

Essay on Evening Classes

The need for evening classes for the benefit of workers is universally recognized in the West. They are known as "continuation schools" because their object is to continue in the evening after office hours, the education which is imparted in the day schools and colleges. They are a growing feature of present-day conditions. The desire for knowledge has greatly increased the need for it also has become urgent. On the other hand, the economic necessity of having to earn one's livelihood as early as possible, forces young people to leave schools and colleges even before their education is anywhere near completion. Under these circumstances, the opportunity of continuing one's education in night classes is a blessing and a boon. Learning while earning has been for a long time a feature in America. It is now in vogue all over the world.

The advantages of these classes are many. They offer real opportunities to earnest workers to improve their qualifications, Academic distinctions carry weight nowadays even more than they did in the past. Theoretical knowledge is an additional advantage for the practical work and greatly increases his utility and efficiency.

In the second place, workers often waste their leisure in idle amusements. A healthy pastime is certainly desirable, but this way of spending surplus time is wasteful extravagance both in terms of time and money. If a worker spends that unprofitable period in the healthy atmosphere of a school or a college class, he will be a gainer all round. He will acquire knowledge, he will enjoy the healthy companionship of earnest intellectual people; he will be spending time in a thoroughly wholesome atmosphere. He will imbibe a taste for cultured leisure and thus raise himself above the cheap and vulgar amusements of uneducated people.

Thirdly, in this age of machinery, there are technical men whose practical efficiency is not backed up by adequate theoretical knowledge. They can acquire in the evening colleges a knowledge of things which should help to increase their competence as practical workers. Those whose job is in an office also can acquire in these classes specialized knowledge of business methods and principles of office management. In a word, at a time of intensive specialization, higher knowledge is more than ever necessary for all workers.

In India, these evening classes fulfill a real need in another way. Our people are educationally backward but eager to learn. Our governments are miserly in their attitude to education. Spectacular schemes, costing cores, receive enthusiastic support, but they are reluctant to unloose their purse-strings for the long and laborious ' process of educating the people. Where money cannot be found for building new schools and colleges, it is a good idea to utilize the buildings and equipment's of the existing schools and colleges in the morning and evenings for the benefit of the students who are unable to avail themselves of the limited accommodation in the day classes.

Unfortunately, in our country, there are some who have doubts as to the need, the efficacy, and even the desirability of having these classes. Some are afraid even today of too much education, for they hold that education only creates problems. They overlook the contrary evidence provided by European countries. Some sincerely believe that such classes will be unhealthy for the students. These people forget that in these days only a few people can afford to spend their time idly outside their office works. On the other hand, it should be always borne in mind that such classes help to keep people continually striving towards self-improvement which is in itself a most salutary process.

The only valid arguments against evening classes are that they

confine young people in rooms when they should be in the open air. For this there are only two possible remedies, to devote the early hours of the morning to open-air physical exercise and begin the classes somewhat later in the evening. The advantages of these classes are, however, so great that the attendant hardships have to be endured.