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Dire need to impart moral education in schools

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The recent case involving Olympian boxer Sushil Kumar should be an eye-opener for all right thinking people. The emerging nexus between some sportspersons and criminal world is disturbing, to say the least. The surprising thing is that in Haryana, sportspersons belonging to the state who win medals at national and

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University, India. He has nearly four decades of teaching and research e
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international competitions are showered largesse apart from being provided good jobs. Also, various public and private sector undertakings are always on the lookout to form own teams or sponsor sportspersons. Sushil Kumar was with the Indian Railways.

Not every sportsperson makes it to the top and win largesse. Some such youth (and there must not be many), particularly in the body-building, wrestling, etc. games make wrong use of their muscle power and infatuated by the glitz and glamour of rich life get involved in criminal activities. Underworld is only too glad to enroll them in mafia-type activities. In these times, the lure of the lucre is too great to be overlooked by ordinary mortals, so all moral considerations are thrown out the window. This calls for a re-think about the training and education of sportspersons.

It is the absence of any worthwhile moral education in schools and colleges that is responsible to a great extent for the growing malaise. Partly due to the concept of secularism operating in the field of education as manifest in Articles 28 and 30 of the Constitution, and partly

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due to the non-enforceability of guidelines regarding teaching of moral education, hardly any school takes the impartation of such instruction seriously. There is rather a rat race to grab medals and flaunt the image of the school as a goldmine rather than an abode of value-imparting education. While lip-sympathy is paid to lofty ideals in school prospectus and in speeches from the podium at school functions, it is a fact that parents hardly probe this aspect of education of their children; they are more attracted to shining school building, material facilities, etc. In the field of sport at school, the spirit of competition and winning medals at competitions overtakes all other considerations.

The budding wrestlers and boxers are considered good for sport only so that they are allowed to miss classes in other subjects, ostensibly for practice sessions. All through, it is the brawn that is in focus. It is seen that a youth who decides to land in the ring devotes all his energy and time to that end. Whether he is trained in school or college or in a private akhara, he is taught only to attack and defeat the opponent. In this, the role of the parents too is vital. As was seen in the Hindi

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popular movie Dangal, parents sacrifice a lot to see their ward go up the ladder. Whether it is providing the young aspirants nutritious diet or facilitating training at costly facilities, they do it all. Only here too, the focus on samskara or good moral breeding takes the backseat. The young people need to appreciate the sacrifices of their parents and bring laurel rather than infamy to their families.

The ethos of our time can be blamed which derives inspiration from TV soaps, raunchy movies and even raunchier stuff available on the internet and social media. The problem is that the rural society of Haryana which had been known for following enthusiastically a rational and reformist institution like Arya Samaj is fast slipping into the throes of superstition and fake gurus. The glitz and glamour of modern life attracts the old generation now as can be seen from the throngs at the swangs (rural stage shows) which are replete with obscene presentations.

Clearly, the older generation has failed to transmit traditional cultural values enshrined in traditional folklores, and even in short prayers,



chants or karke (sayings) accompanying daily household chores like cooking, cleaning, etc., which are forgotten now. Serious efforts need to be made to highlight the importance of value education at the school level as the habits and attitudes formed at that stage mostly stay lifelong. Schools should not be allowed to skirt the impartation of moral and value education on the plea of heavy syllabi or any other pretext because this is the need of the hour. One hopes that the National Education Policy of 2020 with its stress on “doing what’s right”, on the basis of “a logical framework for making ethical decisions” will work out well. The NEP also outlines the practical aspect by expanding these ethical decisions with regard to practices like cheating, violence, plagiarism, littering, tolerance, equality, empathy, etc.

Young students are expected to be equipped with the faculty of judgment to “formulate a position/ argument about an ethical issue from multiple perspectives, and use ethical practices in all work.” Besides, the traditional Indian values and a host of human and Constitutional values like truth, service, pluralism, righteous conduct,



gender sensitivity, respect for elders, environmentalism, etc. have been mentioned in the document. One hopes the right kind of strategies to enable students to put into practice the values will be used by teachers, who are themselves trained adequately to that end. We may then be witness to young minds develop into responsible adult citizens.

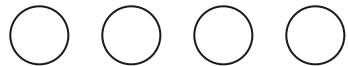


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