

Philosophy of Education in Contemporariness.

Jatindra Kumar Behera.

General Manger (Works), Ganges Jute Private Ltd. Kolkata.

Abstract: *Integrality, indivisibility & interrelatedness of Philosophy & Education are underscored from following view points.*

a) **Views of Ross** – “Philosophy & Education are two sides of same Coin, the former is contemplative while later is active side”.

b) **Views of John Dewey** – “Philosophy is theory of Education in most general phase”.

c) **Fichte’s View** – “The Art of Education will never attain complete clearness without Philosophy”.

d) **Gentile’s View** – “Education without Philosophy would mean a failure to understand precise nature of Education”.

Dewey further observes, “Education is the laboratory in which philosophic distinctions become concrete & are tested”.

Education is the dynamic side of philosophy (Wisdom) & is the lone & strongest instrument for the achievement of ideals of life & civilized attempt to bring about balanced & proper development of human personality, it is best means of propagating Philosophy. Philosophy gives ideals, values, principles & education works on these elements to rational contemporary needs of the society.

The ultimate potential of Education is realized when Greek Philosopher Aristotle says – “All those who have mediated in the art of governing mankind have been convinced that fate of empire depends on youth education”.

Education being the process of making manifest latent in a child makes him a self-reliant & selfless human being, creates sound mind in a sound body, develops activities in the individual enabling him to control the surrounding environment. While philosophy deals with ends, education acts as the means to achieve those ends.

Education can thus be defined as the commanding force which derives its activities from Philosophy & proceeds to deliver a balanced society in all senses of the term. But the corner stone of education is described at its best as

Becoming literate is not education

Getting a degree is not education

Gaining knowledge & new skills are education.

This explains in complete measure why despite having education of global standard, India represents contradictions like grossly unjustified poverty, unwarranted Socio – economic & political disorders.

Keywords: *Interrelatedness, Etymologically, Contradictions, Cosmopolitanism, Modulate, Bankruptcy, Positivism, Sanctimonious, Transcending, Humanism, Excellence.*

I. Introduction

Let me start with definition of “**Philosophy of Education**” with sole objective of critically emphasizing the very issue under deliberation.

Etymologically the word education is derived from Latin word **Educare** meaning “**bring forth what is within**”, “**Bring out potential & also related to ducare which means to lead.**” The word philosophy literally means love of wisdom derived from two Greek words, i.e. **Phileo** (Love) & **Sophia** (Wisdom). Hence Philosophy of education in essence translates into embracing the wisdom to lead and education is the lone potential instrument to have formative effect on mind, Character, Physical ability to bring about composite growth of human being as requisite qualification to actively and committedly participate in the role of meeting national needs and aspirations both through scientific approach as advocated by of J.L.Neheru, M.N.Roy etc in proper combination with traditional Indian thoughts of Revivalism, Rationalism, Humanism, Neo Vedanta, Integralism, Positivism, Nationalism, Cosmo-Politanism, Electicism, Idealism, Realism & Plagiarism in their contemporariness as envisioned by great thinkers like Swami Vivekananda, Aurovinda, Gandhiji, Rabindra nath Tagore, S. Radhakrishnan etc.

Observations like

a) “**As much as living to dead**” – Greek philosopher Aristotle on how much educated men are superior to those uneducated.

b) **“The essence of education lies in drawing out the best in you. Earning money can never be the purpose of education. Acquiring good qualities is the only aim of education”**– M.Ghandhi.

“The recitation of Gita will be of no avail if it does not help in building the character” – M.Ghandhi.

c) **“Essence of Education is education of the body”** – Benjamin.

d) **“Learning is the treasure that follows its owner everywhere”** – Chinese Poverty.

e) **“Our value Agnostic Education system is content in churning out moral Idiots and Ethical illiterates”** – N.A. Palkivala.

“We have too much of judiciary with too little of justice, too much of administration with too little of governance, too much of control with too little of welfare” – N.A. Palkivala.

f) **“A Nation can be built neither by the zealots who limit themselves with religions ghettoisation of their minds nor by mere pragmatists who cut their coat of pride and policy according to the cloth grudgingly supplied by the international Bankers”** – Chandan Mitra.

g) **“Few things are certain to be uncertain. Native ability without education is like a tree without Fruit”** – Theodore Roosevelt.

h) **Substance of the Book “The future at the bottom of the pyramid” – eradicating poverty through profits** – by late management Guru Prof. C.K.Prahallad.

k) **“No gate can withstand the crush of poverty”** – Gunter Grass.

encompassing various phenomenon and activities across entire spectrum of human society is certainly embedded within and addressed through philosophy of education, so large is its cature, really awesome and very very difficult to comprehend. Philosophy is curiousness of human being to know its origin ,his aim , his destiny , his relationship with the God and everything that comes to his mind , hence Very rightly it is called **mother of all Arts and science of all sciences**

II. Role of Education: -

Philosophy of Education according to Prof. C.Seshadri is the analytical function carried out on educational Concepts, Policy, Theory, Programmes and Practices. Education in its largest sense through act or experience empowers humanity with Knowledge, Skill, modulates physical & mental capabilities, thus acts as the vehicle in transmitting accumulated knowledge, skill & values from generation to generation & in greater term from civilization to civilization.

Education seeks to systematically, gradually influence & modulate human mind through well defined, structured instructions aimed at harmonious development of all potentials of human being – Physical, Social, intellectual, Spiritual in developing creative mind, well defined self, Socio – political & economic purpose & experience related to interests of individuals, societies & from historic development as prerogative of privileged few, education has become a human right in form of **Right to Education** enshrined in our constitution even though I venture to put on record that this right is yet to be administered in fullest letter & spirit. Put more abstractly, education at its best equips individuals with skills, substantive knowledge that enables them to define, pursue their own goals in process of participating in various human activities as full fledged & autonomous citizen. The direction & magnitude are most fundamental components of all kinds of education & knowledge human being acquires, but in specific context of liberalized, globalized society & civilization characterized with unprecedented communication revolution, metropolitan materialism & consumerism rapidly spreading into countryside too (this encompasses economic growth also) which doubtlessly is an welcome augury, but most unfortunate part is degradation erosion of ethical & moral conduct, rather its near complete bankruptcy almost at all levels in pursuit of blinding & grossly irrational self interest at cost of priceless Greater human and national goals. While this rot is spreading faster and wider critically challenging all the laws , regulations in place to arrest these , the morale of issues is deployment of acquired knowledge in diametrically opposite direction that renders the education , most potent force for human development into ineffective and counter productive one thus making complete mockery of philosophy of education. It is rightly said, **“Integrity without wisdom is meaningless and wisdom without intergrity is most dangerous”**.

III. Democracy – A victim of Liberty

Honestly speaking , even a rudimentary assessment of current functioning of Democratic polity in India- a western diplomat is surprised how India with its very well developed infrastructure, third scientific manpower in the world etc manages to remain poor to which his Indian counter part responds in frustration that India is poor not by nature , but by policy and that it has excelled at art of perpetuating poverty - is not only ineffective towards public wefare, nor any such positivism is visible for days & years to come despite current rise of civil society to certain degree. Can we, as our Epic Gita says, hope to witness reincarnation of heavenly

power, to bring an end to abuse of democracy and usher in a regime of peace and prosperity for all or is it the operational efficiency of Democracy to which we have to reconcile ourselves as fate accompli.

IV. Desecration of Dignity & Divinity

In our system , we have got schools , colleges universities , several other seats of higher learning in almost every wing of education functioning with well defined curriculam to impart moral material growth of students into well equipped and autonomas citizens . Families and society at large have also to discharge their obligatory responsibility in fulfilling such attainments.

According to **Acton Institute**, the human person , created in the image of god , is individually unique , rational, subject of moral agency and co creator Accordingly he possess intrinsic values and dignity , implying certain rights and duties for himself and other persons. Although human persons find ultimate fulfillment in communion with god, one essential aspect of development of person is our social nature and capacity to act for disinterested ends. The Institution of civil society, especially family are primary sources of society's moral culture. These institutions are neither created by nor derive their legitimacy from states. The state in turn must dutifully respect their autonomy. Other values of human superiority are covered under Human action, sin, rule of law & subsidiary role of Govt., creation of wealth, economic liberty, economic value & priority of culture.

Despite being endowed with God's image, dignity & all other superlative characters on the earth, it is truly distressing that human being of all hues become perpetrators of all forms of tyranny on fellow human being thus senselessly subverting heavenly human spirit within himself. Considering spiritual aspect of philosophy of education ,can we ensure that virtues do not turn into vices .Can it materialize from shrill & feeble voices emanating from very very few & very very far between in this sprawling hinterland called Earth in general & Mother India in particular.

V. Education as a Marketing Commodity

Under the heading "**The concept & Aims of Education**" in his presentation "**Philosophy of Education as a knowledge field**" Prof. C.Seshadri discusses sheer materialization of education in sharp contrast to conceptual / ideological meaning of education, its status as good, justification of education & its social objectives like self realization. While equipping with necessary skill to be a skilled worker in corporate, market driven economy, a decisive balance of value system in its contemporariness must be imbibed to make it a living force with human face. While globalization & market economy might be requiring specific skills, grossly unethical activities like turning education as a marketing commodity, demeaning ethical quality & excellence can not simply be attributed to market forces, it is prime responsibility of Govt. authorities, private enterprises & society at large to function under meticulously blended culture of tradition & modernity. This now being the emerging order of the day, we must not fail in re-orienting ourselves retaining the traditional identity & culture in revised version. An excruciating facet is privatization of education particularly at elementary level not as supplement to Govt. activities in this area but as supplanting it with an artificial public school system with English as medium of instruction. My concern is complete degeneration in quality of education in Govt. owned vernacular schools. It has been rightly advocated to impart education in mother tongue in pursuit of maintaing our own culture, but English as a language must be restored from early stage to acquaint the students with this majestic language.

Proper orientation for Grammar, Essay writing, precise writing, Debates on various issues including current affairs must be practiced to develop potential towards English from very beginning so that in future days to come, they can be groomed properly to take up higher learning in English language & this alone can empower them parallel to those from Public School system for higher & elite services.

Rather such students from rural hinterland finding way to upper strata of the society will provide much needed meaning to Public service, human welfare and will discharge their duties with lesser weakness (Every man has his own human weakness in pursuit of power, material wealth) in view of their upbringing rooted in ground reality as compared to their public school counterpart brought up under culture of "**Oasis**" (Completely detached from realities of surrounding human society).

Near complete abolition of English at elementary level in vernacular medium Govt. Schools has created an artificial & unwarranted demand for mushrooming public schools where parents from economically lower strata manage expenses of their wards with back breaking difficulty. This distortion in Govt. policy towards elementary education has wrought havoc, for example one Mr Anil.Meena of Rajasthan from vernacular schooling made up to AIIMS through sheer merit, but unfortunately hanged himself due to his miserable failure in coping up with teachings in English. This is simply the symptom but the disease in more deep rooted. Such a gory occurrence of national shame has as usual evoked lukewarm response & authorities must take due note in devising appropriate curriculum at ground level to maintain social equilibrium.

It is extremely painful that such a noble system maintained at Govt. Exchequer has undergone unspeakable degeneration, exemplifies absolute apathy to an urgent, genuine Socio – Economic need resulting in counter productive performance in term of delivering hopelessly ill-equipped, mostly unemployable graduates & post graduates. Such unproductive **youth force with very limited skill & knowledge simply take to all roads leading to make a living through destructive & subversive means. Falling to trap laid by both outside & inside fountainheads of terrorism & insurgency become the obvious off-shoot.** It is yet to be realized leave alone properly addressed that our short sighted, myopic & quite often elite outlook to this fundamental aspect is becoming root cause of most of evils. In very nutshell, global standard universities, colleges & institutions of excellence erected upon such shaky foundations can hardly deliver services to meet genuine Socio – economic & political needs of nation in our democratic polity.

VI. Conclusion

(Indian Constitutional Provision) Constitutional right & Duties.

A vital document which has united one of the world's oldest & largest civilizations for 120 Core populations speaking as many as 25 official dialects & more than 250 regional dialects, the Indian constitution through its 412 articles, 12 schedules epitomizes collective will & aspiration of all Indians. Through various articles & schedules, the constitution sanctions for all citizens justice, equality & fraternity in all walks of life.

Education as a Fundamental right: - The constitution among others, provides fundamental right to education, the state shall provide free & compulsory education to all the children of Six to Fourteen years of age, emphasizes that no religious instruction shall be provided in institution wholly maintained out of state fund except those institutions established under trust, emphasizes facilities for instruction in mother tongue at primary stage to preserve the tradition & culture, provides rights to minorities to establish & administer educational institutions, emphasizes that no citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by state on ground only on religion, race, caste, language or any of them.

While granting several other fundamental right, education being only an aspect, the constitution defines some rational duties like a) To abide by constitution and respect its ideals, institutions, National flag & National anthem b) To cherish & follow noble ideals which inspired our national struggle for freedom c) To uphold & protect sovereignty, unity & integrity of India d) To defend the country & render national services when called upon to do so e) To promote harmony & spirit of common brotherhood among all people of India transcending religion, linguistic, regional, sectoral diversities, to renounce practices derogatory to dignity of women f) To value & preserve rich heritage of our composite culture g) To protect, lakes, rivers, wildlife & to have compassion for living creatures. h) To develop scientific temper, humanism & spirit of enquiry & reform.

My objective of deliberation on Indian constitution, rights primarily with respect to education & fundamental duties is to emphasize philosophy of education that performs a critical & sanctimonious responsibility in accomplishing these. But in present context when quality education of excellence & international standards is surging ahead forcefully unfortunately devoid of values, ideals & principles of philosophy, the outcome is material education without moral values, misguided missiles with enormous destructive force, modernity rather market

force & globalization devoid of much needed traditional identity, all these put together spell darkness for all of us and final denouement is we are brain dead to realize & completely blind to visualize it. The ultimate outcome is a fatally wounded civilization with deep wounds unfortunately inflicted by inside forces and this painful reflection is borne in title of the Book **“India , The siege within –Challenge to a Nations unity”** Written by eminent Indian Journalist M J Akbar on eve of operation Blue Star in Punjab in 1984 and **“No fullstop in India”** by celebrated BBC Correspondent and Author Mark Tully. All these negativities notwithstanding, India still possesses numerous positive facets & God willing, wisdom will dawn on us to make the best out of Philosophy of Education.

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