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Impact of Spiritual Education on Social Consciousness of Students : An Evaluative Study

Awareness and consciousness are analytically distinguished process. Awareness is a type of process where various types of information are made directly available for more global or integrated processing (Sommerhoff,1996).Consciousness refers to processes entailing self-reflection., i.e. a type of awareness of awareness or meta awareness. Social consciousness is conscious awareness of being part of an interrelated community of others. It refers to the level of explicit awareness a person has of being a part of a larger whole . It includes the level at which one is aware of how he or she is influenced by others ,as well as how his or her actions may effect others.The objective of the present study was to study the impact of Spiritual Education on social consciousness of B Ed trainees.The Pretest Posttest experimental design was used . As treatment, a group of 14 students pursuing BEd course attended 60 sessions of Spiritual Education for five months .Qualitative analysis was done on the basis of responses to interview schedule and on the basis of records. The findings of the study reveal that Spiritual Education leads to enhanced Social Consciousness among students.

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Introduction

There is no trace of humility and discipline which are the hallmarks of true education. In the place of character and good conduct, which should be prevalent among students, we notice today the spread of materialism, ostentation and arrogance. Spirituality is the basic foundation for producing a generation of pure-hearted boys and girls.

Scientists, scholars and contemplative teachers are finally beginning to work together to explore the ways in which people are conditioned by the biological, social and physical world in which they are embedded and in doing so to recognize a broader picture of our collective human potential (Schlitz,2010).Schlitz et al (2010) reported that curriculum and pedagogy have beneficial effects on student development. It provides a platform from which they can better navigate complexity, be more self aware, make choices with greater discernment. Teachers report that students take interest in making a positive contribution to their home and school communities and are expressing sensitivity to issues of global concern.

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Social consciousness is anchored in empathy and compassion for the people around us. Compassion and empathy can be understood as a kind of reverberation with the feelings of someone else (Gardiner, 1994). These values are especially important in a context where youth culture appears to be increasingly self-centered and materialistic; compassion and empathy give children the ability to connect with others and understand the presence of something greater than the self. As such, compassion and empathy are antidotes to the alienation from and antagonism towards others that many individuals encounter in contemporary society (Gardiner,

1994). Through developing these traits, children will be incited to step up to address the issues that they face both locally and globally.

The values of universality and equality introduce a sameness and connectedness that opens wide the gate of identification with others. It opens wide the gate of a sense of community that goes far beyond the boundaries of the immediate community in which each individual is born. (Coicaud, Doyle, and Gardner,2003) The study stipulates that Spiritual Education would enable the students to break the self-enclosed individualizing of him and expand into the common existential interests shared by him and others.

Operational Definitions
- **Spiritual Education**, is a course designed to introduce the students to thoughts of spiritual leaders and religions and leading them to an understanding of connectedness and unity among them. It aims to develop the understanding that all entities of the universe have a common bearing and source.
- **Social consciousness**, or social awareness, is defined as consciousness shared by individuals within a society. It essentially means to be conscious or aware of the problems within a society or community.

The objectives of the present study were as follows:

To study the impact of Spiritual Education on social consciousness of B Ed trainees.

The hypothesis of the present study is-

There will be no significant difference between the scores of pre test group and post test group on social consciousness.

The Pretest Posttest experimental design was used . As treatment, a group of 14 students pursuing BEd course attended 60 sessions of Spiritual Education for five months .Qualitative analysis was done on the basis of responses to interview schedule.

A scale for assessment of social consciousness was developed based on the following levels of social consciousness.(Schlitz,2010).

Levels of Social Consciousness
- **Embedded**
- **Self-Reflexive**
- **Engaged**
- **Collaborative**
- **Resonant**

At Embedded level, consciousness is shaped without our awareness by social, cultural, and biological factors. It's a kind of presocial consciousness that serves as a baseline for our own development..

Level Two is called *self-reflexive* social consciousness. Here people gain awareness of how their experiences are conditioned by the social world. This can be accomplished through personal reflection and contemplative practices such as meditation.

Level Three is *engaged* social consciousness. At this stage, we are not only aware of the social environment but begin to mobilize our intention to contribute to the greater good. There is a movement from "me" to "we" as our awareness moves us to actively engage in the wellbeing of others and the world.Level Four involves what *collaborative* social consciousness. Gaining   greater awareness of ourselves in relation to the social world may lead us to participate in co-creating solutions with others. Here we begin to shape the social environment through collaborative   actions.Level Five is   what   we call *resonant* consciousness. At this stage of development people, report a sense of essential interrelatedness with others.

T Test scores obtained on scale for social consciousness were as follows-

TABLE 1
Pretest and Posttest Means, SD and SE Means

	N	Mean	S D	SE Mean
Pretest	14	24.929	6.3786	1.705
Posttest	14	37.571	5.1993	1.39

T-Value -5.7481 ,P> .01

Null Hypothesis was rejected showing the positive impact of spiritual education on social consciousness of students.

TABLE 2   Qualitative Analysis

S No.	Indicators of change in behavior	No of Responses		
		Low	Aver age	High
1.	Students' regularity and attendance		4	10
2.	Involvement in Institute welfare activities		10	4
3.	Openness during classroom discussion		1	13
4..	Closeness in relating to instructor and co-learners.	4	4	6
5.	Exhibits greater understanding of values inherent in the various religions			14
6.	Secular attitude		8	6
7.	Curiousity for understanding the universe			14
8.	Quest for aim in life		3	11
9.	Satisfaction and detachment towards material things in the world		10	4
10.	Interest in Spiritual literature and study.			14
11.	Active participation in social work		3	11
12.	Assuming leadership in welfare activities		2	12

The findings of the study reveal that Spiritual Education leads to enhanced Social Consciousness among students. Findings of other studies are as follows-
- Awareness about issues affecting the community or raising social consciousness has always been a precursor to social movement (Swift, 1990).
- Social awareness directly influences students' development of critical thinking skills (Tsui, 2000)

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- The choice of social norms influences the accuracy of the agents' responses to varying environmental factors, as well as the effectiveness of social consciousness and other aspects of agents' utility functions. D. Sullivan, A. Glass, B. Grosz, S. Kraus(1999)
- Cognitive and social development occurs in interaction with others(Springer, et. al., 1995)

Conclusion

The study paves the way to use of methods to enhance spirituality among students,that is the methods which hone the creative and imaginative faculties and bring them closer to understanding of reality.Lantieri (2001) encourages teachers to pursue those teachable moments that occuring between the test preparations, and to not miss opportunities to address life's deepest questions "because of fear of being 'off task' or venturing into a realm that is forbidden in public schools." (p. 10). Regarding explicit spiritual curriculum, Kessler (1999) proposes The Passagesprogram which consists of a curriculum that integrates heart, spirit, and community with strong academics. Even though this program is geared toward adolescents, there are many aspects of it that could be adapted to classrooms. Shahjahan (2005) proposes that spirituality should be incorporated in higher education, allowing for teacher preparation programs to include spiritualityand provide for a safe space where teachers can not only be educated in the matter, but share reflections and nurture their own spiritual growth and development.With the emergence of human inter subjective understanding, which establishes the texture of the social world, we may envisage a special life order. Educators may be interested in these findings as they can help set priorities in selecting instructional design elements and lend insight into how to connect external learning experiences to the classroom.

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