gurugedara (home of the scholar)³⁹. With the introduction of Buddhism, the responsibility of education shifted to the *pirivenas* (monastic colleges) where not only monks but also male lay students were provided with the opportunity to learn.

During the reign of King Mahasen, the curriculum of these monastic colleges incorporated a range of subjects in addition to Buddhism such as languages, astronomy or literature, and there was a clear organizational structure evident.⁴⁰

As we have seen throughout this study the earliest cases of all education have been an exclusively private affair. This is based on mainly on the class aspect in education.

³⁹Also see Joshi, Ankur; Gupta, Rajen K. (July 2017). "Elementary education in Bharat (that is India): insights from a postcolonial ethnographic study of a Gurukul". *International Journal of Indian Culture and Business Management*. 15 (1): 100–120.

⁴⁰Graham, S., & Thrift, N. (2007). *Out of Order: Understanding Repair and Maintenance*. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 24(3), 1–25.

Structured education which was quite all round was always the monopoly of the princely classes which included priests. However, the lack of a structured system of education will not suffice to give pass only for academic training. It is clear that even on religious terms sciences and formation were pursued.

Before colonial times, education was limited only to an exclusive group of individuals, which primarily included Buddhist monks. These monks would, in turn, instruct individuals from the upper echelons of the villages in reading and writing. In Tamil communities, teaching was the role of the educated Brahmins and Vellalars.

The curriculum of these traditional schools mostly involved religious studies, and practical or technical skills, which included metalworking, weaving, architecture, and geometry. Art and painting were also among the subjects that were taught. Outside of these schools, knowledge was inherited from father to son. Yet, the vast majority of the population did not have

formal education, and remained unlearned and illiterate.⁴¹

Before the arrival of colonialists Sri Lanka has had strains of holistic education throughout history. It gives glimpses of the philosophy devised by temple education and in the education of princes that all around training was of vital importance. With the colonialists seizing power of all aspect of life in the country educational also became an instrument of policy administration. During the early period, missionaries were largely seen as responsible for the religious and educational activities.⁴²

The Portuguese handed over education to religious orders which gave way to the first faith schools. These centered on religious instruction and the Dutch school were also impressive in the style however, Christianization was the end goal of these administrations.

⁴¹ Historical Overview of Education in Sri Lanka - Ancient Period (543 BC - 1500 AD) Archived 24 November 2010 at the Wayback Machine, Ministry of Education

⁴² Jayasuriya J. E. 1969, Education in Ceylon before and after independence. Colombo, Associated Educational Publishers

In fact, the whole education system was controlled by the Christian clergy. It was hoped to form a class “attached to their country by birth.” In fact, the major objective of the system was to create an English-speaking Christian class⁴³

The British maintained several hundreds of schools that imparted such education at the turn of the last century. However, in the modern day only sixteen of these schools remain. We will go through the curriculum of these schools in a later essay. However, it is important to note that they concentrated on character building or formation rather than on academic training alone. However, to the detriment of the system they also had a discriminated in terms of democracy in education. The gap between ‘normal’ schools and the fee levying schools which had better prospects attached to it had eye brows raising and tempers swirling.

The vernacular schools were meant for the ‘poor and humble sections of the community and provided a narrow literacy program just sufficient to serve the needs of the class concerned’. However, more attention was placed by the colonial power on high fee levying high

⁴³ Peiris, R., 1964. Universities, Politics and Public Opinion in Ceylon. Minerva

status schools that operated in the English medium. These English medium schools patronized by the elites provided high quality education for those who could afford to pay the fees. These schools provided education up to secondary level. They were limited to a few urban areas and those who went to these English schools gained most of the white-collar jobs during the colonial period.⁴⁴

The situation was sentimentalized that it gave an end to private schools after the wave of nationalism. This is found quite aptly written in the quote below. However, after many decades the same need of an English education with character building has been reignited with the international school system. However, time would tell if this is rivalled by the private school system which was on offer at during, the British rule.

The private schools started by Christian missionaries during British times were seen to evoke colonial pro-colonialist sentiments. Thus, for those that grew up within the free national education system, private schools continued

⁴⁴Warnasuriya, W.M.A. (1969). Secondary Education. In U.D.I. Sirisena (Ed.) Education in Ceylon from the 6th century B.C. to the present day – A Centenary Volume, (3) 811-824. Colombo: Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs

to be a reminder of colonial power and a driving force for social stratification. In 1961, therefore, the government of Ceylon decided to ban the establishment of any new private schools under the Assisted Schools and Training Colleges Special Provisions Act.

Existing private schools were given the option of abolishing fees and receiving state grants to become semi-government assisted schools or continue to remain as unaided fee levying schools. As the Government of Ceylon 1961 notes: ‘No person shall, on or after the date of the commencement of the Act, establish any schools for the education of persons who are between the ages of five and fourteen years (both ages inclusive)’.⁴⁵

Anyway, much to the sorrow of the private school fraternity there original mission has been hijacked if that is the word to use. More often than not when private education is talked about it means to talk of the international schools. Such has been a sad turn of events when this philosophy has been lost or has been put in the

⁴⁵Wikramanayake, D.H. (2009). An analysis of national policy formation in Sri Lanka: the role of historical legacy, policy environments, donors and economic globalisation, Australia: University of Sydney.

hands of modern philosophers who run the schools with money as a goal and as profit organizations.

CHAPTER 13

PRIVATE SCHOOL EDUCATION A REVIEW

It will be an interesting proposition to point out a few aspects of holism in the private school tradition. Due to the non-availability of specific third-party books on private schooling in Sri Lanka weblinks have been quoted where necessary of private schools in Sri Lanka.

The genesis of the private school tradition can be seen in Britain with thinkers such as R A Butler who considered ‘The main problem standing in the way of education reform was the question of integrating church schools into the state system, he proposed that Church schools could choose either to be 50% aided or else fully funded with a local education authority majority on the school governing body. Serious thought was given to integrating public (fee-paying) schools into the state system. Butler was supportive, believing that standards would be raised in state schools if affluent and articulate parents were involved in the system. The Fleming Commission, assembled by Butler, recommended in July 1944 that a quarter of public school places be given to scholarships. However, nothing came of it, not least as the idea of

spending ratepayers' money on a few bright pupils often did not meet with local authority approval'⁴⁶

Further strains can be linked with Thomas Arnold who introduced a number of reforms in (curriculum, sports, morality, religion and responsibility) that were widely copied by other prestigious public schools. His reforms redefined standards of masculinity and achievement.⁴⁷ And in the oriental intention in Thomas Babington 'I feel... that it is impossible for us, with our limited means, to attempt to educate the body of the people. We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern, – a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit

⁴⁶ Howard, Anthony (1987) *RAB: The Life of R. A. Butler*, Jonathan Cape

⁴⁷ Thomas Arnold of Rugby (1828–1842): Gender, educational policy and school life in an early-Victorian public school", *Gender and Education* 16.3 (2004), pp. 303–326.

vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population.⁴⁸

One of the main components of holistic education as can be seen in these intuitions is the insistence that an all-around education is possible. It is not only an ideal but it can be practiced as well. For this purpose, all these schools maintain a heavy all-around training mechanism which come in different forms.

To develop a positive change in knowledge, attitude and skill at every level of education.

To enable each student to realize her full potential by providing an institutional culture characterized by dynamic implementation of the curriculum, augmented by a huge variety of co-curricular and extracurricular activities.

To offer highly individualized mentoring thereby turning the residential facility into a great opportunity for personality enrichment and inculcation of life-oriented skills, values and competencies.

48

http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00generallinks/ma-caulay/txt_minute_education_1835.html

To foster in the hostellers a habit of accuracy, neatness, orderliness and independence.

To make Mowbrarians worthy citizens, zealous for the true welfare of their country and conscience of their responsibilities as citizens of the world in keeping with their tradition and culture.⁴⁹

To highlight one of these will be sports. Sports has been an essential part of schools now for many years. And people may question as to what we insist here. In these schools there is a motivation to do sports even in cases where it is offered for free. Another of these will be clubs and associations which may run in the tens. Some schools have made it mandatory that each student participates in at least two such associations. These associations can be very creative in some regards which step away from language or literature aspects.

S. Thomas' also boasts of more than 50 societies and clubs. The Student Christian Movement and the other 3 religious societies play an important role in fostering religious education on the Thomian youth.⁵⁰

⁴⁹<https://mowbraycollege.lk/aboutus/college-profile/#History><http://>

⁵⁰<http://www.stcmount.edu.lk/about/our-college/>

Secondly spirituality has been a key component in this training. While the foundation has been firmly on the Christian denomination the freedom which does beyond any we can find in any government or semi-governmental organization has become a symbol of such training. More than any other school, these schools spend considerable amount of time on spiritual formation and have festivals and celebrations of all faiths which become accessible to all.

True to the principles of its Anglican founders, Trinity College has always endeavoured to instill and nurture qualities such as respect, compassion, self-discipline, fairness, honesty and integrity. As an Anglican school, but with children from many different religions, we believe that these virtues are valued not only by Christians, but by members of all faiths.⁵¹

Thirdly these schools have a heavy emphasis on hostel life and also on housing system. House systems stem from the British system where boarding schools was, the norm. And when students enter into a house together with the all students, they form a strong bond which may

⁵¹<https://www.trinitycollege.lk/abouttrinity/>

even last a life time. This becomes an identity that makes it possible in all sorts of competition to be unique. Adding to this it also says that when having a training in a hostel school it can also develop independence and self-growth.

From its inception, the college enrolled boarders and as numbers grew, the number of ‘dorms’ needed also increased. Each of these dorms had a master in charge and was known by the incumbent master’s name. This meant that the name would keep shifting as new masters took over the responsibility. The day boys were all grouped together and simply referred to as ‘Day Boys’. Another difference between the initial system and the present was that the houses (or dorms) were made up of seniors or juniors rather than a mix of both. This naturally happened because boys would be boarded with those of a similar age.⁵²

Fourthly staff becomes vital in holistic education. Unlike mainline schools the teachers do not rotate. Their tales of loyalty become tale of growth for students. There is much to learn from them and they become legendary in a way. Their legacies can form and even promote a certain

⁵²<http://www.stcmount.edu.lk/about/house-system/>

ideology of thinking and imagination. To add this staff at all levels become part of the learning community of the student.

The school's success depends on the partnership between students, staff, parents, teachers, administrators, and community members. Active parent participation is vital to a rewarding experience by all. With our efforts, we can make great strides toward helping our young people reach their potential and become respected citizens of our community. We can expect increased independence and acceptable models of behavior with a collaborative effort spanning in and out of school. Together we can foster a safe environment that produces students with strong, compassionate character capable of competing with the best of the best in a diverse world.⁵³

Fifthly outside engagement becomes a natural process. Here we mean more collaboration from the outside world with prominent past students and also more work attempted on the outside by the community. It brings a realistic approach to the student's mind in terms of the society they belong to. Needless to say when all these schools are fee levying there is distinction

⁵³<https://www.stcguru.edu.lk/2-stc-gurugalawa/6-message-from-the-headmaster>

between those who can pay and enter these schools and the many who may not. Therefore, the rift can deepen severely over year even culminating in conflicts in university or world life. However when such opportunities of outreach takes place there is more capacity of a student to widen ones' horizons.

We believe that everyone has the potential to develop leadership qualities and encourage all our students to take up leadership roles. It is our commitment and obligation to society, to produce citizens who are confident, assertive, creative, courageous and caring. We hope that all our students will become leaders wherever they are and spread the values they have learnt in College as light shines in darkness.⁵⁴

Next another important aspect is character building. This is of importance as these school stress it over many other aspects. Respect, integrity, compassion, equality, service become hallmarks of characterbuilding with discipline at its centre. The modern-day soft skills have been a fab amidst academics and other circles. However, a proposal for this can brought that creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration have all been

⁵⁴<http://sjcjaffna.com/leadership.html>

perspectives of holism in private schools. It was a noteworthy requirement for prestigious jobs at the time of the British and even further away from them.

Though it is a Christian school belonging to the Anglican Diocese of Colombo, a multi-religious, multi-racial and multi-cultural community was fostered at Ladies' College from its very beginning by our founders. Quoting Ms. Simon, "We have in our school a great variety of girls differing in race, religion, age, tastes, abilities and character – indeed a variety not unlike that in Ceylon. Here we have the opportunity to learn to live together to realize that fruitful relationships are based on differences, and not on identities. There is unity in our diversity".⁵⁵

⁵⁵<http://www.ladiescollege.lk/index.php/about/college-profile/>

CHAPTER 14

MARKS OF A CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

The private school tradition thereby brought another aspect ideology of educational thinkers who according to the protestant tradition in Sri Lanka cared very less about it for quite some time. Without prejudice let us take time to ponder on the transformation of the educational atmosphere, where from the times of might, to times of slightly blight dawned and the need for the British men and women declined in manner but gave way for other faithful to design their own educational bastions.

Currently there are just over ten thousand government run schools in the country, just over one hundred international schools, a touch over thirty semi government schools which for most part bear a Saint's name and sixteen private schools owned by the main line churches, a drastic decline from the colonial times.

Bypassing the fervent loyalties of the past students of these schools who might have their varied interpretations to uniqueness, let us attempt to draft below a general overview of same. Ample room is however provided for the actors and observers of these schools to inculcate their own views as an exercise of enrichment, expression

and continuous dialogue on the inspiration of these schools.

When we say ‘Spiritual in Foundation’ we believe that all considerations stream from the faith and faith experiences. Countless past students pay homage to their schools for that insistence that spiritual growth was prioritized. In modern times we see the platform been made richer with the insistence of all great traditions who give prominence to their faith through practice, observances, festivals, gatherings etc.

Spirituality in this sense is broad word. It does not necessarily give the label of religious group but rather it strives to inculcate a humility with the person to recognize the partnership in life. In times when the human being becomes so much individualistic spirituality in all forms become a shortcoming. When this takes place the human integrity itself goes down. We may debate on the good and the bad of religions but its alternative of an atheistic background does not make us get up each day in the morning.

Coming to ‘General in Education’ there is that famous word ‘holistic’, felt sometimes to be written as ‘wholistic’ since it’s not the score cards or the name lists

that measure success but the whole integration of character, goodwill, sensitivity and perhaps the odd benchmark in curricular and co-curricular needs. Therefore, these schools present a host of activities to build the total person.

All these schools do follow the general governmental curriculum and it would be a travesty if children would not succeed in studies. Prestigious private schools such as Eton in Britain do exactly the opposite where they make sure that all students do excel in studies even while having a holistic formation. But the difference is that the general always take more precedence than the specific of academic only training.

It is said that these schools are families. Relations remain forever and for example to be found in one old poem where the author says 'if i had the wings of a little dove, i would fly fly far far away, and into the arms of my true love, where i would forever rest and would stay' with alma mater in mind. Through hostels, get togethers, house systems and traditions we develop this grooming of 'Familial in Association'.

This is something that is visible to all who may inspect. The college songs and the annual re unions and in the

modern day the social networking which goes on. The school becomes one's first family and this strong loyalty remains basically till his or her life comes to an end on earth. While this is melodramatic it is real in so many perspectives and this strength of the past students was the main driving force that kept these schools at bay certain elements insist on governmental rule in these schools.

In the golden times these schools provided the foil for mission in context, and not in faraway lands discerning one's own needs alone. Students in these schools are made aware of the disparities and conflicts present in the society through outreach work so that with the elevations they may have in life they will be instruments of social justice, which has for long been the case of 'Social in Mission'.

Especially in the British dominated rule this was indeed the case where persons who were educated at these institutions entered politics and diplomatic services providing leadership in some aspects which a person who was not exposed to same could not offer. While this becomes a matter of debate the prevalence of persons from this background in law, rights, diplomatic services

etc have been a constant. Some may even excel at it in other countries.

These schools are perfect for the celebration of the wonderful mixture of languages, cultures, religions, backgrounds and ideologies. We might see a remarkable difference in those having their formation in such schools who are able to relate to the 'other' and bear one another with tolerance and develop harmony. Instructions in uniform settings can tend to lead to extremes.

If these values are harnessed and nurtured it will enable for a counter culture devoid of competition, suspicion and individualism. For these schools this is their uniqueness.

CHAPTER 15
THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF LANKA
PILIMATALAWA - HOLISM

The Theological College of Lanka was inaugurated in 1963 by the Anglican Church, the Methodist Church and the Baptist Church in Sri Lanka. Later the Presbyterian Church joined the federation, to educate the new clergy (ministers) and laity in the environment and context of Sri Lanka and their own languages, Sinhala and Tamil. Rev. Basil Jackson, a British Methodist Missionary, became the founding Principal of the college in 1963. Language is the vehicle of culture and when Christians begin to think, speak, preach, pray and write in their own languages, they soon become familiar with their cultural values and begin to appreciate them in the practice. This new step was foreseen by all the churches as an attempt to produce indigenous theology by people who are being educated in Sri Lanka

The experience of the TCL as it is fondly known is possibly one of a lifetime. It is so because it brings both the worlds of being a university and a theological seminary. It brings to life both a local and an international perspective as we are affiliated to the Senate of Serampore in India. It brings together

academic training with practice. It brings together theory but also gives lessons in living together. The key to understanding this formation is look at each of its formational components.

Firstly, the academic part of the education is predominantly overlooked by the Indian University. The Senate of Serampore was established by a Royal Charter from the then Danish King almost 200 years ago and to this day the College has been developing curriculum and assessments in Theological studies. On a normal day student will have classes from eight to one in the morning session. This is also the best time for concentration and reflection.

The syllabus is a 'no stone unturned' mixture of courses which can be broadly categorized into New Testament, Old Testament, Christian Theology, Church History, Religion & Society and Communication in Ministry. Each Academic year is divided into two semesters of five months each and each semester will have at least five to six subjects under each heading. Students must also study English and the local languages also on three days. This is both beneficial for study purposes but also for the attempt of an indigenous theology. The Lecturers are all drawn from the Main Line Churches with a few

from the National Seminary in Ampitiya. Further to this we also have mission partners, guest lecturers from abroad and other experts who are drawn once in a way to teach these courses.

The academic instruction can be challenging when considering that most students who come for the College may not be as equipped as general university students in their academic training. It can also be challenging to have such a wide arrayed number of subjects with reading and assignment times to be accommodated within other activities such as worship, field education, sports, associations etc.. While these challenges remain, there is also no possibility of either lengthening the already existing four-year degree or spending even more time on preparation of students as they already undergo enough time before their ordination. Therefore, the intensity of the course must be looked at positively and the pass rate has always been near perfect which speaks volumes of the students who have come to terms with the academic training over four years.

Secondly the Theological College of Lanka presents a comprehensive co curriculum to academic training. This is achieved through a system of field education. Field education runs throughout the week and throughout the

year. Each student takes part in at least two committees which attend to needs of the College such as food, water, garden, communication, library etc. Students learn responsibility and also leadership through these activities.

They are also given a weekend field education assignment each semester. Some students are posted to parishes to undergo pastoral ministry. Some may teach in a College run Children's club and some might visit elders or children's homes developing the caring ministry. Some students are arranged opportunities to work at reconciliation, disability studies, drug problems, justice issues etc.. through pioneering ministries. And ecumenical training which is a main objective of the College is also achieved through weekend parish assignments. Students are also given a longer field education through actually living in a community for several weeks at the end of their first and second years. This makes way for students to experience varied communities such as war affected, free trade zone, interfaith, fisher etc.

As future ministers the more exposures a student can receive it maybe of advantage to him or her and field education has been designed in that manner. Apart from these, students also take part in literary associations of

the three languages and also take part in activities such as sports, shramadana, music, drama etc.. which gives much room for them to express their talents and also to equip oneself in an all round perspective. These activities which are structured from the afternoons well into the night also gives the impression of a normal work day in the life of a minister.

It is of course the College's duty to make sure that all these components do make an impact in a student's life. However this co curriculum is not at all limited to what is mentioned above. There are many occasions where students work on their selected passions such as liturgies, singing, pastoral visits, chaplaincy initiatives, arts etc... and they become motivated even further to excel in these fields in ministry. Above most of these will be the experience of living together with persons who differ in denomination, gender, background, education, socio-economic backing, ethnicity, age, political thinking etc.. The best lesson will be to be able to love and bear the other unconditionally breaking any human barrier. It is emulating the love of God which we experience in Jesus.

The third component is possibly the most unique when considering the Theological College, distinguishing it from any other College and this is Spirituality.

Spirituality can come in a variety of ways within the formational structure of the College. It can be down to the services we hold every weekday which comprise creativity, tradition, innovation etc. The community follow a liturgical guide in readings which journey the Christian year and to enrich it services are also held on special occasions such as festivals, worship classes, meditations etc..

The community alike are given opportunity to lead worship and in general to be a worshipping community. There cannot be theological interpretations without worship. Spirituality can also be the personal space provided for meditation and reflection both in and out of class and in certain aspects such as retreats, quiet days, spiritual guides etc. Unconsciously during a four year period a person's understanding with regard to oneself and God and the relationship with the world must undergo change. While we cannot regulate spiritual challenges the Theological College provides the canvas on which these struggles can lead to positivity.

Ministers must be strengthened in their ministries spiritually to work with persons and communities who may struggle with spiritual issues. This aspect of formation is largely invisible but hugely visible in

practice and behaviour. It is for that same matter that we also use discipline as a word to make sense of spirituality. Behaviour of team work, compromise, respect, compassion, empathy, honesty etc... are areas in which all ministers must find themselves conversant and effective.

We as a Church and the congregation together with ministers must realize that clergy formation is indeed a massive task. The modern minister is asked to play several roles and he or she is expected to be exemplary. The time they may spend at the Theological College is in a way very short when we think of the many aspects of training that must go into making an effective minister. However this holistic approach is set in place in the hope that those who journey through this formation will be moulded to better face the challenges that may lie ahead. It is also necessary to balance the three aspects above which will also provide the balance the minister will need when attending to the several needs of a parish ministry.

The Theological College of Lanka has now for fifty five years served the nation in equipping ministers from all the Main line churches in their ministries. The College also strives relentlessly to be true to its mission of

ecumenism and indigenous theologizing. The above three aspects become aligned to these two basic objectives and is woven into every policy and practical decision that is taken by the College. This experiment started in the conflict of nationalism, independence and localization provides transformational tools even for the general university training which is bent heavily on knowledge alone for most parts. We pray as a Church that while perfection is a journey and not a start TCL will endure the many changing scenes of times in our country in strengthening ministerial capacity for the Church in Sri Lanka.

CHAPTER 16

RECEPTION OF HOLISTIC EDUCATION

Undoubtedly this becomes the tricky part of this study.

To answer this or to present some thoughts on the subject, three areas will be covered. The first is the impression of holism on Sri Lankan education and matters pertaining to 'labeling' of the philosophy covered in this chapter. The second will be related with the societal view and how this gets challenged. The third is the school view, and here it is promoted to the last as this is a key aspect in this consideration.

There have not been many studies which have been done on Holistic Education in Sri Lanka and fewer on Private schools of the type mentioned above. However, the studies conducted have yielded effective results. One study evaluated the role of teachers in Christian schools on holistic education and concluded that leadership was of key importance⁵⁶. The aspect of 'tradition' which still draws parents to choose this particular schooling have

⁵⁶Johnson, H., McCreery, E., & Castelli, M. (2000). The role of the headteacher in developing children holistically: perspectives from Anglicans and Catholics. *Educational Management & Administration*, 28(4), 389-403.

also been part of this leadership that is inspired by the educators.

Holistic education has had effects on peace building policies.⁵⁷This study has determined that education which proved to be attitudinal have assisted students in conflict management. Also,when comparing primary grades and found that school performance and holistic education were positively related.⁵⁸

This study as carried out in the Northern part of the country and its results are also visible in the next order of academic achievement. It states that holistic education assists in future trades. This also has strains in multiple intelligences and soft skill education.⁵⁹ These aspects appeal to the audience which may not be only academically motivated.The internationalization and its

⁵⁷Cardozo, M. T. A. L. (2008). Sri Lanka: In Peace or in Pieces? A Critical Approach to Peace Education in Sri Lanka. *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 3(1).

⁵⁸Gamage, S. Results of an experiment in holistic education in the primary grades in an education zone in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka during 2013-2014

⁵⁹Silva, P., & Yarlalagadda, P. K. (2013). Holistic success in higher education in engineering and technology: A coaching approach towards developing complete graduates. *GSTF Journal of Engineering Technology (JET)*, 2(1), 80.

holistic curriculum have enabled (classism) knowledge of society to students. This study reiterates that constant exposure into society yields results of character and disposition.⁶⁰

Yet there are two main considerations in building this link between holistic education and effectiveness as well-rounded person. The first is the link which must be made to equate whatever educational philosophy of the British as Holism. This has its own merits when the overall and mission and training are considered of the private schools. But there is a failure in which these schools do not necessarily promote their philosophy as holism. There is also not much encouragement on the front of the British who called it as such.

This becomes an area of question to the outsider who may critique private school education. He or she may term this 'term' as education which is unspecific. There is freedom for the child to progress which ever way preferred or even not to progress.

Another issue with this reception is the discriminatory aspect a third party might bring into this subject. This

⁶⁰Gamage, S. I. R. I. (2011). Internationalization (privatization) of school education in Sri Lanka: An analysis of the differing discourses and the impact on society. *Modern Sri Lanka Studies*, 3(1), 25-412.

can be explained as whatever qualities that is sought from holistic education can also be found in any other person, sometimes even without being subject to holistic education. And following the line of argument proposed the private school system should have been producing more persons which can be a practical issue with giving empirical data.

For once the elitism that has accompanied the private school tradition can stand in the way of attempts to justify its merits. While holism is not the monopoly of these few number of schools they would want to be recognized by this mark. At least this can be a positive in the struggle to make claims on this philosophy. With the modern international school claiming to be the flagbearer of this style the complications can get awkward. However, that would be another research title. The conclusion on what holism provides and how it gets reception to it is a rather polarizing question. On one hand persons who underwent such training will always speak of the affirmative but which can lack proof. On the other had the person who may not have undergone so, could negate it outright.

CHAPTER 17

CHALLENGES TO HOLISTIC EDUCATION

Under the umbrella of ‘factors’ we will also include varied stake holders of the traditions among them would be the Church, parents, teachers, managements and children as well as the society and policies in education.

If a school is bound to promote a specific philosophy as the ‘main’, in this case holistic education, it would mean that this thinking will run right through the school in work and mission. For an example it could mean that there are many extra activities in school to promote such thinking and also recognition achievements in same at different levels. This could mean more finance, human resources, energy and importantly time is spent on these aspects.

One of the major challenges a school will have when having a holistic education framework will be the insistence by the parental community for more thrust in academia. Even amongst past student-parents this sort of thinking can become realistic if they are influenced by the race that it presents in the world for the above talked about ‘few prestigious occupations. It can even go to the

length of becoming a topic of ‘non receivables’ when education is paid.

This will leave the school in a tug-of-war between what the envision for the school and what a majority may want to happen. In many governmental schools during sport meet times, children are not sent to school as observed by teachers. These children may not find any interest in same. Similarly, students rush off from school when school closes without engaging in character building activities such as sports, guiding, cadetting, clubs etc. In private schools this tide can be stemmed up to some level but the agitation can overcome to the point that teachers maybe a centre of accusation for their lax in academic intention.

Related to this, students themselves may face this challenge. When they are called to all round in school yet from the society or family networks friends and family may discourage it. There has a been trend of students who may decline leadership in schools for these same matters. This comes at a time when leadership becomes a vital aspect in the success of any chosen career. This can lead even the managements perplexed and questioning what thinking motivates such behaviour.

Next, we turn to the academic staff in these school. Properly speaking they are not only academic staff per se but they become holism facilitators, who are called to lead children into understanding themselves in the larger picture of life. While all teachers may not be products of similar schools, very few can be, their outtakes on the subject become important as well. At the end of the day the teacher becomes key when he or she is the visible reality of what the school encourages students to be.

There have been very significant testimonies even from non-Christian and non-private schooled educationists in the flow of educators that came from other countries in a bid to promote holism. These can be found in the comprehensive writing collections by Prof D Jayasuriya in a work titled 'Education in Sri Lanka, past, present and future.' They and many other Sri Lankans who modeled them would have been the exception to the rule when it comes to educators themselves who are all-rounders. With teachers under realization that even university admission is based on mere academia alone the message they propose can be a dilemma filled ordeal.

Another aspect that we can discuss on a related level to both these parental and student concerns is the reception of holistic education at schools' level. What is meant

here is that lists are always coming from education offices which give rankings of schools on academic results. There are almost no lists for overall performance say perhaps sports festivals and so on.

Will these play a role in the mind adjustment of the school? While holding on dearly to what we believe is our calling will the society increase pressure even on admissions thereby signaling an end to holism.

While this is an existential threat, two aspects seem to favour the private school against this. The first is that now holistic education in whatever form has become relevant to all of the country. Which still may not convince parents caught by in the rat race but which makes an exception a new norm. The second aspect is that these private school have been able to maintain a balance between the two worlds in so far as much this issue of reception has not being a problem so far. Yet the challenges may remain.

Next we can turn our attention to the Church as the main overseer on what schools may do. While the gap on what the Church may say and what can happen in a school has been widening, the Church's role has been challenged many times over. The pushing of the holistic agenda with the spiritual base at a premium has being a

worrying sight for the many forces that are in a school who may want these schools to progress with only a knowledge giving platform.

Other than this the Church continues to promote these schools in the same manner it has done over the years which makes a claim for holism. However, with most of these schools becoming elitist in some way or the other, the Church must grapple with the issue if holism has any role to play in this regard. When these schools may offer facilities for an all-around experience with a guarantee that such is the best option it makes an elite group gather around the school. This has been in-depth studied in the previous book which was on social aspects of these schools and will not take more space than required for this purpose.

As facilities were mentioned above, let us also reflect on this aspect. While human resources and the will to do is present, the facilities become important. Facilities are even important to develop aspects of compassion, respect and justice. These can be afforded on initiative paths or on specialized programmes. Many of these schools continue to have these options available and this becomes convincing when we glance at the web links which these schools sponsor.

For the private schools, providing these are not only an obligation but they become the canvass on how their training will take place. Therefore, all schools continue to have house masters/mistresses, chaplains, counsellors, career guidance units, leadership units, past pupil collaborations, social work systematized units, outreach activities in daily life etc to promote the philosophy. For the moment there are not many issues with regard to having such components when considering the internal activities of these schools.

It may not be possible to provide concrete solutions to these issues at the end of such a work which to its merit will have many shortcomings. However, we must also realize these private schools have thrived not only because of financial security or goodwill, neither has it been on the rich tradition and the upkeep, alone. But this journey has been possible because we believe that through our faith we become convinced that this is how these schools must be governed, weathering any storm and critique that will come its way.

Therefore, the school does not do this in isolation but under a calling with a spiritual platform coming from centuries of examination. Therefore, as we look forward

for many centuries ahead we can proudly flag bear that its leadership was present in this educational philosophy as it's the best for the dignity of life and the world.

Some Quotable Quotes from the Christian Teachers Conference in 1955 Editor Rev Basil Jackson appear below, which maybe quite out-of-tune with regard to the modern context in mode but maybe applicable in intention.

a) What is a Christian School?

“Two conditions are necessary for a school to be regarded as an effective agency of the Church’s life. It must be under Christian direction: that is to say those responsible for its policy, admissions and staffing must have a clear and definable aim of using the school for the extension of the Kingdom of God in that area. Without that direction from above the school cannot fulfill any distinctively Christian role. In the second place the staff must be in sympathy with that purpose and prepared to be used for its furtherance.” 6

b) The School’s Pastoral responsibility for its Christian scholars

(b) The appointment of resident chaplains or others with special qualifications for pastoral work (men or women as the case may be) is greatly to be desired. Such persons

would not take upon themselves the full responsibility of the hostel, which would be too big a task in a large school, but would be in a position to help others in their pastoral responsibility.

(c) Opportunities for training Hostel masters and Mistresses in pastoral care should be provided. 11

c) School and Church

The need for the closest cooperation between the life of the school and the life of the congregation to which it is attached is widely recognized, but such cooperation has its dangers. For the pupil there is always the danger of associating church attendance with school life, to be discarded in the holidays, and after leaving school. For the local church there is, on the other hand, the danger of becoming dependent upon the personnel of the school for the maintenance of its Sunday school, youth work and lay leadership. 14

d) Religious activities in school

The ordinance makes it impossible to have the whole school assembled at the beginning of the day for an act of worship. The Christian school must not, however, deprive its Christian children of this privilege, even though it involves dividing the school into religious groups at the beginning of the day. Great care should be exercised in the conduct of this worship and the

associations which gather round it in the child's mind. It is the one permanent, repeated, corporate of school life and as such will remain as a dominant memory and influence in the lives of those who share in it. 16

e) Responsibility for the welfare of Christian children

It is not only in admission but also in assisting them when leaving that the Christian school must look to the welfare of its Christian children, though in this matter the assistance it is able to render will be available to its Christian and non – Christian children alike. Assisting its leaving pupils to find employment cannot perhaps be undertaken on any large scale, but the matter of vocational guidance is one of great importance, and merits much more serious attention than it has received. A careers master or mistress, with adequate qualifications in psychology as well as a sufficient knowledge of the local conditions of employment could render valuable service to leaving pupils and their parents. 21

f) The dilemma of the Christian school

We are required to render to Caesar the obedience which Caesar legitimately demands from us; we have also a responsibility to render to God a higher obedience. We are called to bear witness in word as well as in deed, and our obedience to God therefore requires us to engage in

every form of indirect evangelism which the letter of the law permits. 23

g) Character training without religion

Apart from the religious issue altogether, the necessity for any school to include moral instruction – in whatever form- is fundamental, and the Church should, in the name of sound education, resist most strenuously every attempt by the Government to exclude this subject from the time table. 27

h) The witness of the Christian love

The Christian life is marked by love, as described by Paul in the thirteenth chapter of first Corinthians, or as we see it in Him who came and lived among s as a servant. It is achieved through the miracle of the Grace of God slowly transforming and recreating the spirit which finds its nurture in constantly waiting upon Him. Of the value of that kind of witness there never can be any doubt. 32

j) The Church's responsibility

The faithful witness of the Christian teacher in the non-Christian school is the church s most valuable assets in the context of Ceylon today. The shortage of Christian teachers in her own schools must not be used as an occasion for discouraging men and women from service

in this pioneer missionary work which is of the essence of the Church's evangelistic outreach. That there is a grave shortage of Christian teachers is well known, and is a hindrance to the work of Christian schools. 35

Further Reading

1. Bernstein, B. (1996). *Pedagogy Symbolic Control and Identity: Theory, Research, Critique*. London: Taylor & Francis.
2. Best, R. (Ed.). (1996). *Education, Spirituality and the Whole Child*. London: Cassel.
3. Bohm, David (1980). *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
4. Bookchin, Murray (1990). *The Philosophy of Social Ecology: Essays on Dialectical Naturalism*. Montreal: Black Rose Books.
5. Bowers, C. A. (1995). *Educating for an Ecologically Sustainable Culture*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

6. Cajete, G. (1994). Look to the Mountain: An ecology of indigenous education. Durango: Kivaaki Press.
7. Dudty, D., & Dudty, H. (Eds.). (1994). Holistic Education: Some Australian Explorations. "Belconnen, ACT": Australian Curriculum Studies Association.
8. Forbes, S. (2003). Holistic Education: An Analysis of Its Ideas and Nature. Brandon, VT: Foundation for Educational Renewal.
9. Gardner, H. (1993). Multiple Intelligences: The Theory in Practice. New York: Basic Books.
10. Glazer, S. (Ed.). (1999). The Heart Of Learning: Spirituality in Education. New York: Penguin /Putnam.
11. Harris, Anastas. (1980) Mind: Evolution or Revolution? The Emergence of Holistic Education. Del Mar, CA: Holistic Education Network.
12. Kessler, Rachael (2000). The Soul of Education: Helping Students Find Connection, Compassion and Character at School. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
13. Krishnamurti, J. (1981). Letters To The Schools: Volume One. Den Haag, Holland: Mirananda.

14. Lemkow, Anna. (1990) *The Wholeness Principle: Dynamics of Unity Within Science, Religion and Society*. Wheaton, IL: Quest Books.
15. Miller, J. P., Bruce Cassie, J. R., & Drake, S. M. (1990). *Holistic Learning: A Teachers Guide to Integrated Studies*. Toronto: OISE.
16. Miller, J., & Nakagawa, Y., eds. (2002). *Nurturing Our Wholeness: Perspectives on Spirituality in Education*. Brandon, VT: Foundation for Educational Renewal.
17. Miller, John P. (2000). *Education and the Soul: Toward a Spiritual Curriculum*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
18. Miller, R. (1992). *What Are Schools For?: Holistic Education In American Culture (Second ed.)*. Brandon, VT: Holistic Education Press.
19. Miller, R. (Ed.). (1993). *The Renewal of Meaning in Education: Responses to the Cultural and Ecological Crisis of Our Times*. Brandon, VT: Holistic Education Press.
20. Moffett, J. (1994). *The Universal Schoolhouse: Spiritual Awakening Through Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
21. Muller, Robert (1982). *New Genesis: Shaping a Global Spirituality*. New York: Doubleday.

22. Nakagawa, Yoshiharu (2000). Education for Awakening: An Eastern Approach to Holistic Education. Volume Two of the Foundations of Holistic Education Series. Brandon, VT: Foundation for Educational Renewal.
23. Nava, Ramon Gallegos (2001). Holistic Education: Pedagogy of Universal Love. Brandon, VT: Foundation for Educational Renewal.
24. Noddings, N. (1986). Caring: A feminine approach to ethics and moral education. Berkley: University of California Press.
25. Palmer, P. J. (1983). To Know As We Are Known: Education as a Spiritual Journey. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco.
26. Purpel, D. E. (1989). The Moral and Spiritual Crisis in Education: A Curriculum for Justice and Compassion In Education. New York: Bergin & Garvey.
27. Rogers, C. (1967). The Facilitation of Significant Learning. In L. Siegel (Ed.), Some Contemporary Viewpoints of Instruction. San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Co.
28. Rogers, C. (1969). Freedom to Learn. Columbus, Ohio: Merrill.

29. Sheldrake, Rupert (1991). *The Rebirth of Nature: The Greening of Science and God*. New York: Bantam Books.
30. Whitehead, A. N. (1967). *The Aims of Education*. New York: The Free Press (originally Macmillan 1929).