

## SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDYING PHILOSOPHY IN UNDERSTANDING EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AND GOVERNANCE

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### ABSTRACT

*The present study aims to know the significance of studying philosophy in understanding educational policies and governance. Philosophy is so deeply involved into human life that everyone follows a philosophy whether he is aware of it or not. Human beings primitive or civilized, educated or uneducated, plodding or brilliant cannot escape from philosophy. The influence of philosophy on the education of an individual is tremendous. The super structure of an educational system is raised on the foundations of philosophical thinking. Philosophy makes a determined effort to lay down what education should consistently do in the face of contradictory demands coming from diverse interests of life. Philosophy explicit or implicit is always in the background for shaping things in education. Philosophy deals with the broader aspects of direction, purpose and effect. All educational programmes become consistent if their foundations are laid on sound philosophy. Philosophy coordinates the diverse interests of the individuals, his family, his community and his state. It gives unity of outlook and clarifies various factors of experience and makes the activities and experiences meaningful. It helps in reconstruction and readaptation of education to suit the needs of the contemporary society. Real educational progress is the product of philosophy.*

**Key Words:**

*Aims, Curriculum, Instructional Technique, Textbook, Discipline, Teachers, organization, Administrative and Supervision.*

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### INTRODUCTION

Philosophy is the art of living a tranquil and serene life. It is a skill to be acquired by prolonged training and rigorous practice. The Hegelian's conceive philosophy as a form of knowledge, indeed as the highest form of knowledge, a sort of super-science, which is superior to science, just as science is superior to common sense. The highest knowledge is immediate and rational, all comprehensive and concrete. Philosophy is a reasoned recourse into the ultimate problems of substance, the cosmos and the truth. It is an overall comprehensive and logical attempt in giving an overall world view. Philosophy aims to give more adequate understanding and conception of life, including a more inclusive ideal of life. It is a critical study of the conflicting values of life, to find out the best possible ways to manage life, in the face of these conflicts. It is an attempt to think truly about human experiences, as a whole.

Scientific progress has given a lot to the mankind, but has snatched the valuable treasure of love and affection from it. Scientists will have to realize that their progress should be for the constructive cause of the human beings. Then and only then, we shall be able to achieve our highest cause, for the good of all. Similarly the persons of other disciplines, such as social sciences are equally supposed to know the philosophy, scientific discoveries and inventions. Inventive mind always helps the innovators to invent the things and side by side they must know the 'why', 'wherefore' of every process and to achieve the highest ideals of life. They will have to philosophize their ideals and ideology. Therefore, scientists must know something of philosophy and vice-versa.

Life passes through many problems, the problem of individual nature and collective nature, the general problems and specific problems such as growing uncontrolled

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population, poverty, illiteracy, ignorance, diseases, unemployment, threatening by big powers and social evils etc. The only solution to check and control these problems is to humanize the minds for love of humanity. For that we have to study philosophy from purely philosophical sense because it provides incentive, elevates intellect and presents the solution of the problems that we are facing in our day to day life.

Philosophy is the theory of education in its most general phase, as no educational structure can be built without the solid foundations of philosophy. While philosophy attempts to identify the 'why' and 'wherefore' education formulates the 'what' and 'how' of the educational process and indeed, the process of all learning. The corner stone of education is the philosophical premise, that learning and educational process, as well as teaching and instructional process, is built around the potential and possibilities of the mind, consciousness, reasoning, intuition and understanding.

All modern educationists hold the view that not only should the educator be equipped with the knowledge of a variety of subjects, but also that he should have his own philosophy of education, without which he cannot efficiently solve the problem in teaching from day to day. Fichte correctly pointed out that, the art of education will never attain complete clearness in itself without philosophy. Hence there is an interaction between the two, and either without the other is incomplete and unserviceable. For the good of life, the good of individual and the good of the society, we need direction and this direction is provided exclusively by philosophy, which is the mother of all sciences including education.

Max Black in 'A Note on Philosophy of Education', Harvard Educational Review (Spring 1956) has very aptly remarked. "All serious discussion of educational problems, no matter how specific, soon leads to a consideration of educational aims, and becomes a conversation about the good life, the nature of man, the varieties of experience. But these are the

perennial themes of philosophical investigation. It might seem a hard thing to expect educators to be philosophers, but can they be anything else." Divorced from philosophy, education would become an aimless endeavour, a hopeless waste of time and energy; philosophy gives its point, its target and its goal.

Education is the active aspect of philosophical ideals of life. Education is the roof and philosophy is the root. Education is the way of life and philosophy is the sum total of their aspirations, ideals, values finding worth and the fulfillment in educational programmes and activities.

The study of philosophy is very helpful in understanding the following practices, policies, trends and governance in education:-

#### **PHILOSOPHY AND AIMS**

Aims are often used interchangeably with the terms - goals, purposes, ultimate objectives and broad objectives. Aims are important guides in education, without aims the entire education process is meaningless. Philosophy is the best guide for formulating aims, which when rooted in deep philosophical thinking, gives concrete guidance to classroom teaching. Aims of education are relative to aims of life, which in turn stem from philosophical thinking about values, reality and knowledge. Aims of education are determined by the prevailing philosophy that is why they change with the change in philosophy of life. Philosophy specifies the essentials and requirements of happy, healthy and harmonious life. Education translates them into aims. Diverse and conflicting thinking on the aims of education are resolved and reconciled by philosophy.

When we examine the aims of society, we must take into account not only the forces of change and social pressures but also existing philosophies. People react differently to the same events; they appraise, reflect and react to the tendencies of the times according to their biases and values. In short, the aims we advocate are based not only on social forces impinging on society but also on philosophy of education.

Philosophy not only tries to lay down the aims, but also tries to prescribe them in accordance with requirements of time and environment. Without philosophy we lack a framework for developing aims.

### **PHILOSOPHY AND CURRICULUM**

The goals and objective of any educational effort can only be implemented through a curriculum which translates them into subjects, units of instruction, themes and topics. Curriculum is very much influenced by philosophy. The philosophical approach to life is the guiding factor in the determination of the curriculum. Gandhiji's scheme of basic education was an expression of his philosophy. His scheme of studies therefore, emphasized craft and the environment. He was very keen to make education self-supporting, besides developing moral character. The National Policy on Education, 1986 lays stress on a core curriculum keeping in view the needs of emotional and national integration. Introduction of self-government in school programme, is the outcome of democratic philosophy.

Philosophy determines curriculum or the contents of education. Education in independent India is expected to train the children in accordance with the philosophy, as enshrined in our constitution. Specific curriculum problems demand a philosophy for their satisfactory solutions. Philosophy supplies the basic principles of what knowledge, what attitudes and abilities should we develop in children. Philosophy answers that every subject has extrinsic and intrinsic values. It also lays down that curriculum should always be reconstructed and made useful "in meeting each crisis, as it arises".

### **PHILOSOPHY AND INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUE**

Instructional technique is selected in order to fulfill the aims of education in life and so it has to be in consonance with them. This is determined by philosophy. Instructional technique is a triangular process, involving the teacher, the

taught and the subject. It raises many problems: should the teacher dominate the classroom situation? Should he only be a senior partner in the teaching- learning process? Should the child be allowed freedom? Should the child be allowed restricted freedom? All such questions and the problems that arise in the classroom technique are satisfactorily tackled by philosophy.

Philosophy emphasizes that instructional techniques must recognize the inborn gift, the learning ability and the capacities of children. It wishes that activity and interest should be tapped for giving knowledge to the children. Instructional technique has to be so designed that the goals of education are achieved. Philosophy is concerned both with facts and values about all aspects of human being, the world around him and his status in the cosmos. Every action that has to serve its purpose properly, has to be guided by philosophy and that it is true of method.

### **PHILOSOPHY AND TEXTBOOK**

Textbooks are the actual learning experiences/ materials. Textbooks also reflect the aspirations of people and help to create respect for higher values among the young mind. According to wisely, "textbook reflects and establishes standards" and indicates "too frequently, perhaps, what teacher is required to know and what the pupils are required to learn." Teacher must know what he is required to teach and a pupil must know what he is required to learn, yet maintaining the standards and values prescribed approved by philosophy and allowing no tampering.

What should be the appropriate textbook is determined by life values fixed by philosophy. If the life values of the prevailing philosophy are reflected in the content material of the textbooks, then they are considered to be appropriate textbooks. If they oppose the prevailing philosophy of life, they are considered inappropriate. A textbook sets up the norms of knowledge which the children are expected to know, provided it is written according to the prevailing philosophy of the nation.

### **PHILOSOPHY AND DISCIPLINE**

Discipline too, is determined by the philosophy of life accepted at a particular time. Discipline is nothing, but the conduct of educand. Discipline even reflects the political philosophy prevalent in the country. In a despotic system of government, repression is common. In a democracy, the doctrine of emancipation is advocated as a disciplinary measure. In the impressionist's system, it is the personal influence of the teacher which is effective in ensuring discipline. Repressionists believe in the method of physical force, emancipationists advocate the method of love and understanding, and impressionists favour the method of persuasion. All these are born out of philosophy of the person who is responsible for the maintenance of discipline or due to the political philosophy prevailing at the time.

What type of discipline should it be? Should it be a military type of strong regimentation, or should it be a free discipline? Should discipline be judged from the large list of fines put on the notice board, or should discipline be judged from the absence of fine list altogether? All these issues are decided by philosophy. Hence, the nature and extent of discipline depends on one's philosophical faith and belief.

### **PHILOSOPHY AND TEACHER**

Teacher must be dynamic, energetic, scholarly and sympathetic, with clear philosophical views on teaching and education. He is a mediator between the learner and learning. The teacher gets his theory of teaching from philosophy. Philosophy provides direction to the teacher and enables him to think critically, constructively and rationally. Teacher is the back-bone of educative progress. He must have the knowledge, the light and the reason for progress. He can have all this only if he has the insight of philosophy. Gentile has rightly remarked, "The belief that men may continue to educate without concerning

themselves with philosophy means a failure to understand the precise nature of education\_\_\_\_\_ the process of education cannot go on right lines without the help of philosophy."

Philosophy provides direction to the teacher. It helps teacher in understanding man / pupil, his life, his actions, ideals and problems. The teacher must understand that child is a living being and he is to be enabled to understand the philosophical values enshrined in the constitution. A teacher therefore must have a philosophy, a clearly defined and discernable outlook on all educational matters. In the words of Adler, "Thus we begin to see not only the distinct sphere of the philosophy of education, as answering questions, unanswerable by science but also the need for a philosophy of education, for without it there could be no certain determinations of the basic practical principles, underlying the policies which direct actual day to day educational practices."

It is therefore, very essential that teacher must have a consistent and sound philosophy in accordance with the philosophy of the nation to which he belongs.

### **PHILOSOPHY AND ORGANIZATION, ADMINISTRATION AND SUPERVISION**

Democratic philosophy lays emphasis on sympathetic and imaginative system of organization, administration and supervision which is essential for initiating and accelerating educational reforms. It lays stress on the participation of the staff and students in running some programmes of the educational institutions. Educational organization, administration and supervision implies a comprehensive effort to direct, guide and integrate associating human strivings, which are focused towards some specific ends or aims set for the society. Philosophy helps us in preventing misdirection of resources and energies, and to deal successfully with the increasing complexity and responsibility of the profession.



## CONCLUSION

There is a need for philosophy in every aspect of life and education. From every angle of educational problem comes thus, the demand for a philosophical basis of the subject. The call of the time is to scatter the seeds of philosophy everywhere, so that the cultivation may bring its fruits, grains in the form of its reward. Some drastic changes are needed. A development-oriented system of school and mass-education is required. Educational theory and practice need to be combined, so that it may give literary, scholarly, economically productive and creative results. Prior to studying any subject, its philosophy must be studied, then only then, we shall be able to draw crystallized results.

Our main concern in the context of "significance of studying philosophy in understanding education" is our approach towards the policy and the strategy for equitable management of school and mass education in India. The brief picture of existing educational inequity and inequality, areas of poor achievement and the major challenges should guide our thinking in this respect.

Hence we find that formation of our aims, the choice of a suitable curriculum, or even text books, the use of proper methods and devices, the decision about the type of discipline to be maintained and how to maintain it are the ultimate questions of philosophy and knowledge of all these is very essential to make education purposeful, inspirational and effective. Education is a plant on which the flower of philosophy blossoms.

Thus, we conclude that the process of educational policies and governance cannot go on the right lines without the help of philosophy. Since philosophy speaks the language of analysis and reason therefore, there is hardly any problem of education which is not solved by philosophy.

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