

PHILOSOPHY AND EDUCATION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO GANDHIAN VIEWS

Dr. George Kolanchery

Asst. Professor of English (Applied Linguistics)
Bayan College-Oman (Aff. to Purdue University, USA),
Oman

Ms. Yevette Mathew

Lecturer of English, Majan College
Sultanate of Oman

Abstract

Education does not commence with the alphabet; it begins with a mother's look; with a father's nod of approbation; with a sister's gentle pressure of the hand; or a brother's noble act. No education deserves the name unless it develops thought, unless it pierces down to the mysterious spiritual principle of mind. There comes the relationship between Education and Philosophy. Mahatma Gandhi was a great philosopher as well as a visionary of education. He had a very clear insight into education and its aims. This paper delves deep into the different aspects of Education, Philosophy, Gandhian views about Education etc.

Keywords: Education, Philosophy, Gandhiji

Introduction

I consider a human soul without education like marble in the quarry, which shows none of its inherent beauties until the skill of the polisher fetches out the colors and makes the surface shine. What sculpture is to a block of marble, education is to the human soul. The philosopher, the saint, the hero, the wise, and the good, or the great, very often lie hid and concealed in a plebeian, which a proper education might have disinterred and brought to light. (Addison)

Education does not commence with the alphabet; it begins with a mother's look; with a father's nod of approbation; with a sister's gentle pressure of the hand; or a brother's noble act. No education deserves the name unless it develops thought, unless it pierces down to the mysterious spiritual principle of mind. There comes the relationship between Education and Philosophy. Mahatma Gandhi was a great philosopher as well as a visionary of education. He had a very

clear insight into education and its aims. This paper delves deep into the different aspects of Education, Philosophy, Gandhian views about education etc.

What is Philosophy?

Philosophy is the zenith of human thought. Each thought requires to be chewed properly and digested; it requires contemplation. An analytical differentiation of the entire universe and human life, the creator and the creation, life and world, knowledge and ignorance etc is done in it. India is regarded as the centre of philosophy. Greece comes next to India. But there are minor differences between the Indian and Western views.

Here are some of the important definitions:

“Philosophy is a logical enquiry into the nature of reality”. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan

“Philosophy aims at the knowledge of eternal nature of things.” Plato

“Philosophy is the science and criticism of cognition.” Kant

“Philosophy is the science of knowledge.” Fischte

“Philosophy is the science of sciences.” Comte

The parameters on which one can define philosophy are indefinite. The various aspects are quite relative and are dependent on the views of the philosophers.

1. Relation between Education and Philosophy

According to J. S. Ross “Educational questions are ultimately questions of philosophy” Philosophy and education are two sides of a coin. Philosophy is the contemplative side and Education is the active side. Education develops thoughts which lead to the self-realization. The real object of education is to give children resources that will endure as long as life endures.

Modern education too often covers the fingers with rings, and at the same time, cuts the sinews at the wrists. – Sterling.

The best function of education is to enable us to realize that to live as a man is great, requiring profound philosophy for its deal. – Tagore

2. Great philosophers as great educators

A philosopher is one who regulates his life by the light of philosophy he holds. The history underlines the fact that great philosophers are great educators. The best examples are Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, H.G. Wells, Jesus Christ, G.B. Shaw etc. Plato’s ‘Republic’ and Aristotle’s ‘Politics’ are worth-mentioning. Jesus taught the Fatherhood of God. Gandhiji’s teaching is a useful craft.

3. Divergent views on the relationship between Education & Philosophy

Many people have come up with a lot of divergent views on the relationship between education and philosophy.

Some of them are as follows:

- a. No philosophy of education at all
 - b. Philosophy is the flower and not the root of education
 - c. All educational questions are ultimately questions of philosophy
 - d. Educational philosophy stands on its own feet.
 - e. Philosophy is the root of education
 - f. Philosophy is not the root of education
4. Different schools of philosophy: Idealism & Naturalism

Idealism is the exaltation of personality and Naturalism is to enable the individual to adjust himself to the environment.

What is Education?

Education brings changes in the behavior of a child which are for his good. In the modern times, education is not taken in the sense of simple information; but it is considered to be concerned with the present. It helps in the growth and development of a child at each stage of his life.

a. Need of specific aims of Education

The following factors answer the question of the need of specific aims of education:

- Formal education
- Curriculum
- Organizing of educational process
- Improvement in interest
- Utilization of time and power

b. Basis of establishing educational aims

The educational aims are formed and established on the basis of a manifold factors. Some them are:

- Philosophical basis
- Sociological basis
- Political basis
- Economic basis
- Psychological basis
- Scientific basis

c. Classification of Aims of Education

Aims of education may be grouped under two heads i.e.

1. General aims : Mental & Physical development
2. Specific aims : spiritual, democratic, social, national integration

General aims of education are:

- Physical development
- Mental development
- Social development
- Cultural development
- Moral & Character development
- Professional development

Specific aims of education are the following:

- Spiritual development
- Social development
- Training in appreciation of beauty
- Integration aim
- Education of citizenship
- Education for rights

Gandhiji's Philosophy of Education

Mahatma Gandhi is one of the visionaries who had a very clear idea of educational philosophy. He practiced all what he preached in his life. The very insight of so many valuable principles of life imprinted him in the minds of the people.

- a. *Gandhiji's Philosophy of Life*: 4 cardinal interactive principles such as truth, non-violence, fearlessness and *satyagraha* formed the skeleton of his life. Service to humanity and Seeing God in His creation were the key elements. According to him, *Ahimsa* is 'love for all and hatred for none'
- b. *Gandhiji's Philosophy of Education*: Educational experience at Phoenix settlement, at Tolstoy Farm in Africa and at *Sevagram Ashram* in India have helped him to evolve a philosophy of education. Pestazzi is to western world as Gandhi to India.
- c. *Education as defined by Gandhiji*:

Gandhiji tried to find the soul of education. It is evident in his definitions.

"Literacy is not an end of education, not even the beginning. It is one of the means."

His most popular definition is "Education is an all round drawing out of the best in child and man, and body, mind and spirit." Gandhian system is weaving round a suitable craft.

- d. *Aims of Education according to Gandhiji*:

Immediate goals:

- giving the citizens of the future a keen sense of personal worth, dignity and efficiency.
- Making the learner socially efficient by teaching him a craft
- Building the character of a child
- Giving freedom from all bondages

Ultimate aim: Realization of the ultimate reality (God) & Self-realization

- e. *Scheme of Education*: The scheme of education was centred round a basic productive craft i.e. profit yielding vocation.

Criticism of the self-sufficient aspect of Gandhiji's system of education: 1. Child should be pushed early into adult struggle 2. Child labor would be exploited and 3. Result in enforced labor, fatigue, money-making etc. But these are baseless: Children should be trained in pens, pencil, candlesticks, chalk sticks, ink, paper weight, mat, hand bag, envelope etc.

- f. *Methods of Education*: According to Gandhiji, the methods of education were based on three principles viz. 1. Principle of learning by doing, 2. Principle of integration of learning process, and 3. Principle of purposive learning. He emphasized on Productive Activity.

Main features of Productive Activity:

- It is not mechanical.
- It is not forced upon the child.
- It satisfies the liking of child.
- It is followed scientifically.
- It develops the child's social traits.
- It makes the child aware of social needs.

- g. *Place of teacher*: Teacher has different roles to perform. Teacher is a guide. He studies the interests of child. Centre of education is child. The education system should be

student-centered. No bookish knowledge can satisfy the needs of education. They learn by doing. Students gain perfection through experience and designed purposeful activity.

Conclusion

Education is a treasure and culture of which never dies. The philosophical minds come up with high thoughts and they are implemented through education. Education has mainly two aspects, the cultural aspect which makes a person grow, and productive aspect which makes a person do things. Both are essential. Everyone should be a producer as well as a good citizen and not a sponge on another person - (Nehru). May the flame of education enlighten the posterity!

Bibliography

Mathur, S.S. : *Educational Psychology*, Vinod Pustak Mandir, Agra, 1962

Amidon, E.J., and Hough, J.B.: *Interaction Analysis: Theory, Research and Application*, Addison Wesley, 1967

Sen, N.B.: *Great Thoughts on Education & Books*, New Book Society of India, New Delhi, 1996.

Sharma, Indra: *Educational Psychology*, Vinod Pustak Mandir, Agra, 1984

Bio-Note:

Dr. George Kolanchery, Asst. Professor of English, currently works at Bayan College (Aff. to Purdue University, USA), Oman. He is the Chairperson of College Research Committee and Coordinator of Curriculum Development. He also works as Reviewer for ELT Journals.

Ms. Yvette Mathew, Lecturer of English, presently works at Majan College, Oman. She has been an ELT professional for more than 15 years. Her area of interest is English Language Teaching Methodology.