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The Ukraine crisis once again brings to the forefront the need for young students to develop global vision and approaches to transform society



# Encountering Complex Challenges



Are we going to witness a new world order? The recent crisis in Ukraine, two years of pandemic, racial and political unrests in many parts of the world will lead us to such a thought. Let us face the reality. We need to counter such uncertainties and keep the world a safe and better place for the present and future generations. To do this, confidence in oneself and a democratic political system, which respects even opponent's views are a few fundamental aspects that have to be firmly

instilled in the public, particularly in younger generation. Education system, while focusing on subject specific curriculum should also educate to have a global vision and instill values that are critical these days.

Who would have thought that a global pandemic will be unfolding that has taken away so many lives and more recently, how diplomatic fallout may lead to tense situations?

## Value-based Education

More and more educationalists are convinced that to face challenges that are unexpected, education particularly from high school level should develop global vision approaches in students while having a greater understanding of their own society. Caring for others has been an important gospel in all major religions. Indian classical texts, for ages have been preaching global brotherhood and sisterhood, “Vasudha Eva Kutumbhakam” and “Krunvantho Visvam Aryam,” doing greater good for the welfare of the entire world. How apt these pearls of wisdom are in the present day scenario? Imbibing such noble thoughts from a very young age would provide next-generation leaders with traits such as open mindedness and respect for others.

Sound subject specific instruction coupled with value-based education is the need of the hour. Analytical ability is an important attribute to navigate complexities. Handling situations at hand and at future, needs analytical mindset with good discipline specific knowledge. This may be a utopic education system which we all desire.

Respecting the views of others is a valuable pathway to avoid conflicts. “We may not always agree, but if we can find a way to respect each other, we can work together. Any student of higher education should seek out opportunities to work on a common goal with a diverse group of students that may not share their perspective. It is an exciting process and university clubs are a great place to start,” stated Professor Brendan Kelly at Texas Tech University.

One should seek other’s opinion to make informed decision. “It’s natural to have opinions and for our opinions to reflect our biases; that is, to reflect the way we think things should be,



Professor  
Brendan Kelly

or the way we interpret things. But our best service to others, especially to our broader communities, relies on objectivity in the sense of understanding other points of view and shaping our responses to others accordingly. That is to say, our own ways of thinking about something are enriched and may be more richly received by others when we consider others’ own opinions and biases,” opined Dr. Rob Stewart, Senior Vice Provost at Texas Tech University.

## Global Knowledge and Education

The past two years have been like a gift horse that keeps on giving. As we were relieved with the waning

phase of the pandemic, there comes a global crisis—Ukraine situation. While Ukraine crisis has been brewing since 2014, it has escalated in the past few days, threatening world peace. The current generation has ample lessons in life, that they are experiencing, which should enable them to be well informed global citizens.

As the world is highly connected these days with the transport of goods and the migration of people for education and work, it is timely that reasonable global knowledge and an understanding of other people’s wants are imparted right from elementary school.

## Collaborations and Exchanges

Nations and many higher educational institutions are having programs to encourage international exchanges. United States has been having a well-established Fulbright program for scholarly exchanges. This program is deep rooted in the belief that conflicts and challenges arise due to lack of understanding among nations that are different culturally, linguistically and politically. Programs that support the movement of people across national boundaries, which enrich open mindedness among





Dr. Rob Stewart

people of different backgrounds, are needed. Global interactions are more important than ever, given the current situation in Europe.

## Challenges and Education

Education should not only enhance subject knowledge in conventional fields such as languages, science, mathematics, but also it should educate young minds with soft skills.

Soft skills do not limit only to effective communication capabilities. Building character, a fair understanding of the world and imparting service sense to help and support fellow human beings are becoming important.

These days, it is pleasing to note that schools are teaching environmental science, which is a hot field with nations wanting to reduce green house gases. A few decades back, schools had moral lessons as mandatory class periods. Such courses have to be revamped



Dr. Jayanthi Parthasarathy

and adapted to present scenarios. Enriching communications skills, building character and protecting environment are valuable subjects that need to be part of structured curriculum to tackle challenges.

## Sage Wisdoms to Overcome Challenges

“It is said life is not a bed of roses and even in literary sense, rose has thorns. Instead of getting discouraged and disillusioned as ‘why me,’ ‘why am I being cursed,’ firstly one should accept the situation, analyze and gather strength to overcome difficulties. A strong and clear mind will help to handle challenges,” stated Dr. Jayanthi Parthasarathy of Nationwide Children’s Hospital, Columbus, USA. This advice from Dr. Jayanthi Parthasarathy is genuine as she has overcome challenges both in her personal life and as a dental surgeon who

faced challenges in getting advanced training in India. Believing in what she preaches, Dr. Parthasarathy, obtained advanced orthodontics training in the UK and USA and went on to establish one of the first computerized dental diagnostic treatment centers in India in the eighties. Today, she leads a 3D printing facility in one of the largest children’s hospitals in the United States. We have so many heroes among us, who by determination and will power have overcome odds and succeeded.

“Realizing our world is dynamic and overcoming difficulties enables us to grow. It takes more strength to deal with difficulties than it does to ignore them,” stated Professor Kelly.

In closing, valuable structured education, interactions with experienced persons, learning from family and friends, one’s own motivation, all provide necessary inputs in dealing with complex situations. According to Professor Stewart, “the primary purpose of education is the preparation of a broadly informed, broadly skilled, and deliberately competent citizenry. With those foci of education, education and training for the workforce is much better informed, has a better idea of the role and purpose of work in society, and likely better produces creative thinking and innovation.” Creativity and innovation are needed not only for a scientist, but also for diplomats, service sector people and other workforce, as the world has become more complex, which needs different set of skills and capabilities.

Being part of a society, interacting with others enhances diplomatic skills and confidence. These traits help in overcoming unexpected situations as we are facing now with the ongoing pandemic and the tense political situation in Europe. Challenges and finding solutions to them make life interesting and colorful. 

