

## Study Struggle Service

On average a student spends about 15-20 years of their life pursuing 'education', and then the rest of their life is spent in fulfilling their own and family's needs and desires. If this is life, to eat, study, procreate and die, then it is no different from that of an animal, except that they don't study. Human beings are the epitome of the creation, only because they have the ability to acquire knowledge and apply it to choose between right and wrong. Despite a very sophisticated education system, the students are not becoming capable to reach the epitome and become better human beings, implying that the system is not really educating, but rather creating people who can become better labours. Education is not just about making people literate. Education is to create people who can understand the reality of life and its purpose and become beneficial to the humanity.

Study is a prerequisite for personality development and societal contribution. India has the largest youth population in the world, which is around 66% of its total population. The strength and potential, however, cannot be judged just based on the number of youths in the country. It is their educational capacity and academic performance which determines the potential. Study really benefits when there's knowledge acquired and wisdom instilled, and not just scores in the exam. Grades and scores are also important parameters for academic performance but it is not all.

Allah says in the Holy Quran: "Are those who know equal to those who do not know?" None will be mindful 'of this' except people of reason." (Al-Quran 39:9) Knowledge is the criterion between people; those who have attained knowledge of reality cannot be equal to those who don't know.

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: "Whoever goes out seeking knowledge is in the way of Allah until he returns." (Sunan al-Tirmidhī) This is the essence of education, it is a struggle in itself, and with this sense, there'll not be a need for anymore motivation for achieving academic excellence.

Struggle cannot be episodic in life. Constant struggle is a sign of life. But what matters most is what is the aim of the struggle. There are two dimensions of struggle: one is internal to oneself and the other pertains to the society one lives in. Internal struggle is to continuously strive to purify oneself from all evil and to grow and develop oneself with regards to morality and character, knowledge and wisdom, talents and skills. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: "The real struggle is the struggle of the nafs". {المجاهد من جاهد لنفسه في طاعة الله}, the struggle to not submit and succumb to one's whims and desires, and put oneself on the pious path. The second dimension of struggle, pertaining to the society, is to stand against the evils and injustices present in the society, with voice and strength, to strive to change and replace that evil with good. It is the struggle to stand up for the oppressed and help the weak. It is the struggle for peace and justice.

When the society has students and youth who are engaged in this holistic struggle, that society will become just, peaceful and prosperous.

Service is an extension of both study and struggle. Service is to become beneficial for the humanity, with one's knowledge, talents and skills. Being able to serve the society requires that one is enlightened and ready to be selfless. Contribution with selfishness is incomplete and ineffective. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: "The upper hand is better than the lower hand" { اليد العلي خير من اليد السفلي }. [Saheeh al-Bukhari]

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ also said: "The best of you is the one who is beneficial to others" { خير الناس من ينفع الناس } (Albani)

The impact of one's education and struggle is to ultimately benefit humanity. There are several domains which requires sincere contribution, be it education, environment, socio-economical, welfare, research, etc. Students and youth should identify their strengths, talents and interests and take up different fields to volunteer for contribution. The contribution becomes big and effective when its done collectively.

These three components complete a personality to its epitome as well as the society and thus the slogan raised by **SIO: Study Struggle Service**.