

## **Educational Leadership in the 21st Century**

*By Johnson Joseph*

Education plays a unique role right from the birth of humanity in its onward journey. In the background of the emerging global country of 21st century, education has incomparably challenging roles to play. The 'global family' becomes a close -knit community, minimizing and eliminating geographic, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic and all other barriers and the role of education has to undergo a conspicuous change. At this era of reconstruction and redefining, the very concept of education has to be reconstructed, redefined and modified assimilating the good elements of the past and discarding the bad ones. In fact, the basic concept of education remains intact in its mission but pedagogy and methodology have to be reviewed. That is what T.S Eliot said, "It is in fact a part of the function of education to help us escape, not from our own time - - for we are bound by that -- but from the intellectual and emotional limitations of our time."The educational leadership in this century is endowed with the noble role of managing these changes in an effective and appropriate manner.

The most important challenge of education is to keep pace with the knowledge society. The knowledge and information evolve, develop and are acquired at an alarming speed. The educational leadership has to help the institution encompass the exploding growth of knowledge lest it would remain obsolete. This emphasizes the education being technologically up to date and scientifically exploring. This paradigm shift is due to the giant leaps in communication and information technology that can be manipulated as an asset rather than a challenge. Thus, the real concern in education today lies in the effective management of this complex phenomenon. Therefore, the academicians need to be dynamically ultra paced in the pedagogic process.

The highest edge of competition is the talisman of 21st century. This quest for excellence prioritises the need for competitiveness in all fields. The quiescent knowledge imparted through conventional methods may leave the principal and the agent in the education far behind the signs of the time. The product of an alma mater needs to be equipped with the best to face the world ahead of it. Unless the institution succeeds in this noble mission, it will merely be added up as just one among the others in the list of the so-called millions of schools. Thus, leading innovation in education ensuring uncompromising quality in the minutest of details and at the same time being effective, the educational leadership makes an institution a pace-setting one.

An effective education is life education. Advancing one's knowledge and imbibing competence become worthwhile only when it contributes to the emotional intelligence and quality of life of the individual. John Dewey defines, " Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself". 21st century has the biggest chaos in its values and priorities. Along with achieving professional growth in life, the overall development of the individual needs a special stress. Education should equip an individual to re-define and re-discover the culture and values for oneself. How an individual takes decisions and allots priorities depend on how well the education has expanded his/her horizons. To

dedicate oneself to the service of the nation and his/her fellowmen, one needs to be reinforced by the quality of education he/she receives. The question is whether the modern education leads a learner forward along a path where he is enriched academically, culturally, emotionally, physically and spiritually or not. "The main part of intellectual education is not the acquisition of facts but learning how to make facts live." - Oliver Wendell Holmes

The education is a vision, mission and a passion. The field of education thus needs visionaries, missionaries and people with zest and zeal. When it comes to Indian educational scenario, a country with human capital as the greatest strength finds, at the same time, its enormously growing population as one of the hurdles in its path to greater heights. Benjamin Distraeli states, 'in the education of the people of this country, the fate of this country depends'. Provided the population becomes equipped with quality skills and education, the country will have a strong edge over the other nations in the emerging world. Specifically for India, its future lies in how the young generations bring forth favorable changes in all the realms of political, economic, social, spiritual so on and so forth. As the education moulds the generations, so will be the future of the society. To conclude, G.K Chesterton rightly said, "Education is simply the soul of a society as it passes from one generation to another".