



XAVIER BOARD NEWSLETTER

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President's Message

As we celebrate this Easter season, we wish our readers and all our friends the true Joy of the Resurrection and a powerful outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

In this year, preparing for the Great Jubilee, when we concentrate our attention towards the Holy Spirit of God, let us perceive the images of the Spirit - the wind that blows, the oil that penetrates, the fire that burns, the dove that descends upon us and the running water that refreshes - all images suggesting movement, energy and dynamism. We hope that this energy and dynamism percolates the lives and the work of teachers and students in Catholic Colleges.

The involvement of Catholic Colleges in significant research that is socially relevant is minimal and can certainly be augmented. There is no lack of brain-power in our teachers but there is great urgency and need for greater institutional commitment towards research. This will, in a great measure, lead to a better quality of higher education and the lifting up of the whole educational process.

Dr. A F A MASCARENHAS

THE CATHOLIC COLLEGE IN INDIA : A REAPPRAISAL

*An Article by late Sr. Hedwige A.C.,
former secretary of Xavier Board*

A periodic stock taking of the specificity and functionality of a Catholic College is of the essence, if Catholic Higher Education is to remain rooted to its mission in the maelstrom of changing times. As in academic research, so in the search for our specific mission every step has to be measured in order to bring us nearer to the goal - a spiritual horizon "whose margin fades forever and ever as I move". It is with this in mind that an effort has been made to evaluate the Catholic College in the light of its specific mission.

At the very outset a brief explanation of the milieu in which the Catholic College in a non-Christian developing country like India functions would be in order. Our Universities, the earliest three of them dating back no further than the middle of the 19th century, were modelled on a Western or British pattern. The Christian Colleges fell in with the requirements of the Universities to which they were affiliated though seeing their work as a mission and an apostolate. They chose for their faculty by and large persons committed to the Gospel teaching. Catholic Colleges, few of them older than a hundred years, followed a similar pattern. But never did either Christian or Catholic Colleges restrict their student clientele to believers only. Their doors have always been open to all creeds, castes and linguistic and racial communities firstly in view of the Gospel message to be communicated at the highest educational level and secondly because of the immense popularity they gained, almost immediately as Centres where the total development of the individual human persons was an avowed curricular objective. The number in any group who believed in and could afford a College education being comparatively small and always tractable, and the influence of the classical ideal of a humanizing Ivory Tower isolation from daily material concerns being strong, a College education remained until the thirties of the century the privilege of the elitist,

almost always the aristocrats and the bourgeoisie. The humanities and the sciences formed the pabulum of higher education. None was dissatisfied with the situation as the class structure was totally accepted except for sporadic attempts at social reforms by a small enlightened group. Those who went to College ended up in white collar jobs in the higher echelons. The Universities were few in number. Catholic Colleges similarly few. The teaching and discipline in the Catholic Colleges were both fine by any standard, the curricular no different from those of state or other private Institutions and the ethical and spiritual dimension embodied in a series of co-curricular activities.

It was not in a spirit of emulation of the secular effort in education that Catholic higher education was started, nor has it ever been its motive. The motivation came solely and wholly one might assert, from the evangelical imperative - "Go and teach all the nations", widened in its interpretation to suit the milieu, the age and the advances in knowledge evident even in the developing countries because of a variety of factors. The Industrial age, the Scientific age, and the Technological and Nuclear age have each had their own impact on the texture of life and teaching in the Universities.

With the dawn of Independence in 1947 came about a sea change such as none could hardly have visualized till the forties in spite of the Independence struggle slowly gaining strength over a period of fifty years or more. University education was no more an elitist monopoly, though it still struggled to keep the door closed to the masses. The scope of higher education widened as never before; and by about 1955 the Colleges were all bursting at the seams with the recklessly growing student enrolment while Government and University controls became tighter. By the early sixties Catholic Colleges like any other became trammelled with a network of do's and don'ts feverishly looking for ways and means to avert the indiscipline and loss of standards and values, threatening to affect first the student body and then the staff. It must be said to the credit of the Catholic Colleges that by and large, they have held fast to their moorings, to their evangelical roots; but all the same functioning in an environment

fraught with ethical and spiritual pollution and a watering down of moral and religious values. Persistent efforts have been made to wade through the quagmire depending wholly on the Christian imperative. And it is this inspiration we need to re-focus our attention on, as we take stock of our assets and liabilities.

The Indian Catholic College has a tremendous, shall I say, a Herculean task before it with a barely 2% Catholic population in the country, and bearing in mind the following facts:

- The student enrolment is largely non-Christian and non-Catholic.
- Religious diversities in the student body are numerous.
- Linguistic, caste and cultural difference make uniform standards difficult and unrealistic.
- Religious instruction cannot be a curricular subject.

In spite of all this the Catholic College has its own distinctive character, the endorsement of the Divine, on what might otherwise begin and end as a purely secular enterprise. It is an Institution in which the value system centred in the human person, his dignity and rights, must look for its foundation and meaning in Christ. The important question is how to blend these aims with the requirements of the curriculum; the realities and the exigencies of the time; the aspiration of youth and the demands of a technological future already knocking at our gates. Nothing canned or fossilized will work and the history of higher education in India is frankly not a history of change, movement and adaptation. Being out of joint with the times is at once to be out of step with the aspirations of youth for themselves and for country, and delinquent in our loyalty to Christ. What, we might ask, is India's expectation of the Catholic College? In as much as India's future belongs to the young people the answer is, India expects of us what the youth expect of us.

The broad heads under which we might categorize the aims and objectives of any College in our times and perhaps for a long time in a new era before us, are: Knowledge or teaching; Research or investigating to get at the truth; and Service. Teaching and Research as acknowledged fields of activity. As for service, the Ivory Tower age which dies hard seems to have paid little attention to it. But now the thinking and approach to this problem is new. We have all been awakened to a sense of responsibility for the welfare of the Community. The first major breakthrough has come in the form of a radical change in admission policies that supposedly reflect the values of the Gospel. Our Institutions have willingly shed their elitist outlook and adopted a democratic stance, accepting students from the lower strata of society, from minority groups and all religious groups. We could claim that we are now more open and alive to the palpable reality around us.

It is against this background that we shall have to look at the evangelical mission of the Catholic College. Though we have succeeded to some extent in banishing the elitist stigma we are still grooming young people in the materialistic mould, youth who aspire to profession that offer the lure of prestige and money and prerequisites connected with pleasure and comfort. This is a trend apparent among the upper classes in all our urban areas - a sort of narcissistic enjoyment of and craving for material perks that appeal to the senses and to one's desire for prestige in a society that is beginning to worship "mammon". This has led to a growth of individuals wherein most young men and women are competing for jobs that exude glamour. The Gospel message of service - of being servants to our fellowmen - has not yet permeated the fabric of the education our Institutions offer. Fewer of our students each year make choices that are overtly service oriented. Professional courses seem to prepare students to believe that the next step is towards the West. Our Prime Minister called this a tremendous "Brain Reserve" we have abroad. But our Institutions cannot deny that it is a drain of some of the best talents we have nurtured in our institutions. The Christian ideal of service, so perfectly expounded in the parable of

the Good Samaritan and in Christ washing His disciples' feet has been presented in such simplistic terms that its inner richness has escaped us. We need to present our students with this value woven into the academic work they engage in and orient them towards professions that are service based rather than prestige based.

In this context we must admit that we have failed in helping our youth to understand that education is a process which leads them to transcendental goal. Our new line of action would be therefore to help them integrate the temporal with the transcendental, so that they are able to pursue and realize a Personalism that brings freedom rather than a narcissism that enslaves and disillusiones them as adults.

Another discernible trend in our Institutions is the denial of the existence of God, for which several reasons are boldly offered. The giant strides taken by Science and Technology encourage the student to conclude that man can manage his own affairs while nature is a self perpetuating mechanism that somehow carries on. The explanations offered by science for various phenomena are easier to comprehend and uphold than belief in God's Providence. The former is less cumbersome and straight forward.

A related reason for the loss of faith in God could be the loss of faith in institutionalized and ritualistic religion. In a country where religion is so intimately woven into the socio-cultural fabric, religion has often been the cause of such ugly realities as communalism and communal movements decimate the value of other religions. Briefly the tenets professed by every religion are often contradicted by the trappings that accompany religious worship, political alliance and manipulation. Politicization of religion has resulted in communal disharmony and posed a serious threat to national integration.

Most of our modern youth are caught up in the technological morality of today and this has precipitated a threefold crisis in their lives: a crisis of Identity, a crisis of Power, and a crisis of Direction. The terrible void they experience within,

the conflicts that plague them and the craving for things that do not satisfy, almost goad them to ask for a personal encounter with God, a deeply personal one-to-one relationship with the living God which will lift them out of the pitiful situation in which they find themselves today. But not until their mentors live their faith in its entirety can students encounter the living God. If the *raison d'etre* of the Catholic College is the evangelical imperative to preach the Good News, then it becomes the responsibility of the teacher to be a living witness to Christ - a man for others. The rectitude of his life should exercise a spiritual, not merely a secular influence on his students. Students ask for ethnicity among teachers and this expectation has to be met at whatever cost.

To meet the expectations of youth, the teacher will have to gather and absorb from the world all the "forces" which the student needs for growth. These "forces" are first accepted, sifted with discernment, and interiorized by the teacher so that what he offers to his students is not just knowledge, or culture or values; nor even a definite ideal of man; but all this personalized in "someone". What the teacher offers is what he most truly is - a person for others. "What you are speaks so loud, that I cannot hear what you say". Education is a person to person inter-action. In and through the knowledge and culture imparted by the teacher, the student encounters the person of the teacher. As educator the teacher gives himself, and this is love. Christianity is essentially a religion of love. A teacher, who besides being an educator is also a committed Christian has the joy of seeing with the eyes of faith, Christ being formed in his students bringing them "to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ". In this way the teacher fulfils his divine mission, to prepare the world through culture and knowledge for the coming of God's Kingdom.

Inter-religious dialogue in a land of many religions has been an unexplored territory so far. It is no doubt an uncomfortable territory but we cannot afford to neglect it. While we present secularized human values to our youth, we leave untouched this vital area which they have never known in depth. Inter-religious dialogue could take the form of

discussion among students of different faiths exploring dispassionately the value structures, guide or decide their personal attitudes, beliefs and behaviour. Coming together in this way would inspire respect and reverence for all religions and thus solve problem of communalism.

A word about **campus ethos**. Campus ethos or atmosphere is something intangible which silently subscribes to the aims and objectives of a Catholic College; something that speaks of the characteristic spirit and tone of a College Community; something that in itself is an evangelical inspiration to all around. A College that puts a high premium on the holistic development of young people, that evinces a deep concern for academic excellence and social relevance unconsciously creates a desirable ethos which has a witness value. A truly Christian College campus exudes the divinely humanitarian culture of the Beatitudes. A strong sense of Community is the hall mark of such a campus. We are well aware that the increasing complexity of contemporary life and the emergence of a host of new values, choices and dilemmas, has brought to the fore a number of ethical and value questions which did not confront the earlier generation. In such a situation the College Community comes together to examine realistically the contemporaneous, if any, of the values which Jesus Christ lived and taught. The College Community also studies the lives of their worthy founders to check on the values accepted and practiced by them. In this way a definite value system emerges which at once announces the Good News of Jesus Christ and denounces what is false.

I might add that many of the problems we face in India today have been or are being faced by other countries as well. Hence the importance of exchange of views among educators. If in addition to this, whether through journals or conferences we can also work towards healthy exchanges of teachers and students, a great step forward would have been taken to realize more concretely the mission of Catholic Universities and Colleges.

The future lies in the hands of our young people, but we have, in the few years that are still ours before stepping in the next millenium, to prepare an

undergirding and scaffolding; expertize - professional, technological and theological, to contribute to the solidity of the super structure of the 21st century. We visualize this as a mighty edifice that will stand the test of time. We shall still fall short of our ideals, but we shall strive to be like Wordsworth's Skylark,

*"Type of the wise who soar yet never roam
True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home".*

LETTER FROM SECRETARY

My dear friends,

Easter invites us anew to look at the mystery of life beyond the confines of the disintegrating forces of sin, death and the grave. Life is a trust which God places in the hands of the human. If God has trusted us, He believes that we are trustworthy. That is why He has entrusted us to ourselves. We function within the context of our family, friends and colleagues.

Growth in life takes place only when difference stages are negated and transcended. That is the experience of the child in the womb of his mother, the student who leaves his home for the school and the young men and women who leave their parents to start a new home. If at each of these stages they refused to come out of the cozy matrix of the womb, the home and the kin, no growth would have taken place.

In the comforting security of these inner matrices they would not have even dreamt what life was holding for them. It is a leap into the unknown fraught with frightening risks and filled with fascinating thrills.

It involves the rejection of what one already has in order to reach out to what one has not yet. Here in lies the dialectics of the mystery of Death and Resurrection. That is why Jesus said unless the grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies it remains alone (John 12:24). He also insisted unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the Kingdom of heaven (Mathew 5:20). The price

we pay for this transcending is the cost of discipleship.

May the celebration of the Easter mysteries bring in a deep experience of sharing in the passage from death to life which the risen Christ went through before us and whole out to our emulation.

Yours in Christ

Sr. Ezechiel CMC
Secretary

TOWARDS VALUE BASED EDUCATION

Dr. Alfred Mascarenhas

Education is the process by which a human person develops himself as a woman or a man. It helps man to grow in all dimensions, mastering and controlling emotions and the will. The final result of education is a cultured person. Cardinal Newman could write of a liberal education that makes the gentleman who has a cultivated intellect and a delicate taste, with emphasis on the individual and hardly any concern for social responsibility. The Church speaks of the formation of the individual with respect to his ultimate goal and simultaneously with respect to the good of the society of which he is a member. From the emphasis on the development of the individual for its own sake we have come round to considering the benefits that should accrue to society through the education of the individual.

One part of education that is common to all colleges is that of providing the knowledge and skills that will enable the young people to fulfill their aspirations. The other aspect of education which is particular to Christian colleges is the formation of the young person in the field of values and with special relevance to the gospel, thus leading to a truly cultured person. Institutions of learning began in monasteries and cloisters or in and around renowned teachers. Today, however, they are largely arenas where thousands are herded through structured courses and jam-packed syllabi : many have turned into commercial ventures, largely ignoring the growth of the person.

In the light of these continually increasing pressures it is vitally necessary for Christian institutions of learning to consider their special role in education in human values, in line with the Christian message. The overall aim of this education in values should a) form the student consistent with his ultimate goal, b) contribute to her intellectual, moral and physical development, c) instill in her a sense of responsibility to society, d) prepare her for acceptance of leadership, e) train her to distinguish between right and wrong, f) enable her to recognise her relationship to God, g) facilitate her living a life in conformity with the gospel and h) instill in her the courage and the readiness to bear witness to God.

EDUCATION IN VALUES

Values are what women and men live by and what they would die for. The preamble of our constitution mentions justice, freedom, equality and fraternity - these are values that do not depend on the circumstances or the individual, to acquire a meaning. Christ proclaimed the same values - Justice - in the face of social, economic, political and religious structures that oppress man and dehumanize him: Freedom - from the internal compulsions and external pressures that constrain man, Equality - arising from the common fatherhood of God and Fraternity - of mutual concern.

One experiences difficulty in arriving at a single and comprehensive definition of value. In very simple words, a value is a yardstick of beliefs that influence and guide our behaviour. Value literally means something precious, dear, worthwhile. Values give direction and firmness and bring to life the important dimension of meaning. Values prove a great source of motivation or movement for the person. Without values, one floats like a piece of driftwood in the swirling waters. That is why values are central to one's life since they are normative in all one's actions and understanding. Values bring quality to life.

Values have three anchor bases : first, the **head** - we perceive and see reason why something is valuable and intellectually we prize it high. Another anchor base is the **heart** - the language of the heart also tells us that something is worthwhile - we feel it as such.

When mind and heart are involved, the whole person is involved, leading to the third anchor base - the **Hand** - in other words, values lead to decisions and action.

EDUCATION IN VALUES - AN ANCIENT HISTORICAL ACTIVITY

Each age has had its challenges, its problems and its own glory. In the earliest epics and codes, effort has always been made to understand what is right and wrong. In the Indian context, information regarding human values is found in the vedas - not only a single work but a whole literature, prescribing certain actions and prohibiting others. Later on, the instructions in the scriptural texts were regulated in a value system called "Dharma", which meant a way of life, a code of conduct which regulates a man's activities as an individual and a member of society. In the laws of Manu, the highest values - Moksha - are attached to the moral qualities of the soul.

In the Bible, the value system runs as a continuous thread, highlighting the positive dimensions and condemning the negative ones. The Koran and the text of all other religions also emphasize the necessity to encourage positive values in the human society. Turning to more contemporary workers, Moore (1903) contended that values means good - independent of human desire and interest. Nicolai Hertmann (1932) argued that values are essences - without values, events would be totally lacking in significance. Psychologists including Kluckhohns (1952), Henry Margenau (1959) and Allports (1961) said that value is a belief upon which a man acts by preference.

Every individual and every society has lived by values. There was a balance between the style and the stress of life and the value system in operation. But the present patterns of living and thinking and behaviour has been changing so fast and so radically, that there is now an urgency to introduce value education into higher education.

With the onslaught of the electronic media, the television, the computer and the internet, no longer can we wait for a natural process by which our young citizens will imbibe a sound system of values. The pace of the pattern of living, thinking and behaviours is changing so rapidly, that there is a present feeling of crisis. With the giant strides in science based technology, man is coaxed to feel a new power that is so strong and dynamic, that it often leads him to feel that he is in no need of any value system that could act as a restraining influence.

THE NEED FOR A VALUE EDUCATION CURRICULUM

When we have agreed that the basic aim of education in our institutions is not only instruction in the subjects of the syllabus but much more, the formation of our young women and men, to turn them into individuals that could steer a bright future, it is very evident that we have to place value education at a really priority level in the syllabus. Lest we be condemned by posterity for neglect to perceive the signposts of the time, we, Christian educators have to make an urgent and conscious decision to include a meaningful syllabus of value education in our institutions and to support the same with all the vigour at our command.

The syllabus should be such as to find acceptance by different sections of society, with different cultural and religious backgrounds. The framework should be concrete enough to provide a definite frame of reference and yet supple enough to enable institutions to explore the fuller dimensions according to their own needs and circumstances. While proving a framework that is specific to India, it should also provide a larger context in the universal sphere.

The aim of value education is to enable the student to be truly Indian, really modern and deeply human. These are three essential and fundamental values, like the three sides of an equilateral triangle, each side providing necessary support to the other two sides, which in turn is supported by them. The base

is provided by the most important human dimension, on which is added the Indian, leading on to the modern dimension. The human dimension provides a reference of defence of authenticity to the other two. The Indian dimension comprises the appreciation of one's culture, customs, language and traditions, moving on to regional and national level. The modern dimension must foster a scientific attitude, temper and spirit and strengthen the development of attitudes. The human base brings a depth dimension to values, focusing on the beyond the self dimension and the nurture and the growth of values.

VALUE IDENTIFICATION AND CHARACTERIZATION

The students in our colleges must be enabled to engage in value exploration and value personalization and making the accepted values a part and parcel of one's behaviour.

The taxonomy of value education has been spelt out by Bloom, Dell and others. In any given institution, it is first necessary that the academic head - the Principal - convenes the teaching staff at the beginning for a full day session, where the importance of value education is discussed and assimilated. It is vitally important that the teachers are very enthusiastic about the program and that they support it wholeheartedly. Often, a lot of information must be shared, so that the program is internalized by the staff. It is advisable to have small groups of students for these value education activities - preferably a half day set apart each week, for about six to eight weeks.

The activities are arranged in a process of ascending order, beginning with **Prizing** values, thus sorting out positive from negative values. The student is

encourage to surface the good or positive values in her/his life, thus making them feel good. Rather than sermonize on negative aspects, it is wiser to coax the student to continually discover what is good in and around his life. The second step is **Affirming** the positive values. Once a student is convinced about the goodness of a value, she should be able to speak about it to others and defend her conviction. This step should include various groups of values, such as personal, health, family, environmental, social, spiritual, political, etc. Students who are able to publicly affirm certain values, should be greeted and enthused by the elders - in this case, their teachers. The next step is **Choosing** - the student first starts to choose from two and then some more alternatives and every time understand why she has made a particular choice. A combination of affirming and choosing, done repeatedly, is an important activity in the taxonomy of value education. The student then learns to choose freely and with confidence. At this stage, one can coax them to construct a pie of life, thus allotting priorities in a considered manner. The exercise is rounded off with **Acting** - always a very important aspect. Groups of students are encouraged to organize and conduct programs in and out of campus, where they will put the tested values into action.

CONCLUSION

A program of value education that is accepted conducted by the College with the same seriousness of other examination subjects, is sure to pay important dividends, not only in the individual lives of students and staff, but in the fabric of the whole institution. It has been our experience in the last few decades that many institutions have owned up and are conducting value education programs, thus helping to turn out a generation of future leaders for a better India.

NEWS FLASH

We are happy to inform you that **Sr. Beatina Mary**, OSM will soon join us as the new Secretary of the Xavier Board. We welcome her and assure her of our help and prayers.

SPIRITUAL EDUCATION - THE MISSING LINK IN DEVELOPING HUMAN RIGHTS VALUES

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"It is only with the heart that one can see rightly;
what is essential is invisible to the eye."

(The Fox, in The Little Prince,
by Antonie de Saint-Exupery)

The principal aim of education is to help individuals to be intellectually alert, emotionally stable, morally upright and socially mature. It would involve to a great extent guiding young people to cope with conflicts arising out of knowledge explosion, rapid social change, scientific and technological progress, crumbling family structures, devaluation of persons due to competitive and consumerist behaviour, terrorism and oppression. Under these circumstances there seems to be the need for SOMETHING that can hold together the pieces of the zigzag puzzle, the fragile components of education. Everything of substance is held together by something that is invisible, something that can be seen by the heart. Truly what is essential in life is invisible to eye and is beyond the senses, hence sublime and spiritual Education needs this essential part, the invisible, the spiritual, in order that the holistic development of every person becomes a reality.

The present consumeristic society is overwhelmingly competitive. One's personal fulfilment, self-aggrandisement and success at the cost of anyone or anything seems to be the rule of the day. Education has come to mean a way of achieving success and prestige. Education that implies an acceptance of and feeling for others' needs and concerns; education that trains one to be able to put oneself in others' shoes; education that upholds the dignity of persons and values the preciousness of humans, has receded to the background. **In education, the essential element, the spiritual dimension has become the missing link.**

The Consequence-Areas of Concern for Human Rights

The problem in our country is not poverty because the post-independence years have witnessed a dramatic transformation of Indian economy with unprecedented upward growth in industrial infrastructure, food-grains production, and steady rise in per capita income. It is the ownership of these assets and the control the distribution of surplus that is a decisive factor in human worth and dignity. Hence, the real problem is, the thing which creates poverty and misery, and that thing is **INEQUALITY**, brought about by the system, dividing humankind into rich and the poor. In our country this disparity is a crying scandal. The reality and the depth of the problem arises because the person who is rich has power over the lives of those who are poor and the poor are thus exploited of their assets and their basic rights even for human existence. The **INEQUALITIES** which have caused deprivation not only of the assets and riches but basically one's precious human rights can be listed as:

- i) **Unequal distribution of Income** : i.e., income generated through property rent and profits, dividends through shares and debentures, salaries, and wages where a small section of the population benefits from higher income from economic growth.
- ii) **Unequal distribution of rural assets**, whereby not only the assets like land, but even the common property resources like the village pastures, forests, wastelands, village ponds, government subsidies, agricultural benefits etc., are controlled by the private hands of a few rich or are in the hands of public enterprises like dams and industries giving rise to an increase in the number of landless agricultural labourers.
- iii) **Inequality in the distribution of Industrial assets and power**, whereby the legal titles to ownership of capital in the form of shares, debentures, equities etc., are heavily concentrated in a very small urban section and not with the bulk of the rural masses. Even the salaried

employees and the industrial work-force have no claim on these assets. Even among the owners of industrial assets, the degree of inequality is very high. Besides, the same few again utilise extensively the financial subsidies given by the state owned financial institutions and banks, contributed by the general public in their formation and growth. The new financial policy of the government will further erode this situation.

- iv) **Inequality of human capital assets or the quality** of human labour power, skills, education and health facilities. We see the glaring discrimination in the distribution of health services between urban and rural areas in terms of number and quality of doctors and health centres, nutritional inequalities; discrimination in educational facilities and expenditure. The per capita annual expenditure on primary education is still the lowest. Buildings, other facilities and the performance of teachers in 'poor and rural schools' is dismal resulting in high drop-out rate.
- v) **Inequality in employment opportunities.** For millions in India, who possess labour power, i.e., the capacity to work is the only asset which can be exchanged for food and other necessities. Total or partial unemployment is one of the causes of poverty. The distribution of work opportunities is unequal between urban and rural areas, between man and woman, between the organised and unorganised sectors and between the affluent and the middle class groups of city dwellers.
- vi) **Unfavourable 'exchange entitlement' for the poor.** The situation of the poor, in particular, of those at the subsistent level, becomes more dismal because of the combination of inflation, direct taxation resulting in steep rise in prices of essential commodities and the lack of effective implementation or ignorance of the minimum wage laws. The rise in wage rate or output prices which have failed to rise as fast as the input prices have resulted in lowering exchange entitlement.

Poverty is not just what is depicted so far, a state of material deprivation, but is also a state of human and psychological deprivation. When a section of society has been banned, in word and deed as useless and inferior, the result is, the acceptance of these labels by the poor. When self-respect and self-esteem break down when one lives without a future, itself, then material deprivation results in the DEHUMANIZATION of the person.

Spiritual Education - An Answer

The priorities in education and the hidden curriculum of education today, in spirit of all the noble ideas, goals and objectives recorded in school brochures, highlight factors that have strengthened and deepened these inequalities. The reason as noted above has been the 'missing link' the lack of priority given to ethical and spiritual and educational experiences provided to imbibe these. It is only a radical restructuring of education that changes attitudes and values that can help to build a new, egalitarian and united society and education that concretely becomes a qualifier of opportunities, a means of individual and societal liberation, can guarantee human rights and the realisation of positive values.

Education which includes the physical, social, spiritual and moral development of the integral human personality implies the developing and assimilation of a system of values, which will guide our young people in all their activities, as to live and act in accordance with their human dignity and full destiny.

Julius Nyerere takes a clearer stand on the relative importance of these various processes. He views the liberation of the human persons as 'the primary purpose of education'; "Education has to liberate both the mind and the body of man. It has to make him more of a human being because he is aware of his potential as a human being, and is in a positive life-enhancing relationship with himself, his neighbour and his environment. Education has therefore to enable a man to throw off the impediments to freedom which restrict his full physical and mental development. Education is thus

a matter of attitudes and skills..., that liberates man, enables him to work as an equal with his fellowmen for the development of mankind." Spiritual education, the purpose of which is formation of a person and his value system, has the potential to achieve the above.

The dissemination of academic, professional and technical knowledge is important, and indeed vital...But it is vital only because it is a necessary part of the education which liberates humans, and enables them to work as equals with their fellow human beings for the development of humankind. The core, is spiritual education, that provides the invisible, yet the strongest link that binds all the components of education for enhancing the dignity of the human being.

STUDENTS SUMMER CAMP

The Xavier Board is organizing an All India Catholic College Students Camp from 6-10 May 1998 at the Indian Social Institute, Bangalore. Nearly seventy students will be led by a team from Visvadeep, to "Discover Life within oneself", through sessions including Interpersonal Skills, Leadership, Profile Culture, Media etc... They will progress towards "Youth as model of service, a leavening presence, witnessing with the power of the Holy Spirit."

SR. HEDWIGE ANNUAL AWARD

The Sr. Hedwige Annual Award is given to a Catholic College, (chosen from among those competing) which successfully carries out sustained programs aimed towards the spiritual welfare of students. The college receiving the Hedwige Award for the last three years are:

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|---------|---------------------------------|-----------|
| 1995-96 | St. Thomas College, Palai | } sharing |
| | St. Agnes College, Mangalore | |
| 1996-97 | Vimala College, Trichur | |
| 1997-98 | Holy Cross College, Ambikapur | } sharing |
| | St. Teresa's College for Women, | |
| | Eluru | |

These awards will be presented at the oncoming Triennial Conference of Catholic Colleges at Chennai.

TRIENNIAL CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC COLLEGES

The text Triennial Conference of Catholic Degree Colleges is due to be held at Chennai from 21-24 May 1998. Over 175 delegates will discuss the theme "**Preparing the Catholic University College for the Third Millennium**". Various topics of importance to college youth and teachers will be dealt with. There will be sessions on "Preparing the college student for political leadership", "Motivation of the teachers in Christian Colleges", "Jesus is alive in our campuses" and "Towards the Great Jubilee". There will be Panel Discussions on "Youth, Media and Values" and on "Women's Issues". Regionwise elections will constitute the members of the Xavier Board for the next three years.

The second phase of the project on "Non-formal education of women" will be launched through eight regional centres. Financial support to Catholic Colleges to conduct programs on spiritual welfare of students and human value formation of both students and teachers will continue and will be intensified.

STUDENTS IN CULTURE OF SILENCE

Introduction

Any matter that involves doubt or difficulty needs to be discussed. Frank and purposeful discussion always paves the way for finding a solution. If opportunities are given, even puzzles can be solved.

The Problem

Elders, educationalists and social workers often complain that modern youth fall an easy prey to the evil of "Culture of Silence". This complaint is not an opinion resting on insufficient grounds. But it is a judgement passed on the attitude of youngsters. It demands freedom from the clutches of ignorance and inactivity in the student community.

The Urgent Need

Personal liberty rather than confinement or self-determination rather than external control is the need of the hour. Facts show that independence of thought promotes invention and discovery - a movement of action. The only precaution to be taken is to avoid disdainful looks, words and actions which crush the confidence of the young men and women.

The Fact

It is a matter of fact that a person formally engaged in learning is controlled by the authorities in all the educational institutions. But there is an additional control of direction and action by the organizers of social and extra curricular activities. At this juncture, there arises the problem of adjustment. And because of the attitude of individuals "Silence" sets in. This silence creates maladjustment among the youth in an area.

The Culture of Silence

As time passes on, the sum total of maladjustments existing in the campus shapes the pattern of behaviour in the instructions. This destructive force of inaction is transmitted from one group to another. And this process acquires the name "Culture of Silence" - a state of inactivity.

The Rectification

Any state of inaction can be activated by PROPER EDUCATION and training of the persons involved. It is a matter of change of mind of the individuals concerned. The facts that cause the unwanted change

can be identified and removed. A worthy model will help a lot in directing the aspirations of students. Care should be taken to prevent the youngsters from being pretentious; they should be true to themselves and to the society they live in and serve.

Ways and Means

The solution lies in the change of culture of silence into the CULTURE OF ACTION that assures the required aim and goal! The ways and means are many. To mention a few:

- (i) Do not maintain silence or aloofness towards other persons in a group.
- (ii) Become a leader.
- (iii) Do not ignore and snub a person into silence.
- (iv) Avoid finding fault with others, as a meaningful ritual.
- (v) Praise and admire the individual's good qualities.
- (vi) Offer constructive criticism.
- (vii) Encourage freshness, vigour, spirit, etc.
- (viii) Inspire a person with courage, spirit and confidence.
- (ix) Encourage a person to speak out and share.
- (x) Drive-away a person's shyness by means of two-way communication methods.
- (xi) Encourage cultural activities.

- Mary Auxilia A.

