

M.G. Jackson

Towards A New Educational Protocol

Beyond Greening and
Examination Reform
in School Education



**TOWARDS A NEW
EDUCATIONAL PROTOCOL**

***Beyond Greening and Examination
Reform in School Education***

M. G. Jackson

TOWARDS A NEW EDUCATIONAL PROTOCOL
Beyond Greening and Examination Reform in School
Education

Author : M.G. Jackson

First Edition : March, 2013

© M.G. Jackson

Copies : 1000

Price : ₹ 120/-

Cover : M. Sreekanth

Published by & for copies

Permanent Green

An Imprint of Manchi Pustakam

12-13-439, Street No. 1

Tarnaka, Secunderabad - 500 017.

Mobile : 94907 46614

Email: info@manchipustakam.in

Website: www.manchipustakam.in

ISBN Number : 978-93-80153-92-6

Layout & design

Ankush Printers & Designers, Nallakunta,

Hyd - 40. & 27663211, 9912929078

Printed by

Charita Impressions

Azamabad, Hyd - 20. Ph : 27678411

Contents

Preface	7
Chapter	
1. The school classroom scene today	17
2. The living systems worldview	36
3. Learning by reflecting on experience	45
4. The new educational protocol	52
5. Constructing a new programme	63
Appendices	
1. Pesticide use and human health	74
2. Who is responsible for environmental problems?	77
3. Who will solve our environmental problems?	79
4. Sample activity guides	82
5. Foundational activities for the study of natural phenomena	103
6. An example of a concept map	151
7. Ecosystems levels and their interactions	153
References	158
Index	160

1 The Classroom Scene Today

The purpose of all education, in its broadest sense, is the perpetuation of the cultural model of the society in which it takes place. This is natural and appropriate. But there are times in history, in as far as we are able to discern and interpret the historical record, when an existent cultural model becomes dysfunctional and counter-productive. At such times it becomes necessary, if the society is to survive, to discard the existent model and formulate an alternative. With a new model, protocols governing all aspects of life, including education, must also be formulated. Collectively, these new protocols ensure that the new model is established and stabilised. The central argument of this book is that contemporary global society has reached a point where its present cultural model must be abandoned, and a new model created.¹

In the field of school education the need for a new protocol is not generally perceived. This accounts for the persistence of the greening and examination reform policies. The failure of these policies is also not seen, or, if seen, not acknowledged. In this chapter I propose to present evidence for their failure by looking critically at what is happening in the classroom. In subsequent chapters I will show how an alternative approach

1. For a comprehensive and in-depth treatment of this topic, see Jackson, 2008.

to formulating school educational programmes, following an altogether different protocol can obviate the need for greening and examination reform. It is easier to admit that a programme or policy has failed if a clear alternative is visible.

Whose perspective?

With the whole-hearted adoption of the Western-style development model some two-decades ago average household income has increased and also the availability of goods and services. These benefits have not, however, been shared equally by all of us. Urban middle and upper-income groups have benefitted most, while people in rural areas and those who have migrated from rural areas to cities have benefitted very little. Indeed, many of these people have been further marginalised.

The people who formulate educational policies, build curricula and write textbooks are members of the urban middle- and upper-income groups. They are understandably the most committed to the perpetuating of this development model, and are the least likely to question it, or to give the marginalisation and down-right suffering of a majority more than a passing nod. Their outlook informs our entire educational provision. This provision is largely meaningless to children in rural areas and those in urban slums since it does not place the learning programme in those children's immediate lived environment. This is in spite of the declaration of the National Curriculum Framework of 2005 (NCERT, 2005) which insists that the children's life at school must be linked to their life outside the school. The textbooks prepared after 2005, however, indicate a failure to recognise that there are many different lives outside the school; urban affluent, rural, and urban marginalised.

For a majority of the children in our schools what they are expected to learn in school is meaningless. This majority learn that the only way to 'get on' is to memorise what is being offered. This is an example of what I termed 'negative learning'. It is no more than a survival strategy in a hostile world, and so has its value. Is this, however, our aim in educating children? Equally damaging, it seems to me, is that the current

provision subtly confirms children of middle and upper-income group urban families in their belief of their superior status vis-a-vis children from rural and marginalised urban families, and confirms children of marginalised rural and urban slum families in their acceptance of their inferior status. Here is a second example of 'negative learning'. Is this upper-income urban bias justified? On what grounds can it be justified?

To come to specifics, a few extracts from current NCERT textbooks (NCERT, 2006-2009) of science for grades 6 to 10 are offered below, each followed by a few comments.

1. In the science textbook for grade 7, in a Chapter entitled 'Wastewater Story', on page 220, it is written:

Clean water that is fit for use is unfortunately not available to all. It has been reported that more than one billion of our fellow human beings have no access to safe drinking water. This accounts for a large number of water-related diseases and even deaths. Women and girls walk for several kilometres to collect clean water, as you read in Chapter 16. Is it not a serious matter for human dignity?

It is not difficult to make out by whom this was written, nor for whom. Why have the words 'our fellow human beings' in the second sentence been used instead of the word 'us'? Then there is the phrase 'it has been reported': which children do not know this that it must be 'reported' for them to come to know it? If some children do not know it, will simply telling them do any good? Will the appeal to them to understand the denial of human dignity to those of their classmates who must carry water do any good?

2. In the 6th grade science textbook, in a chapter on garbage (or trash or rubbish) and how to deal with it, we read (p. 161):

You might have seen some children sorting garbage near your house or at other places. Observe the children at work and find out how they separate useful material from the garbage. They are actually helping us. Talk to one such child and find out:

what do they do with the rubbish they collect? Where do they take it? Does he or she go to school? What about his or her friends? If they do not go to school, find out the possible reasons. Can you help this child to read and write?

Here again it is clear who has written this and for whom. Further there is a patronising note. Some children from families whose occupation is the sorting of this trash are now being enrolled in our schools, government and private, and it is our collective hope that more will be in the future. Consider how this will sound to them. Why should there not also be an exercise to investigate the behaviour of children of upper and middle-class families who create most of the waste and who fail to contribute to its effective processing? Are they making a positive contribution to society, as, according to the textbook, slum children who collect and sort rubbish are ('They are actually helping us. ')? Of course, it is not a question of blaming 'others' for our collective problems, but coming to see for ourselves, and helping our children to see, that we are all caught up in a defective cultural model.

3. In the science textbook for class 7 in the chapter entitled 'Forests: Our Lifeline' there is a story of a visit to a forest by a class of students (pp. 206-8):

One Sunday morning the children...walked together through a forest trail near a village. On the way they met Tibu, a young boy of their age group, of nearby village, who was taking cattle for grazing along with his aunt....When he saw the children, Tibu...started walking along with them, while his aunt went on a different path. As soon as they entered the forest Tibu raised his hand and signalled them to keep quiet because noise could disturb the animals living in the forest.

The story goes on to tell about the animals and trees the children saw. Seeing these things, 'Boojho and Paheli remembered that they have studied about forests as an example of a habitat in class 6. They could see now how the forest provides a home for many animals and plants.' The text then goes on to describe the inter-relationships of plants, soil and decomposers in a forest.

For the children of the class this story describes a nature study outing, conforming to the urban upper and middle class conception of environmental studies. Tibu is a nature study guide. A village child like Tibu, however, will see his village forest as a vital part of his family's and village's livelihood base, and will be concerned about today's grazing and a supply of fuelwood and cut fodder. He, of course, knows the animals and trees of the forest. He needs to learn the ecosystem concept as applied to the forest and his whole village and how to ensure sustainable production of the things his family needs. But this is not covered in the textbooks anywhere. This lesson is more or less meaningless to him. It is probably meaningless also to slum children. What is needed is a strategy by which all children, wherever they live and whatever their families do for a living, come to understand the varied life situations of all their contemporaries and how all these life situations are inter-related, parts of a single social, economic national-world system. If we are convinced that the system is sick, then it is our collective responsibility to heal it. School education must create the capacity and willingness in all students to take on this task.

NCERT social sciences textbooks for grades 6 to 10 are more sensitive to this issue. The textbook *Social and Political Life* for grade 6 for example, has a section of local government and administration with separate chapters on rural administration and urban administration, and also a section on livelihoods with separate chapters on rural and urban livelihoods.

Contradiction, incoherence and confusion in the classroom

In the year 2000 G. P. Pande, a colleague in the Uttarakhand Environmental Education Centre (UEEC), and I prepared a monograph *Environmental Education in India; A Critical Assessment of Developments to Date and Suggestions for the Future* (UEEC, 2000). The first chapter was an enquiry into the effects of the national policy on greening the school curriculum. This policy was formulated by the National Council

End of Preview.

Rest of the book can be read @
[http://kinige.com/book/Towards+A](http://kinige.com/book/Towards+A+New+Educational+Protocol)
[+New+Educational+Protocol](http://kinige.com/book/Towards+A+New+Educational+Protocol)

*** * ***