

## **Notes**

# **Education and Social Sciences<sup>\*</sup>**

***Sharif al Mujahid<sup>\*\*</sup>***

All said and done, Education is the key variable in every one's life. It's the most fundamental variable which determines success or failure. In it you are involved from cradle to grave – whether consciously or unconsciously. To it you resort, whether you profess it or not, to widen your horizon, to make your approach more holistic, to facilitate your flights of imagination, to foresee the trajectory of events and developments, and to help you to straighten the curves in your ongoing life. In a word, education helps you to develop an enquiring mind, and once you cross this threshold you are in a position to differentiate between the intellectual world and the personal world. And that differentiation not only promotes, signifies, and indexes progress but is also the dire need of a civil society to flourish and enable it to pick and choose the most viable solution among those available for tracking and tackling social issues. Equally important, Education is not severely confined to the applied science subjects, but also includes the Social Sciences which also comprise the Arts and the Languages.

Broadly speaking, Education may be classified into two competing genres: i) Education without Frontiers, and ii) dogma laden Education. The former is Aristotlean in approach while the latter Pythagorean. The former concerns itself with the quest for truth while the latter believes that it knows the truth. And once you are secure in the belief that you indeed know the truth, you are frenetically determined to

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<sup>\*\*</sup> Prof. Sharif al Mujahid, an HEC Distinguished National Professor, has co-edited Unesco's *History of Humanity*, Vol. VI and *The Jinnah Anthology* (3<sup>rd</sup> edn., 2012) and edited *In Quest of Jinnah* (2007), the only oral history on Pakistan's founding father.

have it enforced over one and all, and at all costs – that is, even with the barrel of the gun. The horizon of this latter class is rather limited, skewed, dogma laden, and ideologically indoctrinated. This indoctrination which invests them with an irreversible ‘certainty’ of their belief system turn them into ferocious, frenzied and do-or-die activists to enforce their system over the entire society. The activists, whether religious, political, cultural and socioeconomic, are doctrinaire, not open to dialogue, debate and discussion, and all the more determined to live in their personal world. The grotesque holocaust was the handiwork of Nazi activists; the Soviet Union went through untold havoc and political cleansing from 1917 to the end of Stalin’s era in 1953; Israel is persistently and consistently engaged in ethnic cleansing since it was founded in May 1948. Nearer home, the Taliban and their several offshoots have mounted death and destruction over one and all, including women and children, to enforce their ‘Shariat’ on Pakistan. Additionally, the various sectarian outfits, indulging in sectarian cleansing, have turned into a Frankenstein during the last two decades. All these entities comprise ferocious and frenzied activists who are a live nightmare for the general populace, which have made Pakistan a battlefield and put the security and sovereignty of the state at stake.

For the reasons stated above, I opt for Education without Frontiers, for it separates one’s intellectual world from his personal world. Education is meant to develop an enquiring mind, so that the students and researchers can investigate. The enquiring mind is all the time in quest of truth as prescribed by Socrates and Aristotle, and rejects manufactured truth all the way. This means you have an open mind, evaluating ideas, concepts, developments and events purely on their respective merits. This means you are open to dialogue, debate and discussion and you create an environment where Milton’s ‘free market place of ideas’ is facilitated. This openness is the fundamental prerequisite that distinguishes a social scientist from an activist.

In mulling over problems for a long while and pursuing a holistic approach, before coming to a conclusion, as of now, the social scientist opts for the inductive method. Interestingly, the inductive method, which enables us to collect an increasing corpus of empirical data, is a must for scientific research. Islam also lays great emphasis on the inductive method, exhorting both Muslims and others to look at the rise and setting of the sun, the waxing and waning of the moon, the ebb and flow of the tidal waves, the transformation of the day into night and vice versa, the change of seasons and that of the climate, and reflect on them. According to the Quran, these are signs pointing to the existence of an all powerful Almighty Allah, and the central mechanism.

Because Social Sciences primarily deal with the social phenomena, they serve as the glue or the cementing link between the various sectors of the society which constitute the building bricks of national survival, national security, national progress and national prosperity. The Social Sciences, thus, set the framework for the society, and lay down the contours the society should traverse within, in order to accomplish its ambitions, its aspirations and its goals. Because of their expertise in the domain of the rise and fall of nations over the ages, Social Sciences are in an unenviable position to set out the principles and goals towards which the various sectors should strive, in order to ensure success for nation building enterprises. Thus, in a sense, the Social Sciences set and forecast the trajectory of events.

The discussion above boils down to this. Unless you go in for Education without Frontiers, unless you develop an enquiring mind, unless you opt for the intellectual world in place of the personal world and unless you follow the inductive method, you simply cannot gauge the social issues in their total perspectives, nor can you arrive at their whys and wherefores. And without taking this perspective and grasping the origins of their whys and wherefores, any attempt to engage in tracking social issues, not to speak of tackling them, would be a non-starter, *ab initio* and *ipso facto*. And a debacle at large. Hence the prime need to prioritize your approach.