

WHERE SCIENCE IS AN END – THERE PHILOSOPHY STARTS

INTRODUCTION- Here we will discuss the inter-dependence of philosophy and education. After discussing the impact of philosophy on education and vice-versa, we will describe briefly the different schools of philosophy viz. Naturalism, Idealism and Pragmatism, and their implications for education in curriculum, role of the teacher and the nature of discipline. While explaining the ideas advocated by different schools of philosophy on above concepts, this paper will also incorporate the views of both Western as well as Indian thinkers.

PHILOSOPHY, EDUCATION AND THEIR INTER-DEPENDENCE- The inter-dependence of Philosophy and Education is clearly seen from the fact that the great philosophers of all times have also been great educators and their philosophy is reflected in their educational systems. This inter-dependence can be better understood by analysing the implications of philosophical principles in the field of education. Before analysing the educational implications of general philosophy, we should know the concept of “PHILOSOPHY” and “EDUCATION”. Each one of us has a personal philosophy which we apply consciously and unconsciously in our daily life. Each philosophy reflects a unique view of what is good and what is important. In these sense, philosophy is the system of beliefs about life. The literal meaning of philosophy is the love of wisdom which is derived from the Greek word “Philos” (love) and “Sophia” (wisdom). Wisdom does not merely mean knowledge. It is a continuous seeking of insight into basic realities—the physical world, life, mind, society, knowledge and values.

NATURALISM AND EDUCATION—

Naturalism as a philosophy of education was developed in the 18th century. It is based on the assumption that nature represents the wholeness of reality. Nature, itself, is a total system that contains and explains all existence including human beings and human nature. According to naturalists the material and the physical world is governed by certain laws, and man, who is the creator of the material world, must submit to it. It denies the existence of anything beyond nature, behind nature and other than nature such as supernaturalism.

Naturalism as a philosophy of education has exercised a great influence on the theory and practice of education. It decries all external restraint and it condemns all necessary formalities. In the Naturalistic system of education there is no place of classrooms, text-books, timetables, curriculum, formal lessons or examinations. The teacher has to play the role of acquainting children with their natural environment. External discipline is altogether out of place. The only discipline is the discipline of natural consequences. Naturalism believes the formal education is the invention of society which is artificial. Good education can be possible through direct contact with nature. Naturalism in education has the following common themes:

- 1) Look to nature and to human nature, as part of the natural order, for the purposes of education.
- 2) The key to understanding nature is through the senses. Sensation is the basis of our knowledge of reality.
- 3) Because nature's processes are slow, gradual and evolutionary, our education also should be steady.

Schools of Naturalism—

According to Naturalists, the existence of school is a natural necessity. All of us know that man is the most dependent creature of God as compared to other animals because of the long period of infancy of the child and its consequent dependence on adults. The offspring of other animals have negligible periods of infancy whereas the human offspring requires a few years even to perform simple functions of day-to-day living. For ROUSSEAU “Everything is good as it comes from the hands of author of nature, but everything degenerates in the hands of man.” According to Him nature is the only pure, clean and ennobling influence. Human society is thoroughly corrupt. Therefore man should be freed from the bondage of society; and he should be able to live in the “State of nature”. Human nature is essentially good and it must be given fullest opportunities for free development in a free atmosphere. Gandhi's philosophy of education is also naturalistic in setting as He believes in the essential goodness of child's nature. According to Him, children should be educated in an atmosphere of freedom- freedom from superimposed restriction and interferences. His main emphasis is on activity of learning by doing and shows aversion to artificiality and pedantry.

NATURALISM AND CURRICULUM-

Naturalists emphasized the study of sciences dealing with nature- Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Zoology, Botany, etc. They also give importance to the study of language and mathematics. Naturalism gives a very insignificant place of spiritualism in the curriculum.

ROLE OF TEACHER-

According to naturalists the teacher is the observer and facilitator of the child's development rather than a giver of information, ideas, ideals, and will power or a moulder of character. In the words of Ross “Teacher in a naturalistic set up is only a setter of the stage, a supplier of materials and opportunities, a provider of an ideal environment, a creator of conditions under which natural development takes place. Teacher is only a non-interfering observer.”

IDEALISM AND EDUCATION—

Idealism is the oldest system of philosophy known to man. Its origin goes back to Ancient India in the east and to Plato in the west. Generally, Idealists believed that ideas are the true reality. According to them, the human spirit is the most important element in life. All of reality is reducible to one fundamental substance spirit. The Universe is viewed as essentially non-material in its ultimate nature. Matter is not real, rather it is a notion, an abstraction of the mind. It is only the mind that is real. Therefore, all material things that seems to be real are reducible to mind or spirit.

In essence Idealists advocate that:

- 1) Education is a process of unfolding and developing that which is a potential in the human person. It is unfolding of what is already enfolded.
- 2) Learning is a discovery process in which the learner is stimulated to recall the truth present within mind.
- 3) The teacher should be a moral and cultural exemplar or model of values that represent the highest and best expression of personal and human development.

IDEALISM AND CURRICULUM—Idealism emphasizes the spiritual side of man. So, for the idealists curriculum is based upon the idea or assumption of the spiritual nature of man. They are of the view that the curriculum is a body of intellectual or learned disciplines that are basically ideational or conceptual. They arrange their curriculum in the form of a hierarchy in which the general discipline occupies the top most position and gradually it comes down to particular subjects in their relationship to general discipline.

Plato, a great exponent of Idealism, conceives of the curriculum from the point of ideas. He believes that the highest idea of life is the attainment of the highest good or God.

Ross talks of two types of activities i.e. physical activities, and spiritual activities to be included in an idealistic curriculum. Physical activities include subjects such as health and hygiene which foster bodily skills viz. Gymnastics and athletics that lead to good health and fitness and thus make the pursuit of spiritual values possible. Spiritual pursuits imply the intellectual aesthetic, moral and religious studies. Hence such subjects as history, geography, language, fine arts, morality, ethics, religion, science, mathematics and others should be included in the curriculum.

Sri Aurobindo also in his integral philosophy of education gives importance to moral, religious, and physical education. By moral education he means the training of moral faculty, that is the ability to distinguish between what is right and what is wrong

ROLE OF TEACHER—

J. DONALD BUTLER has identified some of the desired qualities of the good teacher. According to Him the teacher should:

- 1) Personify culture and reality for the student
- 2) Be a specialist in the knowledge of the pupils.
- 3) Be a kind of person who commands the respect of the pupil by virtue of what he himself is.
- 4) Be a personal friend of the individual student.
- 5) Awaken students' desires to learn.
- 6) Be a master of art of living.
- 7) Be one who capably communicates his subject.
- 8) Appreciate the subject he teaches, and
- 9) Aid in the cultural rebirth of generations.

PRAGMATISM AND EDUCATION—

Pragmatism is popularly regarded as an indigenous American Philosophy. But its roots can be traced to ancient Greek philosophy. The term 'Pragmatism' is derived from the Greek work 'Pragma' which means work. Heractitus and Sophist of ancient Greece are considered to be pragmatic in their approach to life. The background of Pragmatism is associated with the works of Francies Bacon, John Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau and Charles Darwin. But the philosophical elements that give pragmatism a consistency and system as a philosophy in its own right are primarily the contributions of Charles Sanders Pierce, William James and John Dewey though they differ considerably in their methods and conclusion.

Pragmatists reject metaphysics as a legitimate area of philosophical inquiry. Reality, they opine, is determined by an individual's sense experience. Man can know nothing beyond his experience. So questions relating to the ultimate nature of man and the universe simply cannot be answered because these problems transcend one's experience. For example, there is no way for any living being to determine whether there is life after death, because one cannot experience life after death while living. Any conclusion we make about life after death in merely conjecture or guess. They believe that reality is in constant flux. There is nothing in the World which is static, permanent or eternal.

According to Pragmatism, knowledge based on experience is true, genuine and worthy of acquisition. Since the phenomena are constantly changing, so knowledge and truth must change accordingly. They emphasize knowledge and understanding.

PRAGMATISM AND CURRICULUM—

According to Pragmatists the main focus of education is not social heritage of the past, but the good life in the present and in the future. The standard of social good is constantly changing, so it should be tested and verified through changing experience. Life doesnot stand still and there is a constant need for improvement. John Dewey, however, is of the view that acquaintance with the past experience is very important for effective handling of the present as well as the future.

Pragmatists are of the opinion that the curriculum at the school should reflect the society. They have rejected the traditional approach to subject matter curriculum which is associated with formal schooling, where knowledge is separated from child's own interests, needs and and experiences and is fragmented or compartmentalized. They emphasize the need and interests of the children. This doesnot mean letting children do anything they want. Interests and needs do not necessarily mean the dictates of whim. Dewey opines that all learning should be particular and contextual to a given time, place and circumstances. For example, history is traditionally taught to the student without considering its relevance to the everyday experience. Dewey in His book "Democracy and Education" recommended three levels of curricular organization:

- 1) Making and Doing,
- 2) History and Geography, and
- 3) Organized sciences.

ROLE OF THE TEACHER—

Pragmatism neither treats the teacher merely a spectator as naturalist does not regards Him as indispensable as Idealism does. According to Pragmatism, the teacher is not a dictator or task master but a leader of group activities. The chief function of a pragmatic teacher is to suggest problems to his pupils and to stimulate them to find solutions. Teacher ought not to try and pour information and knowledge into the pupil, because what pupil learns depends upon his own personal needs, interests, and problems. Dewey views the teacher as a resource person who guides rather than directs learning. The teacher's role is primarily that of guiding learners who need advice or assistance. Direction comes from the requirements of solving the particular problem. Educational aims belong to the learner rather than the teacher.

COMPARISON OF NATURALISM, IDEALISM AND PRAGMATISM---

| <u>NATURALISM</u> | <u>PRAGMATISM</u> | <u>IDEALISM</u> |
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| <u>FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES</u> | | |
| 1. Nature alone is entire reality, it is readymade. | Reality lies in the process, it is still in Making , not ready – made. | Mind and thought are real. |
| 2. The outlook of the naturalist is materialistic. | The outlook of a pragmatist is social. | The outlook of a idealist is spiritual. |
| 3. They don't believe in existence of God. | Pragmatist believes in the existence of God to and extent. | Believe in the existence of God. |
| 4. Ultimate reality is physical. | Ultimate reality is utility. | Ultimate reality is spiritual. |
| 5. Universe is natural creation. | Universe has been created by man. | Universe has been created by God. |
| 6. They don't believe in value, soul, god, Religion and divine spirit. | Changeable and are created by men. | Eternal spiritual values never change. Truth, goodness and beauty, eternal values. |
| 7. Physical and natural laws are Universal. | No laws is universal. | Spiritual laws are universal. |
| <u>EDUCATIONAL PRINCIPLES</u> | | |
| 1. Nature is the base. "Follow nature" is the Slogan. | Society is the base. Emphasis is on Physical and social environment. | Spirituality is the base. Emphasis is on the spiritual and moral Environment. |
| <u>AIMS OF EDUCATION</u> | | |
| 1. Self expression | Dynamic in nature. | Self – realization. |
| <u>CURRICULUM</u> | | |
| 1. Emphasis in on sciences. | Emphasis is on practical utilitarian Subjects. | Emphasis is on ethics and study of Humanities. |
| <u>DISCIPLINE</u> | | |
| 1. Uncontrolled freedom, discipline through Natural consequences. | Restricted freedom and social discipline. | Emphasis on regulated freedom and self- discipline. |
| <u>TEACHER'S ROLE</u> | | |
| 1. From behind the scene. | Teacher occupies an important place in Education. | Teacher guides, directs, suggests and controls the situation. Position is very high. |

CONCLUSION—In this paper we have attempted to introduce to people the philosophical basis of education explaining, how the educational system of a nation is influenced by its philosophy and its contribution in the field of education with special reference to the school setting, curriculum, role of the teacher and nature of discipline.

Naturalism, as a philosophy of education advocates maximum freedom for the child and further stresses in feeling the child from the tyranny of rigidity, interference and strict discipline.

Idealism as a philosophy of education emphasizes "the exaltation of personality" which is the result of self-realization achieved by spiritual knowledge, self discipline and guidance of the dignified teacher.

Pragmatism, as a practical philosophy contributes a lot of the field of education. According to the Pragmatists there are no fixed or absolute values. Values are created by man.

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