

UNIT THREE: EDUCATION

Why Go To University?

Moti Nissani, USA (1947-)

The essay “Why Go To University?” is written by an American writer, Moti Nissani. In the essay, the writer is trying to show the importance of university education. The central idea of the essay is “*University education enlightens the mind, makes critical, creative and inquisitive, makes people aware on the importance of good health, helps us to be conscious on the basic fundamental rights of life like life, liberty and pursuit of happiness, makes practical, helps to handle the situation rationally, makes people democratic etc.*”

In the beginning of the essay, the writer is talking about the disadvantages of going university for the acquisition of knowledge. He says that we may already be responsible for our job, family and going university creates additional stress. We may wish to spend our leisure time relaxing but we have to be busy on doing homework. We sometime have to pay for our education and living expenses that we have to pay later. Moreover, in the time of going university, we could be working and earning money. Our papers are compared, evaluated and graded. It is not sure that knowledge always brings greater happiness. To some extent ignorance is bliss. University education encourages for social evils like environmental degradation, materialistic value system and political transition. But the writer in the essay has given tremendous advantages. The writer has stated ten excellent advantages. They are:

1. University education ensures better job and income opportunities that helps for our prosperous life. For an educated person the doors of an opportunity are always opened that helps for name, fame and existential life.
2. University education helps for the practical application of knowledge. An educated person can handle the situation logically, rationally and practically being conscious on the negative sides of the problems than an illiterate person.

3. University education helps people to be conscious on the importance of good health. An educated person is more likely to have more appreciation for the hazards of smoking, overweight, lack of exercises or stress.
4. University education makes people conscious on the importance of physical exercise for physical, mental and emotional well-being. A sound mind in a sound body is focused on in the university education.
5. University education helps for the exchange of cultural values as university is the place where the people come from across the world having different cultural backgrounds.
6. University education makes people inquisitive. Scientific discovery, innovation, inventiveness, reasoning, rationality are increased while getting the university education.
7. Going to university expands our social horizons, as we meet new people; make new friends, share new experiences that help for satisfying our needs for companionship, personal growth and friendship.
8. Education increases our personal freedom. University education teaches us the true meaning of the life and helps us for an existential life.
9. University education provides the knowledge about the universe like geographical condition, species, biosphere, human mind, world economies etc.
10. The last advantage according to the writer is university education makes people democratic. An educated person knows the norms and values of democracy being conscious citizen and fulfilling duties and responsibilities.

Don't Cut down the Trees, Brother Woodcutter

Balakrishna Sama, Nepal (1902-1981)

The poem “Don't Cut down the Trees, Brother Woodcutter” is written by a Nepalese literary figure known as The Father of Nepali Drama, Balakrishna Sama. Through the poem, the poet is trying to give moral lesson that we shouldn't cut down the trees because the trees are the source of imagination, freshness, and reincarnation means simply the nature. The poet, in the poem, tries to give us the moral lesson that it is our duty and responsibility to protect and conserve the trees because trees are the source of survival.

In the poem, the poet says the woodcutter not to cut down the trees because they protect us from sun and rain, give fruits and flowers, help for the refreshment, give warmth, bring newness in our life like season, spring, taught us to sing, give shelter etc. If we cut they don't speak to us but weep and we can see ooze sap. The trees bring dream for the morning for the beginning of our life. In the winter season, we gather inside the house and take warmth from the fire. The trees stretch their arms for our convenience but we cut it.

Hence, the poem teaches us to protect the trees and conserve the nature that helps for flourishing the life and the civilization.

“Surely You Are Joking, Mr. Feynman!”

Richard P. Feynman, USA (1918-1988)

With Ralph Leighton

The essay “Surely You Are Joking, Mr. Feynman!” is an autobiographical essay. In the essay, the writer is trying to show the importance of curiosity for the academic achievement. We shouldn't limit our academic strivings only in a subject in the way of experiencing the world. “Different subject matter should be given emphasis for academic excellence” is the main idea of the essay. “Errors are the ways of improvement” is the suggested idea of the essay.

Feynman completed his under graduation from MIT University in physics and admitted in Princeton for his further education. In the college welcome program. In which he was participated, Mrs. Eisenhart asked him if he would prefer cream or lemon in the tea? In response he told that he would prefer both Mrs. Eisenhart laughed and told him, “Surely you're joking, Mr. Feynman” on his social error. He was unfamiliar in Princeton because the gowns hadn't been washed since three years. Likewise, he saw Cyclotron which was kept in the underground made by the college students and was kept in disorder. He studied or took classes of biology and did research on ‘a phase’ and discovered double mutation process which made him popular among biology students so he was invited to give a lecture for biology in Harvard University.

Hence, the essay deals with the importance of curiosity not limiting the focus on in only a subject for excellent academic achievements.

A 1996 Commencement Speech

Salman Rushdie, India (1947-)

“A 1996 Commencement Speech” is the speech delivered by an Indian writer, Salman Rushdie on the auspicious occasion of Commencement day of Bard University, USA, in 1996, where he was invited as the chief guest. The speech is about the importance of standing on own leg to ensure freedom, dignity and sovereign life. The message of the text is “We should not bow our head in front of any authority to get an unalienable right on the name of power and post. We must be adventurous, demanding, inquisitive, defiant and creative being governed by self-nature defying the God because civilization is run due to male and female but not by the God.” “To get the fundamental rights we should not bow our head in front of any authority” is the central idea of the essay.

Rushdie, in the beginning of the speech is talking about his own experience of Cambridge University from where he was graduated in 1968. According to him, the days in the beginning were interesting but on the course of the completion of graduation, he was suffered by all the means. Before a few nights of his graduation day, someone had spilled up a bucketful of a thick brown gravy-and-onion sauce that destroyed the interior decoration, books and clothes. He wasn't responsible for the crime but the college administration blamed him instead of investigating the incident and compelled him to pay the compensation of the destruction. He went to the ceremony wearing brown shoes and was sent out of the parade of his gowned and properly black-shod contemporaries and had to change his shoes. Fortunately, he was able to attend the program after changing his shoes. If he wasn't able, he would have to wait for a year. At the time of getting certificate, vice-chancellor called him and ordered to kneel down the legs and raise his hands up and spoke few words in Latin that he couldn't understand. It means Rushdie faced injustice, exploitation, intolerance, hostility (dislike) though it was his fundamental rights to get the certificate after the completion of the graduation. He had to surrender with the college administration to get his unalienable right. So in the speech, he encouraged Bard students not to bow the head to get the fundamental rights that hindrance for intellectual solidarity.

Rushdie, in the speech has used the Greek word “Hubris” which means the sin of defying the God. He encouraged the Bard students to defy their Gods as he believes on “defiance is an inventible and essential aspect of what we call freedom”. Rushdie from this statement meant we have to be guided with our self-nature defying the Gods those human beings have based expressed their humanity. He says that it was men and women who had made the world in spite of their Gods. So we should behave ourselves and know our place. It is that we must be guided by our natures though it can’t be true, arrogant, venal, corrupt or selfish; but in our best selves and will be joyous, adventurous, loving, inquisitive, demanding, creative, competitive and defiant. At last, Rushdie suggested Bard students not to bow their heads know their place, defy the God being guided with their better natures to be an existential, free, and dignified and to spend the sovereign life.

