

1st Prize at the Essay Competition held by the Department of English and Communication

Alvin Mathew, MSc Counselling Psychology

An edge of an Educated Mind over Degree Enhances Employability

In the year 2009, a Bollywood movie by the name, “3 Idiots” created a wave among the Indian youth by taking on the pattern that the Indian education system follows. A dialogue from the movie that is famous till to this date is when the protagonist, Aamir Khan, encourages his fellow college mate by saying “Don’t go after success, pursue excellence and success will follow you.” These words, even after several years still echoes in the years of the young minds. Why? Why do such words sound appealing? This movie highlighted the stark reality of our present education system that to a lot of extent has reduced the young minds to fall into the vicious trap of thinking that earning a degree is all that matters as a student.

But isn’t that what we need, for more and more students to get degrees? Indeed so! We need more students to take up academics and pursue degrees, but not at the cost of parrot learning. In this year’s articles in Times of India, one of the subject matters published was “Why our freshly graduated engineers are unemployed?” Out of the several reasons given, one of the main reasons listed by the article were the words of several companies who interviewed students for placements. According to them, it is not that they don’t want them but they are of no use as they do not see them skilled enough to take up the jobs, they were simply “unemployable”. The article went on to explain that more than 75% of our fresh engineering graduates are simply unemployable. Hence, we see that a mere degree is not enough to be employable.

So, where are we going wrong? Have you come across people who would brag about 100% literacy in their states? Well, Good! But knowing how to read and write would not simply solve the problem. An educated mind transcends beyond literacy. According to Tabatha Coffey, being educated is to have an ear and eye of critical observation; a discernment to know the need of the hour; a mind that critically but thoughtfully comes up with innovative ideas and solutions and has a mind that is creative to generate a sense of wonder about the world we live in. (paraphrased).

The Greek philosopher Aristotle taught that knowledge starts with wonder. A mind that merely pursues education for a degree plays only the notes that are taught to him/her, but a mind that seeks knowledge for the sake of wonder learns to make its own masterpiece.

An educated mind will always have an edge over a degree or a degree driven mind because, for it, the learning never stops because the wonder never ends. Look at minds like Dr. Abdul Kalam, Thomas Edison, Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Sachin Tendulkar. Some have highly qualified degrees and some with not-so high degrees but the reason why they are listed in the categories of great scientists’ innovators, social reformers and sportspersons is because they have one thing in

common, a mind that seeks knowledge in the areas of interest for its own sake and not to get a degree.

It is sad that we do not see more of this phenomenon

in our society. We have, instead, taught and are still teaching our young minds to get degrees rather than helping them to see a wider picture of education.

We have made them machines working for an end result – degree holders rather than making them sojourners to explore knowledge for the excitement that it offers and enchantment that it captivates us with.

An educated mind is more helpful than a degree driven because it has the urge to know more and do more not just to accomplish something but because it realizes that is how it is supposed to be. For an educated mind the learning never stops and that is what makes them employable and truly deserving the job. That is why we see minds like these climbing up the ladder of success.

Pursuing excellence is indeed greater than pursuing success or degrees. That is why the dialogue resonates with the young minds even today. It is not just a playful dialogue but a cry of our young minds that tells that they, even though, are pursuing degrees yet ideally believe and see an educated mind having an edge over a degree for employability.