

D.E.B.A.T.E. (Debate Enables a Brain to Adapt Truth & Enlightening souls)

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ABSTRACT

Blow of words strikes deeper than the blow of a sword. If someone ever go through for argumentation, someone realizes that it is indubitably long winded and boring. But when someone perceives it as a game, all of a sudden someone has a fun activity that get the juices of the brain flowing. It could be said rush of adrenaline in one's body. The soul of debate does not reside in shouting or horrifying others but it lies in striking on someone's soul.

The objective behind this is to make a debater must understand the way to represent one's idea without humiliating someone's dignity. Being truthful in a debate emboldens someone to certain one's victory over one's opponent. One can learn a lot from the debate that unveils a lot about life.

Keywords: Argumentation, Debate, Rubrics

Introduction

In ancient times if we talk about debate, its structure and style it was whole and sole different from the current scenario of prevailing debate system in India. The purpose behind an ancient debate was to examine philosophical, traditional and doctrinal values. Even though since the ages of pre-Buddhists to *Upanishads* it had been so popular that not only the monk and the priest but also the king and the scholar ladies also

participated enthusiastically to take part in debate. If we talk about doctrine that is related with *Charak Sanhita*, (text on ancient Indian credited to 'charaka' who was a practitioner of the traditional system of Indian Medicine known as Ayurveda) it has three heads namely, 1) *Karyabhinirvrtti*, the aggregate of resources for the accomplishment of an action (2) *Pariksa*, the standard of examination, and (3) *Sambhasha-vidhi*, or *vada-vidhi*, the method of debate.

And if we talk about *Nyayasutra* debate culture it is quite different from *Charak Sanhita* Theory. *Nyayasutra* (nyayasutra probably were composed by Gautama or Akshapada about the 2nd century BCE, the sutras are divided into five chapters, each with two sections. The ultimate purpose is salvation i.e. complete freedom from pain) debate consists of *vada*(the honest debate), *jalpa*(the bad debate)) and *vitanda*(the wrangling debate). Elaborating all these three *debate vada* (the honest debate) mainly depend on hypothetical or indirect reasoning(*jalpa*) the bad debate can be said or means as quibbling where an opponent can reach any kind of clincher illegitimately. *Vitanda*(the wrangling) in which a debater aims only for victory simply by refuting all the arguments by the opponent.

Referring to the Tibetan Buddhism Debate is something or quite different than the debate as defined in *Nyayasutra* and in *Charak Sanhita*. In Buddhism debate monks spent years in studying and practicing debate. In that era, debating means to inculcate critical and analytical thinking where one can learn and hone one's skills in defeating misconceptions.

The emergence of debate system can be considered from the 18th century in London. Gradually it became so popular and was acknowledged as a key factor of analyzing and deriving useful knowledge of different aspects from different subjects. Before participating in a debate, participants lose themselves in the depth of

the topic including both brighter and darker side of that topic. They spend hours for participating in debate.

But in this modern era, being an educator, are we really maintaining that decorum that the debaters used to maintain in the past? Or are we lagging behind its origin and decorum that would somewhere result in deteriorating its zest in exploring the desired outcome. If someone generalizes the prevalent debate culture in India while evaluating after many of the debaters' performance in an organization or on a state level competition one can realize that this is so far from what a debate is actually. By emphasizing on its decorum does not mean criticizing or blaming a country's education system but it is all about that we are following 'Vitanda' (the wrangling) from *Nyayasutra* Debate Culture of ancient India in which victory prefers. Victory in a sense a goal to participate or one can say the win – win situation. Means nowadays debate is about quibbling rather than deriving the impactful essence from the arguments. It can be concluded that it is all about not following the actual decorum in a debate. The prevalent pattern emphasizes on winning not on inculcating or honing the skills of head and heart.

Although the structure is known to all still there is no need to amplify the topic in an unnecessary manner by including irrelevant facts. Debating is not the process where someone has to quibble because someone aims to win by delivering a cacophony speech. Emphasizing on relevant fact

that would stir the thought process of the opponent and strike on their mind that would make them wait to think then reply. This should be the process of Debate that our education system is lagging behind somewhere. Therefore, it has become the ardent need of the hour to debate is to educate minds not by arousing a drive to learn more and more about a topic in which they are going to perform.

Where Does Debate Stand in Present Scenario?

“You don’t do new things and try to change the system without generating debate.”

-Anne Wojcicki

Instead of following an exact format in debate culture we are lacking somewhere to train our young minds as they are going to explore and expand their horizon of knowledge in different aspects so it is the prior responsibility of the trainers or debaters who are going to participate in debate. There must be some rules needed to get drafted for the participants that before participating they need to fulfill the required traits to participate in a debate. Only then the standard of debate can be elevated otherwise it will not be more than a bombardment of irrelevant and unnecessary facts which could only entertain the audience but will fail to reach the benchmark of its essence. Although, our educators are following the predefined structure of debate with the rules those are not rigid. But the rigidity can be

analyzed in a performer’s performance during the debate by letting down or degrading someone’s morale. This process of degrading, very interestingly takes part when debaters emphasize on screaming rather than focusing on the deliverance of relevant facts and figures which are considered the soul of any debate. And the prevalent culture of debate is to horrify the opponent does not matter how much solidarity is being laid with the opponent’s content.

“The key to holding a logical arguments or debate is to allow oneself to understand the other person’s arguments no matter how divergent their views may seem.”

-Auliq Ice

How far a debate format can be useful or does a debater truly follow that format. While going through, I came across a format that is practiced in UK schools is known as Mace, where Julian Bell Ma’am very aptly explained that how it can be conducted. The below mentioned points are as follows:

- There are two speakers on each side
- It is a long prep; speakers are usually provided with the topics several days before a debate.
- The participants speak for seven minutes each, alternating between proposition and opposition.
- The first and last minute in speech is ‘protected’ (meaning no one is allowed to

make points of information during that time).

- When all four debaters have spoken speeches from the floor (short points from the audience) are heard.
- One debater from each side gives a summary speech, lasting four minutes, with the opposition speaking first. In this speech, they should not introduce any new material, but should respond to speeches from the floor, rebut their opponent's case, and summarize their own case.
- Marks are awarded for both content of speeches and speaking styles.

Mace format can be considered the appropriate one if it could be served with the addition of "points of information" then it would be helpful in making the debate more interactive and engaging.

Can debates be a tool to transform the world? Can debates transform India or debates be mere a debate of arguments or raising verbal duel.

Debate as a Verbal Duel Especially in India

"Don't raise your voice, improve your argument".

-Nelson Mandela

Debate is much more than a skill to learn how to listen and speak actively but in broader sense it is the ability to represent your truthful views with boldness. It is the gut to defend your views and being protective without being uncivilized. But

being a participant in a debate and specially debating on a burnt topic one may forget the rules of being a civilized one and very often screams louder to horrify or humiliates and hurt the dignity of the opponent. Therefore, a participant should not forget that he/she has to ignite his/her opponent mind by removing the ignorance about that topic.

Referring to a war scene in any of the drama, where warriors attack on their enemies and also get injured sometimes in defending themselves. In the same way, in a debate, when it takes place participants perform like at a dagger's drawn. They forget that they have not boarded for killing or taking out lives but to give life to the dead notions of different aspects to rekindle the light of truth and knowledge that is considered the soul of a debate. Therefore, debating is to venture into the truth and having courage to express that truth. And truth sounds ten times louder does not matter in which tone it would be spoken or expressed it does not horrify the listener but it will strike directly on listener's mind and soul. Therefore, a debater should enlighten the human's soul by removing the darkness of ignorance but by rejuvenating their mind and soul not by humiliating and horrifying them.

Therefore, it becomes utmost important to exemplify the established and appropriate pattern for a debate. Debating can be vital if it would be performed by keeping in mind that we are going to

upgrade our opponent's pre knowledge rather than proving them wrong, debating is speaking the truth and listening with acceptance of that truth but with the others' divergent thinking. Therefore, before practicing debate practice truth if truth is in your practice then you victory is certain.

The most crucial aspect of debate is to learn how to argue to both sides of almost any topic that helps in inculcating mature thinking, empathy and understanding. The complexity that is the peculiarity of a debate must be appreciated to inculcate critical thinking in students. This will help students to take responsibility of their lives and be a successful entrepreneur because these skills will work as a milestone for students.

Adam Grant of the University of Pennsylvania Wharton School summarized perhaps unintentionally what DCI (Debate Centered Instruction) is all about when he wrote- trying to prevent arguments we should be modeling courteous conflict and teaching kids how to have healthy disagreements".

He adds the following rules: -

- Frame (the question) as a debate rather than a conflict.
- Argue as if you are right but listen as if you are wrong.
- Make the most respectful interpretation of the other person's perspective.

- Acknowledge where you agree with your critics and what you have learned from them.

Debate as an elevator of CAT (Critical thinking, Analytical Evaluation and Thought clarity)

Raise your words

Not your voice,

It is rain that grows flowers,

Not thunder.

-Rumi, ancient Poet

In ancient time, the curriculum that was proposed by the medieval scholar was comprised of three essential elements Grammar, Logic and Rhetoric (Reading, thinking and speaking). Medieval time teachers focused on debates rather than giving students' pen paper exam to evaluate their learning skills.

The advantage that can be counted from debate is not only honing about speaking and presentation skills but also inculcate critical thinking as well as research skills, **As F. Scott Fitzgerald once said,** "*The rest of a first rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function*". Debate makes a student liable to see both the sides of that issue and act accordingly. By participating in a debate, a student can train his mind to clarify

between react and respond. They can explain their view effectively and also assess others views. Debaters can read their opponent mind they can assess the level speakers thought procedure. In a debate, students need to research their ideas with the relevant sources.

According to Arne Duncan, then- secretary of Education, debate is “Uniquely Suited” to build skills of a modern citizen, including critical thinking, communication, collaboration and activity.

Proposed assessed Rubric for debate (Parameter for assessment to a debater’s performance)

Serial No.	Points	Clarity of thoughts	Depth of Knowledge	Credibility of content	Relevance of supporting arguments	Speaker’s style and expressions
1	Clarity of thoughts		Whether the supportive arguments are knowledge based or facts based	Recognizing the concept and facts whether they are logically consistent or illogically developed	Using abstractions for describing a particular idea or situation	Arranging and organizing of the information
2	Depth of Knowledge	Applying and operating principles on an idea		Synthesizing existing ideas into new ideas	Examining content and relationship b/w presented arguments and established principles	Delivering of content with the reflecting confidence

3	Credibility of content	Presenting thoughts in a synchronizing manner	Ability to recognize the facts		Presenting arguments with relevant ideas	delivering of content with the stable emotions
4	Relevance of supporting arguments	Evaluating consistency of the ideas	Evaluating the solidarity of content	Examining content to check its reliability		Being determined and firm in content as well as in expressions
5	Speaker's style and expressions	Holding emotions & least variations	Responding Without losing temperament	Preferring responding rather than reacting	Holding the content and delivering with poise	

Summary of Assessment for Grid

The proposed grid explains that how can be the understanding level of a student could be analyzed on the above-mentioned parameters.

For instance, if a participant goes for a debate and if one wants to analyze his/ her understanding then it could be simply measured and balanced with the specific quality and with the other qualities so that real assessment could be done by the assessor. Therefore, it is being elaborated that in the above-mentioned grid that how one can assess the best from a student's content and that content will not work as a mere object that will suffice the appropriateness of the content but also strain the essence of a student's learning.

In first point, the essence and compatibility of remaining points would be assessed. For instance, clarity of thought is comprised with rest of the four qualities and assessing clarity of thoughts will be accepted only if it also comprises remaining qualities of the debate where presence of all these will define the competence of the debater.

Although we have predefined format for debate but assessing a debater's performance includes skills of head and heart as well. While assessing a debater's performance one needs to assess into the depth of a student's knowledge and understanding. Assessment should be done by keeping in mind the core skills of a participants that will emphasize

on evaluating the life skills where one can analyze whether the person is capable of representing the truth and leading quality to get stuck with his/her topic. Debating is just not a competition but it can be implied as a tool to harness the latent skills of students.

For instance-We can choose topic on Civil Disobedience or Violence- what should be given the priority? wherein a student's depth of knowledge can be checked by focusing on clarity of thought, credibility of content, relevance of supporting arguments and speaker's style and expressions. Now the point is that how a speaker's depth of knowledge can be evaluated through these parameters, preferring to the topic if we discuss about in motion then burning issues or arguments could be risen there, for evaluating **clarity of thought** one will need to assess whether the applied thoughts or ideas are practical or if based on some principles then its solidarity.

Opponent 1: (Civil Disobedience movement was not just movement but it took place to inform the moral victory or the definition of moral. Gandhi's victory or Dyer's lesson

Opponent 2: In 1914-1918, there was a tremendous slaughter where people died and more than 240 people died. Civil disobedience is important because it is based on non-violence but fighting for your country tremendously more important rather than non-violence. Greatest sacrifice is sacrificing our lives. Civil

Disobedience is a mask to conceal its true face, Anarchy.

Summary-In both opponents' statements there one can find clarity where one is opposing civil disobedience because it is overruling law and order and the other is supporting it because it has the power to resist law. So, here one can find the clarity of thought.

If someone would check **credibility** then the existing ideas presented should be synthesized into new ideas.

Opponent -1 Gandhi believes in one thing that is to respect your opponent whether he/she is in war or in a debate. Gandhi also believes that law breakers must accept the consequences for their actions then how it sets anarchy. Civil disobedience is not something to fear. He draws his inspiration not from Hindu scriptures but from an American Harvard David, who was a graduate from Harvard University.

Opponent-2 Adolf Hitler a great Marxist was great in his work that believes that no idea prevails without the support of majority. People decide the moral issues not the majority.

Summary-Here is the credibility in both opponents' statements where the first opponent has emphasized that no rule can bypass law that is credible and the second opponent also focused on credibility that a majority's support matters? Therefore, indubitably there is credibility in both the opinion.

Relevance of supporting arguments can be assessed by examining delivered content and relationship between arguments and established working principles.

Opponent-1 Majority does not decide right or wrong, your conscious does. So, why should a citizen render to legislature. So, He or she never hears before a majority.

Opponent-2 We can't decide which law is to be obeyed and which to be ignored for good we never stop for red light. There are rules of law that are more important, no matter what name we give it.

Summary- There is quite relevancy in the opponent -1 statement when he/she states that majority do not decide right and wrong but our consciousness does. But second opponent opinion also vary when he or she speaks about no majority can overrule law it must be obeyed whether it is good or bad. But here he lacks credibility that changes have been brought by the majority by evoking consciousness. Ultimately the first opponent concludes with the striking statement that law can be eradicated or disobeyed if it does not provide equality to all. Providing justice to all without any discrimination is the law. And one must abide by the rules and regulations of the law. Herewith one can easily evaluate how drastic changes could be brought and applied by consciousness. Listening the conscience, observing the behavior but act

Speaker's Style and Expressions would be reflected flawlessly with confidence if his/her content imbibed the previous parameters appropriately.

Therefore, by evaluating these entire traits one can get the analysis-based outcome that would help and benefit both the assessor and the speaker.

Opponent-1 In Texas, they lynched Negro, one of my collegemate, was hung without trial, he was on fire. We Negroes are now lynched. Negroes, I saw the fear in their eyes, what is that Negroes crime, that he should be hung with trial and error. Was he a deaf, was he a killer or just a Negro? A preacher if a Negro still afraid, no matter what he did then where do we lie. That mob was a criminal. Law did nothing except wondering.

The point is that there is nothing that can overrule the law, why Negroes denied living in houses, why have they been away from schools and hospitals. And we are now lynched. Saint Augusten said, 'In an Unjust Law, there is no law at all which means I have a right to deny or resist violence or civil disobedience? You should choose the prior.

Summary-Herewith one will find the tranquility of suppressed pain that is reflecting through each statement, here audience left spellbound when the emotions were reflecting in words.

Sometimes when one is in state of overflow of emotions, one could be out of control and unable to express one's emotions with the balanced words. But in the abovementioned statement the

opponent very aptly expressed the pain what he felt and experienced for his college mate. Therefore, in the concluding statement opponent bound everyone stunned and could be supposed a winner due to the natural and truthful expressions and words that he/she never practiced earlier but in his last statements his expressions overpowered his words that gave a flawless and realistic essence to his expressions and style.

Some indispensable rules which should be followed in debate.

1. Maintaining temperament- While participating in a debate one should not forget that his/her opponent's perspective could be quite different from his/her own perspective. There could be the probability of being get offend and in that type of situation one can easily loose temperament by shouting and raising one's voice therefore one has to be very aware throughout the debate. Maintaining gestures mysteriously by portraying moderate body language can certain your victory by making the things difficult for your opponent.

2. Confidence is the sole key to win the half of the battle-

Confidence plays a pivotal role not only in confronting in debate but also in all the aspects of life. Therefore, coming towards any situation we need only one ornament that would not only enhance our verbal decorum but also helps to come out as a winner. Your confidence will help

you to win half of the battle. Your opponent will think twice before rebutting or cross questioning something that has been spoken with confidence.

3. Maintaining body language and eye contact- Eyes are the mirror of the soul.

A lot is understood and misunderstood through facial expressions. Therefore, it is considered important to maintain eye contact with the audience. Audience is the primary source that we need to keep in mind but there is no need to be biased or audience centered in the entire debate. Rendering here and there can make audience feel awkward and if one pays heed only towards some audience it will make the rest of the audience feel unwanted. Body Language reflects not about the personality but also it helps you to win half of the battle. Necessary Gestures and postures should be used properly to deliver the content. If employed, humor and wit can enliven the content. Therefore, use humor and wit, according to the suitability of the situation. Speaker should conclude from on an emphatic note.

4. Know the appropriate Form and get stuck with the rules of The Debate-

If a participant participates in a formal debate then it becomes utmost essential to follow the rules. There are different forms of debating (viz. parliamentary debate, Asian parliamentary debate, turncoat debate, one-on-one debate, amongst others). The rules of each of these debates are quite different from each of the other. Therefore, it becomes

utmost important that before participating in a debate each candidate must be aware about the rules.

5. Use of Debate Jargons - In order to being appear confident in front of your opponent one must be aware of frequently used jargons like motion, rebuttal and treasury etc., Therefore one must be acquainted with the most commonly used jargons.

6. Balancing Emotions-One can tell anecdotes and stories which could make people feel connected and help you to hold the audience as well as the opponent's attention towards the topic for long. You can apply this tip to play and check your opponent's emotions and temperament.

7. Speak clearly- The most important aspect of a speech is clarity in speaking. Pronunciation should be clear. Avoid using fillers like, 'hmm and 'umm' as much as you possibly can. If possible, practice more and more to avoid mumbling. It becomes very embarrassing sometimes if a debater mumbles and stammers while delivering his/her content. If someone is participating in a formal debate then one must try to maintain the decorum by opting one language. Avoid getting words from other languages, it will not only spoil your debate but also will get discouraged.

8. Do not deviate from the topic-Often, when discussing about personal experiences and adding

some anecdotes then occasionally the debater may deviate from the topic and it becomes utmost important the course of a debate to get stuck with the topic. Ultimately, the debate ends up being about something that is completely irrelevant. Sometimes one can also help one's opponent, to get them back on track. Having this kind of attitude will ensure a good score from the judges.

9. Make possible efforts to find faults – In a debate one gets an opportunity to question the statements of one's opponents. The key point is the trick to look for the fallacies and bring it out to the public. If you utilize 2 to 3 minutes in this then there is much probability to win the debate.

10. Expand your research area- One should expand one's research area. One should be well versed what one is speaking. Your vast research will help you to not only speak well but also answer the questions posed to you by your opponent. Indubitably, it helps you loads to win the debate.

11.The Art of Persuasion - One should know about one's audience's needs and level so the content would be appealing to them. One should be ready, not to only the answers but also accept and adopt the reactions from the crowd. Apply strong emotions when required occasionally. Applying emotions aptly can-do drastic changes in one's speech.

12. Coherence in arguments- One should express one's message to by illustrating its importance. One should try to add more confirmation and evidences to craft your argumentation the real one. Before opposing and challenging one's opponent's point of view, one should acknowledge then give some credence to their arguments. One should end on an emphatic note so that one's last words or content would leave an indelible impact or give a reason to rethink on it. Ultimately, by doing so make your audience think what they want to think.

Conclusion-Besides all this, Debate works as a tool to harness interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, but here lies a question that "Are we lacking or neglecting fostering our next generation with confidence and the tools to express without any fear. And these skills are the pioneer for the long-term success but unfortunately these skills are not mastered in our academic curriculum. If someone segregates both of these and then evaluate their work one will find that in interpersonal skills one gets to learn driving task, researching

methodology and negotiating by doing all this one can consolidate one's collected work then can execute as a team. And if we talk about intrapersonal skills, these skills could help students to articulate their ideas with evidence and logic rather than expressing opinions by simplifying it. Ultimately it could be said that debate lead to groom interpersonal as well as intrapersonal skills too. As these skills empower the children to excel in all the aspects of life in this rapid changing world.

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