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**TRACING A PATH FROM BEING INDIVIDUALISTIC TO WHOLISTIC
THROUGH SOCIALISTIC PARADIGM**

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“School is a building that has four walls with tomorrow inside” – Lon Walters

Introduction:

Can there be harmony in the world if man can't work with men? Why is that corporate and business houses seeking to foster team spirit send their staff on expeditions and trekking to mountains? Why do organizations that want breakthrough innovations and ideas opt for group techniques like brainstorming, Synectics and so on? Team work is valued in every field but is our schools inculcating such interpersonal skills are so sought after? Educational institutions were established primarily to give away knowledge generated through ages, secondarily to enhance social skills and the process of socialization. Schools are supposed to cater to all round development of children. Education has to prepare students to face the challenges of life posed by the 21st century.

With the advent of 21st century are we thinking more about development of various skills? Is it so that prior to 21st century these skills (i.e., thinking, reasoning, problem solving, team work) were not needed? Why globalization, liberalization and privatization have become more demanding of human potential? Globalization demands working in a multicultural and multilingual environment. It is rebuilding the social links through education at school and in non formal environments. Learning to live together can be learned by learning to work in team. In the context of globalization, learning to live and work together and the ways and means to develop it assumes great significance.

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Why is there emphasis on whole child? Perhaps some of the social institutions looking after the multifarious development of the child are not working up to the expected level or the demand laid by the competitive market. The market forces are creating pressure to focus not only on cognitive development but also on other aspects like social, emotional, physical, spiritual, psychomotor, interpersonal, intrapersonal development etc. Although no development can be considered in isolation as each dimension of development is inter-related with the other, we would be focusing on socialization and social skills in children as a means of whole child development in terms of inter and intrapersonal development. The paper also highlights the problems in socialization and suggests strategies to overcome the problems.

Why Socialization as a means of whole child development?

Man is becoming more and more individualistic, whereas the society's demand is for a team player and development of more altruistic attitude i.e., to develop tolerance caring and sharing attitude among each other. The globalized world has definitely increased the bar for quality products and services at the same time the focus is also on sharing the dwindling resources like never before. Sharing and caring are a part of socializing process. Now let us see how the process of socialization occurs.

As one grows and develops does destiny decide how social we are or does the environment determine the nature of a person? Some people say his/her parents are very shy, so he/she is also very shy. This is not the reality, the environment and the social interaction plus the experience determines the process of socialization. One may think that personality matters, intelligence matters, looks matter, or one's background, socio economic status matters, but actually the way one deals with the other person matters most. How you make the other person feel through your actions, words and deeds matters. It is only in the social context that a man becomes man. The social context helps gauging oneself in the mirror of society where one stands and what one would like to improve or would like to be. This process aids in the development of whole child.

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At the early childhood stage the child is self centered and individualistic; as he or she grows they gradually learn to socialize with others. He or she acquires the ability to behave in accordance with social expectations. Experiences in the family and school contribute towards or block social maturation in children. The society is now witnessing the phenomena of nuclear families, single parents and unmarried relationships and so on. In this modern age, home fails to provide adequate opportunities to the young child for socialization. The disintegration of joint family system and the working of both the parents have deprived the child from developing interpersonal skills. The traditional authoritarian methods in schools (classrooms) also are not conducive for developing social skills in children. How much do school and other socializing agencies contribute towards a child's growth and development? Some educationists feel that society is the bedrock for all development that occurs in a person.

Lev Vygotsky's view

Lev Vygotsky, the famous Russian psychologist emphasized the importance of culture and social interaction in the developmental process. He advocated that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition. Central to his theory is his belief that biological and cultural development do not occur in isolation. Cognitive skills and patterns of thinking are not primarily determined by innate factors, but are the products of the activities practiced in the social institutions of the culture in which the individual grows up. Most of the learning occurs with no formal instruction. We see what others do and follow their leads. But in certain situations, a child can perform a task under adult guidance or with peer collaboration that could not be achieved alone. In this way adults and most competent peers serve as intellectual guides and leaders to further development, this process has been referred to as scaffolding. When children function and solve problems independently they are working within the zone of actual development, when a child can solve problems only with support or assistance by a peer or a teacher it is identified as zone of proximal development.

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He also made the contention that learning requires both lower mental functions and also higher mental functions. Lower mental functions can be performed through the inherited natural mental ability whereas higher mental functions develop through social interaction. Any higher mental function necessarily goes through an external stage in its development because it is initially a social function. Once a mental function or a concept has been culturally negotiated, it becomes available to be internalized. This process is called internalization.

This gives an idea about the contributions of society in an individual's growth and development. The individual can in turn exhibit social skills when dealing with others.

What are social skills?

Social Skills are the foundation for getting along with others. A person who is truly socially mature is outgoing and interested in other people i.e., exhibits social skills. Lack of Social Skills can lead to behavioral difficulties in school, delinquency, inattentiveness, peer rejection, emotional difficulties, bullying, difficulty in making friends, aggressiveness, problems in interpersonal relationships, poor self-concept, academic failures, concentration difficulties, isolation from peers, and depression.

Social skills are learned behaviors that students perform to successfully socialize in the group. Social skills facilitate the development and maintenance of positive social relationships and friendships, improve school adjustment, and help students to cope effectively and adaptively with the demands of their social environment. Social skills can and should be taught and reinforced in the classroom just as academics are taught. Students of all ages benefit from social skills instruction. Teachers can also use strategies to improve social skill performance and fluency in many settings over time. The following areas represent general categories of social skills that may be taught in the classroom, with specific skills given as examples for that broad category.

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Category	Examples
Peer relationship skills	Joining a group, Giving compliments, Showing concern and respect for others' feelings and viewpoints, Responding appropriately to teasing and name calling, Taking turns,
Self-management skills	Dealing with Anger, Identifying Feelings, Care for property or work, Following Rules
Academic skills	Listening, Study Skills
Compliance skills	Following rules, Cooperation, Compromising
Assertion skills	Asking Questions, Expressing a complaint

The Current Scenario:

The contemporary Indian society has distanced itself from the religio-philosophic ethos, the awareness of the social design and the understanding of the heritage of the past. Influenced by the techno-informative ethos, the parents also emphasize acquisition of techno – informative knowledge. Another dominant feature that we find today is “**competition**”. People want to compete and vote out the other person from the race. Parents are continuously asking the children to score better than their friends. The increasing population and reducing resources and lack of opportunities are some more reasons because of which the competition is increasing. It seems the world is so small that there is nothing left for the others. The impression is that we living in the scarcity domain.

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We see another anomaly in the school also. **The sociometry done in any class would indicate stars, chains, clichés, pairs and isolates. The schools teachers usually pick up stars for various activities like competitions, cultural programs etc. The focus is always on the stars. Stars are but stars and will shine in any given conditions.** The stars are the leaders, we are preparing the leaders but what are we doing to develop the follower ship? If there is one leader we definitely would like to have followers for the leader. Everyone cannot be the leader. The society does not have all leaders. What is follower ship, its traits, its demands etc., also requires inculcation.

It is not just the problem with the teachers parents also feel their children have to be leaders. The parents feel their children should study in first class schools, have the best of facilities, should always come first, may be for status, may be due to scarcity attitude, the parents feel there is scarcity of various types of jobs. In our country the emphasis is on the small family norm with the single child. In such a situation the school can contribute towards the development of social skills in children.

Democracy also demands social development and socialistic attitude. Higher values and higher objectives can be achieved in the group work. Leadership also demands follower ship, taking responsibility and shouldering it. Sound and clear mind and justified action in the team. Co-operative and collaborative learning are important. More brains think better than single brain. To quote from *Creativity* edited by Dale Timpe (2005) “By combining individuals of various characteristics, Hermann believes, it is possible to assemble a group to duplicate the traits of the individual genius.”

What types of problems are evident in the children because of which they do not socialize or are poor at social skills?

The number of hours that children spend in relationships during their developmental years is staggering. Preschool programs, daycare, school, religious school, sports, extra curricular activities and summer camp, all log on a significant number of interpersonal hours. The students are constantly in touch with the peers, parents and other community members. Students exhibiting poor social skills exhibit some of the following behavior

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which can be seen through observations in various conditions in schools and at home also.

- Impulsivity and disinhibition: In fury/ fit of anger people may say something they were not supposed to say, or make fun of someone without any inhibition. Humor can also be very distasteful and can strain a relationship or even can be a cause of conflict.
- Difficulties reading non-verbal cues: One continues to speak without realizing the signals of readiness or non readiness of the other person to receive and respond. It is important to learn and study the non verbal cues and moods of the other person before beginning a communication.
- Difficulty gauging the impact of their behavior on others: Sometimes the children are so rude that they don't even think what impact it will create on the other children. It is important to gauge the impact of one's behavior on others; one's behavior may hurt or disturb the other person and thus strain the relationship.
- Difficulty with listening skills, entering discussions and modulating tone and volume: They are fidgety, self centered, do not pay attention, lack concentration, talk in a loud voice, etc.,
- Difficulty with processing language: Sometimes people are not good with language so tend to use inappropriate words and enter in a difficult and conflicting situation. As a part of social skill development one should know the language and culturally relevant connotation of the language.
- Difficulty adjusting to feedback from others: The social group on a continual basis tries to socialize the person by giving constructive feedback and at times criticizes the person. But the inflated ego refuses to accept any kind of feedback.

Parents and teachers need training and consultation to maximize their effectiveness in helping children learn to disengage from negative behavior patterns and create more positive communication strategies. Alone schools cannot develop social skills, they need active support from parents. Timely reinforcement and efforts from parents will help

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children learn appropriate social behavior. The schools will have to devise certain strategies to develop social skills in children and actively socialize them. Some of the strategies are mentioned below.

What are the strategies for socialization of children?

- First identify the problems that children have through observation and accordingly devise need based strategies.
- Knowledge of language: In a social setting language is the most essential tool to communicate. One must develop good communication skills in order to develop social skills. A package for language with common courtesies and emotions to be reflected in the social setting can be developed with large number of examples from real life.
- Knowing names and background of other children: Getting introduced to other children in the group, knowing some basic things about their nature and culture is needed for social entry. Every group has its distinct culture and dynamics for which small documentaries or episodes from some programs can be shown, drama, or role plays can be conducted etc.
- Awareness to know social responsibility: Every group has set goals to be achieved, in the group structure each member has a responsibility to perform. So one must know how to accomplish them. Make children aware about the values of what happens due to negligence.
- Group work and assignment: The strategy of giving co-operative and collaborative venture also tends to develop social skills. Assign the task according to their interest and abilities.
- Building realistic self concept: Many a times children are concerned about their physical structure, their looks, skin color and develop strange complexes and are not able to socialize. So building a real self concept and to instill self confidence in them as a strategy would work. For developing self confidence it is necessary to give the task to the children according to their interest and abilities.

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- Getting over rejection and rudeness: The experiences that one gets in a social setting tends to promote or block development of social skills, rejection, rudeness and criticism are the factors which push people into their shell and do not allow them to socialize. Through activities like role play and drama situations can be created and children can be helped to come out of their shells.
- Dealing with emotions: Give situations to the children, ask them to give the reaction in a group situation, point out or demonstrates how the response can be better. Give them a chance to practice, reinforce the right behavior every time that it occurs.
- Camping, outing, excursions: These are some of the strategies which will help children to socialize and develop social skills. It acts as a ice breaking event, where children stay with each other for a longer time, take care of each other, they come to know more and more about others. Lincoln once said “if I don’t like you means I must know more about you”. If you know more about a person you cannot dislike a person as basically everyone is good at heart.

What should children know?

Determining which social behaviors are appropriate in particular situations: To be sensitive to the group situation in their reaction mechanisms.

- Performing social skills fluently and in correct combinations: Social skills require diplomatic skills in appropriate combination i.e., language, attitude, body posture, tone, volume etc.,
- Correctly perceiving verbal and non-verbal cues: One should be able to make out from the eye contact and body language, interest, disinterest, change of topic, etc.,
- Flexibly adjusting to feedback from another person and acquiring skills ranging from simple to complex: Being in the learner’s attitude is important, one should be ready to accept and change.

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- Social entry: One must remember for social entry being rich and famous or pretensions don't work try to be yourself, believe in yourself.
- Conversational Skills: One must know the language and the culture of the group. How to initiate a conversation? Usually people know how to respond.
- Conflict Resolution: In a group it is likely all members may not agree to a point, but even to resolve a conflict they need to talk to each other and solve the problem at hand.
- Listening: It is important in social skills that one has good listening skills, knows how to modulate the tone and volume as per the demand of the situation.
- Dealing with Teasing: Manage the teasing humorously; do not take it to heart. Don't give any weightage to arbitrary labeling.

For Social skill development bring together 4-8- children who are within a similar age range. Social skill groups can be time limited or ongoing and most often include some of all of the following components:

- Identifying the types of skills needed
- Naming/defining social skills
- Modeling the skills
- Scripting the skills
- Role playing the skills
- Paired practice
- Developing strategies
- Reinforcement
- Discussion of skill transfer
- Homework assignments
- Follow-up
- Repetition

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The transfer of social skill is gained in a group treatment but its modality can be further strengthened through collateral work and training in the child's school, family and community. Effective parent training goes hand in hand with child social skill development. Teachers, counselors, school council leaders, parents and peer group all become people who can enhance or inhibit a child's social integration.

Conclusion:

The teacher education has to respond positively, rationally and creatively to face the challenges of enhancing social skills in student teachers and later in school children. One of the most important roles that teachers/ parents play in their child's development is that of teaching their child social skills. These skills include daily interaction skills such as sharing, taking turns, and allowing others to talk without interrupting. The category of social skills can also be expanded to facets of self-control such as appropriate anger management. Meditation and yoga can help in anger management. Stress and frustration can also be effectively be dealt with the help of meditation and yoga. For many children, social skills are learned by observing how others in their environment handle social situations. These children then imitate desirable responses such as turn taking, etc. For some children, however, more direct instruction is needed to help them develop appropriate social skills. Such instruction is more effective than using a discipline strategy such as time out, as the issue of concern is skill building and not compliance. The conceptualization of social skills as skills to be taught may seem foreign to parents who are focused on the child's apparent "misbehavior." By helping parents look at social skills as just that— skills that the child must learn like any others (e.g., riding a bike or playing the piano), parents may be better able to tolerate some deficits in their child's behavioral repertoire. Of course, the parent may also suffer from poor social skills in addition to inappropriate responses to the child's social efforts. Thus, parents also need to be informed about how their social behavior impacts the child, requiring the parent to model more appropriate behaviors if he or she wants the child to do the same. Social skills talk about social intake, process and social output. The teacher's, parents and

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community members can give good samples for children to imitate and learn along with some direct instructions.

Interpersonal situations demand a lot of intrapersonal development in terms of attitude, proper self concept, confidence, belief, values, faith, goodness, humility, reflections and at times an attitude of forgiving people for small mistakes.

The skills that are trained out can be trained back in.....

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