Self-Exploration & Industrial Relations in India

Dr. Abhishek Gupta
Administrative-cum-Accounts Officer & Head of Office
Sardar Swaran Singh National Institute of Renewable Energy
(Ministry of New & Renewable Energy, Govt. of India)
Wadala Kalan, Kapurthala-144601 (Punjab)
Email: iloveindia1909@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Self-exploration is the process of surveying, identifying and highlighting one’s own skills, values, experience, interests and education. It is more likely that the chosen occupations are aligned with one’s skills, interests and preferences hopefully preventing mismatches between the person and the career choice. Self exploration is a process of self-evolution through self-investigation. It is a dialogue between ‘what you are’ and ‘what you really want to be’. It is a process of knowing oneself and through that, knowing the entire existence. It is a process of knowing human conduct, human character and human living. As the name suggests, the process is to find out what is valuable to me by examine myself. Since it is me who feels happy or unhappy, successful or unsuccessful, therefore whatever is right for me, true for me, has to be visualized within myself. In the ease of human being, to understand what is valuable, we need to study over selves and the “larger order” around us, which is, everything around us. When we look around, we find other human beings; we find animals, plants, birds, insects etc. and then things like air, water, soil, stones, metals, etc. All these are things we live with and there is a need for us to understand our relationship with all of these things. We live with this entirety, we live with our family, our friends, air, soil, water, and trees, the nature around us and we want to understand our relationship with all these. Understanding of all these is to be done by me ‘self’. To understand my relationship with all these, I need to start observing inside. Normally, we are used to exploring outside. For example, we keep looking around; we observe trees, animals and other human beings. Seldom do we observe “what is going on in me while I am observing outside”. Thus, it remains only external observation. When we say we want to self-explore, it means we have to now start discovering within ourselves too and not observing just outside.

Keywords: Self-exploration & Assessment, Value Education, Freedom

1. Introduction

Self-exploration is a process of recognizing one’s relationship with every unit in existence and fulfilling it. It is a process of being in harmony in oneself and in harmony with entire existence. It is a process of identifying our innateness and moving towards Self-Organization and Self-expression. Let’s take the example that we are seeing a tree. When I see a tree, here is what is happening; the image of the tree is available on my eyes. From there, the information is passed on to me, and then I say; “I can see a big tree, and it is about 100 meters away and so on”. This is an example of observing outside. But when I start to observe what relation I have with the tree or, how the tree does relate to me, it is observing inside. The simple process is depicted below;

Human Being  <--------------- Natural/Existence (all that exists)
<--------------- (other humans, animals, plants, soil, etc)

(Participation)

“What YOU ARE” AND “WHAT YOU REALLY WANT TO BE”

Ask yourself this question; “Am I what I really want to be?” When we look into this, we find that mostly we are not what we really want to be. These two are different and each one of us is faced with this contradiction. We are something and we want to be something else. This basic dichotomy, this basic contradiction has to be resolved. This dichotomy creates a conflict in us, which is a
continuous cause for our unhappiness. What we are today is the result of our pre-conditionings, our predispositions, our impressions and our beliefs. What we really want to becomes from deep within us that is naturally acceptable to us. This is something intact in us. It needs to be explored and found out. *What I am* < ---- > *What I really want to be*.

This dialogue needs to be started between what you are and what you really want to be. On investigating into it, you will find that the contradictions are not outside of you. These contradictions are inside you. In fact, the contradictions that you see outside are mostly a reflection of the contradictions within. For example, we end up believing many things that are instilled in us since childhood like “living is basically a struggle for survival”. And based on this belief, we plan our whole life. But have we even asked ourselves the question of whether this is the way in which I really want to live? We find that most of the time, we don't even care to know whether the things we have assumed are really true. We are defining our entire lives, all our desires, based on such assumptions, without even knowing whether these assumptions are naturally acceptable to us! This is a serious matter worthy of our attention. On careful self-exploration, we will find that we are being driven by a number of assumptions / beliefs which are contrary to our natural acceptance and they cause contradiction within us. We have to start looking at these carefully. Many times, you will find, we want something, we think something else, we say something else, we do something else, and the results of our anions do not match with the expected outcomes! This kind of dichotomy continues to exist in us, resulting in a state of unhappiness and as of today we don’t seem to be doing anything at all in order to address these contradictions, whereas it is the basic issue that needs to be resolved.

2. **SELF-EVOLUTION THROUGH SELF INVESTIGATION**

By self-investigation, we shall work towards being what we really want to be. Hence, the self-exploration leads to our own improvement, our own self-evolution. We will become qualitatively better. We can be more in harmony within ourselves. We saw in the earlier point that it is necessary to find out the contradictions in ourselves, to see that we are in contradiction. Where would we do this? Since the contradictions are in ourselves, it becomes necessary that we investigate into ourselves to find this out! Hence, it is necessary that we do self-exploration. It is not about exploring outside us, but inside us, in us. We have to start exploring ourselves. Through this process of self-exploration we can achieve self-evolution. This process of self-investigation needs to be started. It needs to start in each one of us. Once this dialogue within ourselves has been established, and we start evolving - we become comfortable within ourselves. The very process of being in this dialogue starts facilitating this self-improvement.

3. **KNOWING ONE-SELF AND THROUGH, KNOWING THE ENTIRE EXISTENCE**

- Ask yourself do I want to know myself?
- Do I want this self-investigation journey?
- Am I satisfied in living my life without having known myself?

If I don’t know myself, am not sure of myself, how can I be sure of what I want and what I do? One finds that the need ‘know ourselves, to understand the self, is an innate need of every human being. This need to know does not have to be instilled from outside, once our attention has been drawn to this fact. Each individual would like to know himself / herself and can carry out this self-exploration and self-evolution. As we know ourselves correctly, we are also able to relate ourselves correctly to the things around us. We can then understand the people we live with, the family we are born in, the people in society we interact with, in fact all the entities in nature / existence. Ask yourself this question. Are you satisfied with just knowing the immediate things around you, or do you also get curious about the larger reality around you, each human being wants to know everything. Once we have known ourselves, we can also know the entire existence. This process starts with the self, and once we are sure of ourselves, we can, through that, also know the entire existence. If we look at the basic fallacy in our current approach of understanding things around us, it is that we try to understand things around us without first being sure of ourselves. Since we don’t know ourselves correctly, and it
is we who understand the world, hence, all the pre-conditionings we have within, the contradictions we have within, reflect in our perception of the world, and we start interacting with the external world, with the things around us based on these assumptions, based on these pre-conditionings. Therefore, it is important to know myself first, and when I am sure about myself and that there is no ‘coloring’ there then, I can know about other things properly. Then, I can be sure about the things I know, since I am sure of myself.

4. **Recognizing One’s Relationship with Every Unit in Existence**

*What are the things we live with today?* We live in our families without parent’s grandparents, brothers, sisters, we live in society. We interact with our teachers, with various people engaged in making available goods and services in the society. We live with nature with animals, birds, plants, insects, materials, etc, and of course, the larger existence all that space, and all those planets, stars and other entities that are suspended in it.

- Do we know our relationship with each one of these entities?
- Do we know and understand our relationship with our parents?
- With our teachers? With the person next door?
- What happens when we do not understand this relationship?

You would find that this lack of understanding leads to problems. For example, if you wrongly assume that animals may breathe away all the air, and hence all animals need to be killed so that there is enough oxygen left for human beings, it would be disastrous. We need to start seeing various interactions in which we face problems for example, the problem of misunderstanding in relationships, the problem of wars and crime in society, the problem of pollution in nature, etc. Are these not due to the lack of right understanding of our relationship at various levels? We find that our problems in our relationship with various entities around us are due to our assuming certain things about these relationships which are not really true. For example, if we assume that mistrust is basic to a human relationship, we shall have problems, since all the time we shall mistrust people we come across, and mistrust is not acceptable to us, not acceptable you to any human being. Thus, we start with understanding ourselves, and then through ourselves, we understand the rest of existence, and also our relationship with all entities in existence and then fulfill this relationship.

5. **Knowing Human Conduct, Human Character & Living**

*Now question is what is human conduct?* None of us wants to live with uncertainty. If our state of mind, our own behavior keeps changing, we are not comfortable with ourselves. We all desire for certainty and stability. Once we know our own true nature, we will also understand, what is our participation with the other things, we live with this is the ethical human conduct or the humane conduct. This is what characterizes a human being. When we know this true human character, we start moving towards it in a natural manner. If you ask yourself, whether you want a definite character or indefinite character what is the answer? The answer is, we all want to have a definite character, a definite conduct. We are not satisfied with having an indefinite conduct, though we are living with indefiniteness. Example, we can’t be sure of how we are going to be this very evening. We are not sure what our mood will be tomorrow morning. Sometimes, we are not sure about what mindset we are going to have the next moment. Are we comfortable with this state of affairs? Or do we want definitiveness in our conduct? There is a need to understand the conduct in a human being and how it can be ensured. Once we know, through self-exploration, our own true nature and the things around us, we shall also know what our relationship and participation is with the other thing, we live with, all the things around us then we will be able to rightly understand ethical human conduct or the humane conduct. Thus, the process of Self-exploration will enable us to identify the definitiveness of human conduct and to live accordingly.

6. **Harmony in One-self & Harmony with Entire Existence**

Through the process of Self-exploration, I establish a dialogue with my natural acceptance. This enables me to be in harmony within myself. Through the same process, I am able to explore into
the harmony in the entire existence. We slowly come to realize (and we will keep talking about this in the entire book) that there is an innate harmony in the existence. I only need to discover this. And once I do this, I can learn to live in harmony with the entire existence. Thus the process of Self exploration helps me live in harmony within myself and in all my interactions with the world around. Would you desire to be in such a state? Well, we need to work for it.

7. IDENTIFYING OUR INNATENESS, SELF- ORGANIZATION & SELF-EXPRESSION

When I identify my innateness, what I really want to be and establish a dialogue with it, it enables me to become Self-organized, i.e. I attain harmony in myself. This is self-organization (Swatantrata). When I start living with this harmony, it starts expressing itself through my harmonious behavior and work, and it naturally extends to my participation with the surroundings. This is working towards self-expression (Swarajya).

Self-organization (Swatantrata) : Being self-organized: Being in harmony in oneself.
Self-expression (Swarajya) : Self-expression, Self-extension: Living in harmony with others, and thus participation towards harmony in the whole existence.

Ask yourself this question

- Are you self-organized right now?
- Are you able to be in harmony if different harmony with others?

If you are living in contradiction, then it means you are not self-organized. If you are living with pre-conditionings, wherein you have assumed certain things, have accumulated desires without having first evaluated them, then it means you are enslaved. If you ask this question; whether we are self-organization (swatantra) or enslaved, what is the answer? Till there is a difference between what we are and what we really want to be, we are not self-organization (swatantra), because we will always be in conflict. Hence, since we ourselves are not in self-organization, our expression in living, be it in behavior with other humans or in our interaction in the form of work the outcome is going to be one of conflict. So, through this process of Self exploration I begin by identifying my innateness, what I really want to be. Then, living accordingly enables me to being in harmony within myself (Swatantrata) and finally being in harmony with the whole existence (Swarajya). In the light of what we have discussed so far, the content of Self-exploration can be visualized in terms of finding answers to the following fundamental questions of all human beings:

- Desire : What is my basic aspiration?
- Program : What is the process to fulfill this basic aspiration?

Do you find these two questions relevant? We will try to find answers to these questions by exploring within. These are very important questions since everything we do is related to some desire or the other we are trying to fulfill. This is what any human being would like to know and work towards its actualization in life. We are going to observe and explore ourselves, our lives, what we do, why we do and how we do. We will study what human beings want, we will study what we really want. We also want to know how to fulfill what we want. We want to explore into what is valuable for us. Each one of us can explore this within ourselves. Points to be kept in mind regarding process of Self-Exploration. “Whatever is stated is a proposal”. Whatever we state here, is a proposal. Don’t accept it as it is, or assume it to be true. We seem to have assumed many things to be true till now. If we assume what we are discussing here to be true as well, it would only add to our set of assumptions and belief and instead of being an aid for us, instead of helping us, it will only end being a burden for us. Alright! If we don’t assume it, how will we verify it? “Verify it on your own right” You need to rigorously verify all the statements and proposals being made here in your own right. No one else can do this for you; you have to do it yourself. It has to be self Investigated by you. Verifying in your own right implies; don’t just accept or reject it; On the basis of scripture, On the basis of instruments, On the basis of others. We are not flying to undermine the importance of scriptures, instruments or the guidance obtainable from wise persons. Not at all we are only suggesting that one should take all
these as valuable proposals worthy of your own serious exploration and then acceptance. Let’s not compare what is being proposed here with what is written in some book, something that you have read or are reading i.e. we think we know certain things, because we have read about it somewhere, and remember it now. However, we are not talking about a comparative study between what we have read and what is being proposed here, we are talking about verification of these proposals directly within yourself.

“Not on the basis of instruments” don’t assume these proposals as being true or false based on the conclusions somebody might have given after conducting experiments with physical instruments. The instruments only give information about some physical phenomena, but the conclusions we make are perception about the phenomena. Such perception also needs to be subjected to self-verification. “Not on the basis of others” again, you may have heard something that some great person has said. You may believe what this person says to be true, and hence end up comparing what is being proposed here with what you remember as being stated by that personality, this would not mean verifying in your own right; it would mean accepting on those great personalities’ right. “Verify the proposal on the basis of your natural acceptance” For every proposal being put forth here, we shall pass it through our own natural acceptance. If it passes through our own natural acceptance, i.e. it is naturally acceptable to us, it is true for us. If it does not, then it is not true for us and we can drop the proposal let’s not assume what is being stated here to be true! You need to ensure that you pass every proposal through your own natural acceptance! Let’s ask ourselves another very basic question; Do I want to be happy? The answer is a very quick yes! How did you get this answer? Of course, through your natural acceptance. This may seem very simple to begin with, but we shall see that this becomes a very powerful way for us to know what is ultimately right. Natural acceptance is a faculty that is present in each one of us. It is intact and invariant. We only have to start paying attention to it, to start “seeing” it. Ask yourself another question; “Do I want to live in relationship with others or do I want to live in opposition with others?” The answer is live in relationship with others. We find that we get the answers from within ourselves and it is spontaneous. The answers are there in us, naturally. We only need to trace them. We call this faculty the natural acceptance.

Once you start asking the question deep within yourself, you will be able to start accessing these answers yourself. This natural acceptance is there in each one of us, it is what we most spontaneously, most naturally desire. You don’t have to import this natural acceptance from outside; you don’t have to learn it from somewhere! For example, when you asked the question “whether trust is most acceptable to me in relationship”, did you ask anyone else for the answer? Did you read or learn the answer from somewhere? Did you have to refer to some instrument? The answer is NO. This answer came from within you. Similarly, about the answer to- “Is living in relationship with others is naturally acceptable to me”. Did you have to learn this from others? Again NO! Thus, as first part of the self-verification, every proposal being put forth here, is passed through our own natural acceptance. “Secondly, live according to the proposal to validate ‘it experientially.’” To verify the proposals, I need to live accordingly in my interactions with the world around. This involves two things behavior and work. If the proposal is true, in behavior with other humans, it will lead to mutual Fulfillment. In work with the rest of nature, it will lead to mutual prosperity. I desire mutual fulfillment in my relations with other humans and mutual prosperity with the rest of nature. This way, I validate the truthfulness of the proposal. At this point, we can make the following observations about natural acceptance.

Natural acceptance does not change with time. The natural acceptance does not change with time. It remains invariant with time. This can be easily verified. For example, our acceptance for trust or respect does not change with age. People hundred years ago also had the same natural acceptance. We can try to verify this within our span of observation. It does not depend on the place. Whether we are in New Delhi, New York or Abu Dhabi, if we address our natural acceptance, the answer would still be the same. It does not depend on our beliefs or past conditionings. We may be told frequently not to trust people of other religions or castes, but is it naturally acceptable to us? No matter how deep our belief or conditioning, as long as we ask ourselves the question sincerely, as long as we refer deep within ourselves, the answer will always be the same. This natural acceptance is ‘constantly there,
something we can refer to try this yourself think of cheating or exploiting someone. The moment you think of this, you sense a contradiction within and feel unhappy that very instant! It happens very quickly, and we may not notice it, but it does happen! Similarly, the moment we think of disrespecting someone, we become unhappy. The very thought is enough to cause a conflict, a strain within us. Thus, this natural acceptance is always there, and if we start paying attention to it, if we ask ourselves every time, for every thought and every desire we have, “Is this naturally acceptable to me?” we will get an answer. Whatever we do, this natural acceptance is within us, it is telling us what is right. Every time we do something not readily acceptable to us, i.e. every time we think or do something not acceptable to us, there is a contradiction in us, because the thought deed conflicts with our own natural acceptance! The moment we think of cheating, we become unhappy. We don’t even have to carry out the action. It will become clear to us that while we want something else at the level of our natural acceptance, we think or do something else, based on our beliefs and preconditioning, which is contrary, it creates a disharmony in us; this is the cause for our unhappiness. Take for example, one may proceed with the act of cheating under the influence of say, an extraneous pressure but one keeps feeling unhappy about it and may even repent over this act in the course of time. If somebody asks, ‘why do you cheat”? One starts offering explanations, inventing justifications. This is because it is naturally unacceptable.

8. REALIZATION AND UNDERSTANDING

We saw earlier that the process of Self-exploration involves two steps; verification of the proposals on the basis of our natural acceptance & experiential validation by living according to it. As we do this, as we continue with this process of verification of the proposals stated here on the basis of our natural acceptance and test it out in our living, it ultimately results in “realization" and “understanding” in us. This means, knowing something to be “true”, for sure, ourselves. The realization and understanding is denoted: Accordingly, the complete process of self-exploration can be depicted as; the answers we get on having realization & understanding are:

(a) Assuring: “I am assured of the answer or understanding in myself”.
(b) Satisfying: “I am satisfied that the answers are fulfilling for me.
(c) Universal: “I know or realize that the answers I have got are the same for everyone.

They are invariant with respect to:

- Time: These answers are the same at all times: past, present and future
- Space: These answers are the same at all places or locations
- Individual: The answers are the same for every human being

If the answers we get do not fulfill any of the criteria of being assuring, satisfying and universal; it means the answer is most likely coming from your past beliefs/conditioning and not from your natural acceptance. Hence, you need to re-verify the answer! Let us not accept the proposals stated here because they are being repeated all the time! Far from it! Each one of us needs to start asking ourselves these questions and see what is acceptable to us! You have to start asking these questions yourself. This process of repeated self-verification of the proposal on the basis of my own natural acceptance and validating it experientially, and also testing the answers for assurance, satisfaction and universality ultimately results in what is called “Realization” and “Understanding”. Self-exploration is;

- A process of dialogue between “what you are” and “what you really want to be”.
- A process of Self-evolution through self- investigation.
- A process of knowing oneself and through that, knowing the entire existence.
- A process of recognizing one’s relationship with every unit in existence and fulfilling it.
- A process of knowing human conduct, human character and living accordingly.
A process of being in harmony in oneself and in harmony with entire existence.
A process of identifying our Innateness and moving towards Self organization (Swatantrata) and Self-expression (Swarajya).

9. CONCLUSION

We need to undergo Self-exploration because we want to find out what is valuable to us, and secondly we want to understand our relationship, our participation with the things around us. The content of self-exploration is exploring into two fundamental questions: what our basic aspiration is; and the program to fulfill this basic aspiration. Process of self-exploration involves two things, firstly, verifying on the basis of natural acceptance, and secondly, validating experientially by living accordingly. When the proposal is verified on both the bases, it leads to realization and understanding. Understanding is assuring, satisfying and universal with respect to time, space and individual. Natural Acceptance does not change with time, individual or place and is not tainted with our pre-conditionings. It is innately present in each one of us and we can always refer to it.

References:

- Chand K. V. Kumar, “Industrial Relations” New Delhi, Ashish Publishers.
- H.L. Kumar, labour Law (Delhi: Universal Law Publishing Co.) 2006 p. 120.