

Pedagogical Patterns in India across the Times

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Abstract

Education enriches life by increasing the power and inclination to reason. It makes formative influence and causes a young person to be, at a given point, what he is. Education is the apprenticeship of life. It must be complete and humane. According to Dr. Radhakrishnan, "It must include not only the training of the intellect but also the refinement of the heart and the discipline of the spirit. The choice of methods of teaching depends on a philosophy of education. Method is a means by which a contact is developed between the students and the subject matter. In the absence of an adequate philosophy of life, the method of teaching employed by the teacher may repel the student from the subject. What to talk about the students with special needs, who need various didactic inputs to bring them at par with the age specific developmental level. Various educationists and philosophers have prescribed different techniques of teaching according to their bent of mind or mental disposition and scheme of education. Different Indian schools of philosophy like the Vedanta, Buddhism, Jainism, Islam, and Idealism, Naturalism, Pragmatism, Realism, etc. and their implications on teaching methodology are being deliberated in this paper.

KEYWORDS: Education; Pedagogy; Training; Teacher, Special needs children.

Introduction

Education is a process of initiating the child into the ways of adult life. As children grow from infancy to adulthood, they need to learn many kinds of skills like language, reading, writing and mathematics, the most basic skills for living life. They need to learn practical skills and skills associated with work which are essential for living a quality life. They would need to know the 'where, what, why, when and how' of education. It is important that at the end of the teaching learning process an individual is capable to respond to "What one knows", "What one believes and feels", "What to do", and "How to do". The basic endeavor for seeking education is receiving information to make sound and wise decisions in life. For this we need skills to transfer knowledge, attitudes or values, and putting acquired knowledge and skills into action. These abilities help individual to be successful in living a productive and satisfying life.

We are faced with an important question in education sector as "Education for what?" Schools often do not attend to children's world of feelings, ideas and moral dilemmas. As a result children do have the skills to transact day-to-day realities in an effective way, but cannot handle worldly issues like, sexuality, abuse, HIV/AIDS, risk behaviors, behavior choices, gender, conflict resolution, aggression, etc. They cannot make healthy choices and decisions. Hence the need for life skills becomes relevant. Education basically provides us with effective acquisition of life skills which influence the way we feel about ourselves; the way others perceive us; our productivity; our self-confidence;

our self-esteem; and our inter-personal relations. Our focus is thus more on adolescence and youth period as these children are growing from childhood to maturity; from childhood to adulthood mentally, emotionally, socially and physically. This period is known as a golden period of life, productive period of life, delicate period of life, and storm and stressful period of life. They are neither treated as a child nor as an adult. They are always in search of identity and role models. The age group given by World Health Organisation (WHO) is 10-19 years. These young people are curious, courageous, friendly, creative, risk takers and like themselves to be trusted. By adopting various teaching pedagogy, education for them can become relevant and everlasting.

A Portuguese philosopher Paulo Freire in his writings 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed' proposed a pedagogy with a new relationship between teacher, student, and society. Pedagogical patterns are high level patterns that have been recognized in many areas of training and pedagogy such as group work, software design, human computer interaction, discussions, brainstorming, role play, educational games, debates, games and songs, case studies, field visits, organization of events and special days etc. These would help to put individuals in a better position to translate their dreams and values into constructive actions; provide inner power and strength to deal with daily life; transfer knowledge skills, attitudes that one has acquired into application for one's life. In the case of children with special needs it becomes all the more important that the teacher uses different methods of teaching catering to their specific learning needs.

According to Aldous Huxley, "Men live in accordance with their conception of the world". No aspect of human life and human activity is separated from philosophy. A person "who has taste for every sorts of knowledge, who is curious to learn and is never satisfied" is termed as a Philosopher. Different Indian schools of philosophy have evolved diverse teaching methodologies over the ages which have been discussed here.

Vedanta school of thought:

The exponent of this school of thought, Sankracharya, believed that the main soul is pure and unblemished and it can realize the ultimate 'Brahma' only through devotion and karma without true knowledge. To know the real self or "Brahma" is salvation or 'moksha'. 'Sruties' in ancient literature have emphasized on knowledge which is to know the 'self and Brahma' as one and the same element. A living being is full of consciousness and intelligence. Hence, setting dynamism in the individual. Devotion and karma reform and develop the capacity of soul towards the highest accomplishment leading to the ultimate knowledge or 'gyan'.

For achieving this objective Sankracharya laid emphasis on the three methods of teaching i.e. knowledge centered, devotion centered, and karma centered. Knowledge centered method included real vision and logical conclusion through logical reasoning. Devotion centered method included self-surrender with the ideal which leads towards Salvation. Karma centered method included fasting, penance, charity, abstinence, self-purification and self-realization. The supreme method is the knowledge of the formless, attribute less, limitless and ultimate reality which is nothing but Brahma. This knowledge, as per this school of thought, will lead the individual towards Salvation (Moksha).

The methods followed by the propounders of this school are:

- Shraavan Vidhi, the method of attentively listening to the teachings of Guru
- Manan Vidhi, the method of pondering over what the teachings of the Guru
- Nididhyasan Vidhi, the method of reaching the point of a definite conclusion
- Question-answer method, an important technique for helping the students to remove doubts with the help of Guru
- Tarak Vidhi, the method of reasoning
- Vyakhya Vidhi, the method of making concise matter easy to comprehend
- Adhyaropa Vidhi, to plan out the unreal to the real
- Drishtant Vidhi, is illustration method
- Katha Vidhi, the story telling method
- Updesh Vidhi, the lecture method

Both Katha and Updesh Vidhi's are a result of listening method.

Buddhist school of thought

Lord Buddha always tried to explain his principles intellectually and usually avoided long discussions. Observing the degeneration of faith he emphasized on experience and efforts. The consciousness of attachment and ill-will makes its impression. Impression is of three types - action, speech and image. Corporeal actions are karma-sanskar, reasoning or thinking, whereas recognition and feelings are called image. One gets knowledge of external things by means of sensory organs. The miseries spread throughout the world are not beneficial; in fact they are the result of the deeds of different people. Buddhism acknowledged three sources of Karma-Physical, Verbal and Mental. The mental gave birth to an idea, verbal expressed it, and the physical side converted it into action. Lord Buddha was a Bodhisattva, a person who is desirous of getting Knowledge, found the causes of suffering and means of removing them. Ignorance is the main cause of all misery and sufferings of mankind. In his search for knowledge brought status and earned him the title of 'Buddha'.

Buddha followed the pragmatic way of life and stressed on one's experiences, actions, or deeds. He stressed upon adopting the theory of Karma; and the teachers, parents and students should shape their ways of life accordingly. He emphasized on: with right insight one may keep oneself away from the mundane things; appropriate speech enables self-control; sweetness of speech encourages a person to behave properly to abandon violence in thought, word and deed, moral actions and moral behaviors and even chant is vital. Apart from these basic elements of knowledge i.e. right memory and purifying one's conscience, is also necessary for salvation. He stressed on practical activities to achieve the ultimate aim of education.

Jain School of Thought

Jain or *Jaina* philosophy is pluralist and relativist in nature. Consciousness is the essence of the soul or *Jiva*. The Jaina system propounded two types of knowledge, the *Pramana* and the *Nyaya* i.e. judgement about a particular thing. *Pramana* is of two types, the direct and indirect, in which direct knowledge is gained by means of sense

organs. It is valid in its own way. Direct knowledge is either practical or worldly. Practical knowledge is achieved through mind, senses, qualities, certainty and impression of full knowledge about the object. The worldly person is unaffected from actions and is independent of mind and senses. Indirect knowledge is of five kinds - memory, recognition, logic, inference and testimony. For the *Jainas* a perfect vision implies a synthesis of all the *Nyayas*.

Jaina literally refers to a person who has overcome his sensual vices and has obtained full control over his worldly desires. This system stressed on practical activities or one's own experiences, thus emphasizing on experimental method and 'learning by doing' method. *Jaina* philosophy of education believed that truth must be viewed from varied angles. The views of the students should be harmonized to get a thorough knowledge of the subject. One must abstain from imposing one view. With this method the student is able to maintain a balance in every situation. Thus, *Jaina* system laid emphasis on discussion method to maximize the participation of the student in the teaching learning process. It also advocated group activities like group projects, self-control, and sense of responsibility towards their nation.

The teaching learning methods as per this school of thought should be such that they create an environment in the educational institutions which helps in developing right understanding of the whole situation, to provide right knowledge about the existence of the self, and to help in the character formation of the students. *Jaina* system focused on work-oriented education which provides practical knowledge to the students which would later become useful for life as it will help them in earning a living. Thus, this system stressed on socialized techniques, experiments, learning by doing, coordination, etc.

Islamic School of Thought

According to Islamic philosophy, man is capable of modifying the activities of himself and his society so as to actualize the divine pattern in himself as his fellows and environment must all be capable of receiving the effectual action of man. Islam suggests rationalistic activities for man. The principle of openness to new or contrary evidence protects individuals against liberalism, fanaticism and stagnation, causing conservatism. Tolerance is the acceptance of the present until its dishonesty has been recognized. Tolerance necessitates man to undertake the study of religions with a view to discover the ancient gift of God, which have been sent through his disciples at all places and times to teach.

Islamic system of education includes processes of consensus and co-operation on one hand and conflict and competition on the other hand through various activities in the school which will help them in their future life as a member of the society. It highlighted the importance of practical work, project work, etc. and through these activities the students will develop a sense of responsibility, co-operation, group feeling, feeling of team work and scientific attitude. By including these in the teaching learning process it intended to develop creativity, decision making, discipline, social qualities, positive and scientific attitude and religious attitude with the help of practical activities and personal experiences. The method of teaching was oral, as the main task

of the teacher was to give lectures and the students were supposed to listen passively. The students were required to prepare their lessons individually. This helped them to be active in studies.

School of Idealism

The proponents of this school sought after higher values as being much more significant in life than anything else. It explains man and universe in terms of spirit or mind. It takes its muse from the ideas evolved by Plato, the greatest philosopher of the times. It does not advocate any special method of education but follows the traditional method. The greatest contributors to this school of thought are Pestalozzi and Froebel. Pestalozzi proposed self-activities by children for gaining knowledge. Method of instructions in all subjects should be based on psychological findings and not on abstract statements. He advocated teaching through number, form and language and the lesson should provide opportunities to children for handling objects themselves. He emphasized on project and play-way methods in modern education. Similarly, Froebel developed the methodology of play termed as “kindergarten”. For him play was a spontaneous activity possessing in it great possibilities of self-realization. Some advocates of idealism propounded teaching techniques as questioning, discussion, lecture method, single and group projects, and imitation.

School of Naturalism

Contrary to school of idealism, naturalism greatly influenced the educational theory and practice. The naturalists believed that nature alone represented the entire reality. Human life for them is a part of the scheme of nature. They are not in favour of direct teaching through lectures or textbooks. They advocated the direct experience of things and believed in the principle of “Learning by doing”. Book knowledge should be as little as possible. For teaching language, direct method of teaching is advocated to vocabulary of the student. In teaching of science and mathematics, heuristic method is emphasized. Geography is to be taught through actual excursion and observation.

The naturalists advocated play-way method of imparting education which created a spirit of joyful, spontaneous and creative activity. Freedom to the pupils to choose their own schedule of work helped them to learn through observation and experimentation. Open air schools, self-government in schools and the establishment of co-education in educational institutions became a pre-requisite for the naturalists.

School of Pragmatism

The pragmatists live in the world of facts and not in a world of ideals or ideas. For them utility is truth and truth is utility and the importance of manpower. They believe in practical and utilitarian philosophy. The major exponents of this theory are William James, John Dewey and S. Kilpatrick.

The pragmatists shun the old and obsolete methods of teaching. They believe in experimenting with new methods. These methods are devised by the teacher in the light of real life situations. They focused on Learning by doing; action rather than reflection; himself solve the problem practically which arise out of situations, further keeping him

engaged in purposeful creative activity. Project method helped the child to acquire certain principles, skills and methods not formally but incidentally. For the exponents of this school, the curriculum and the subject matter are all considered from the child's points of view.

School of Realism

Aristotle has been the major exponent of realism. For understanding this period, it is important to examine the conditions prevalent during the middle ages. In Europe, bookish knowledge was popular, consequently creating a wide gap between the real life and education. This period also witnessed inventions of Newton's law of gravitation, Harvey's theory of blood circulation and Bacon's formulation of new scientific method. This led to the new spirit of inquiry into the realities of nature. Interest in language and literature started waning and a new interest in man and environment developed. This new outlook was termed as Realism in education.

Realists influenced the classroom procedures and the preparation of textbooks. The teacher while presenting facts is not expected to express his subjective opinion on the matter, and follow an objective method of teaching. The teacher is expected to become a faithful translator so that through him the facts themselves may become real and impress themselves on the pupils. The realist method of teaching regards the whole as a product of the part. The teacher uses a synthetic method of presentation in the classroom as well in the preparation of textbooks. He brings out a beauty out of the parts, yet the factual nature of the part is not destroyed.

School of Existentialism

The exponents of this school view man as participating in a world of things and events and encouraging other men. The centre of existence is man rather than truth, laws, principles or essence. Man is characterized by decisions, will and choice. The phenomenon of man is life and it is lived, and the mystery is an awareness of man'

Existentialist's emphasized on knowledge through intimate personal contacts; individual attention to every individual; no indoctrination; home education; education for creativity; no place for group dynamics. They favored the Socratic approach to teaching. They preferred better home education to school education. Methods of teaching must give the pupils maximum freedom to learn according to their own inclinations and must develop the creative activity in children. Education for creativity was most important for existential. They avoided group methods of teaching.

Mudaliar Commission (Secondary Education Commission) 1952-53

This commission believed that even the best curriculum remains dead unless propelled by the right methods of teaching and right kind of teacher. A complete reorientation of education is possible only through dynamic methods of teaching otherwise the reconstruction of organization pattern and curricula would be pointless. The teaching methods should not merely aim at imparting knowledge in an efficient manner, but also at inculcating desirable values and proper attitudes and habits of work in the students. It proposed to create in students' real attachment to work and emphasis on purposeful and

realistic situation through activity method and project method; Providing opportunities for practical application of knowledge, clear thinking and clear expression; Emphasized on acquiring knowledge through personal efforts; Adopt methods of instruction to the needs of the individual students (individual centered method); Balancing individual and group work through learning by doing as well as living; and making co-curricular activities as part of education.

Kothari Commission (Indian Education Commission) 1964-66

According to Kothari Commission recommendations, a good educational system should be elastic, dynamic, flexible and discriminating enough to help institutions and teachers to proceed along different levels of development. The good schools should be free to go ahead on creative and experimental lines while the weaker one should be supported to gain a sense of security. Such elasticity and dynamism is only possible if the experimenting teacher is supported by the administration. The commission emphasized on varied and new methods of teaching. It focused on process oriented evaluation rather than only product oriented evaluation of the trainee-teacher. The major attention is on helping and guiding the teacher-trainee continuously, to develop him/her into a sensitive, innovative and competent teacher. This is a major improvement in the area of teaching methodology in teacher education institutions.

National Policy on Education 1968

National Policy on Education (1968) stressed on encouraging the development of new methods of teaching the language, explored and the possibility of including the study of Sanskrit in those courses (such as modern Indian languages, ancient Indian history, and Ideology and Indian philosophy) at the first and second degree stages, where such knowledge is useful.

In technical education, practical training in industry should form an integral part of such education. Technical education and research should be related closely to industry, encouraging the flow of personnel both ways and providing for continuous cooperation in the provision, design and periodical review of training programmes and facilities.

National Policy on Education 1986-92

National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 and Programme of Action (POA) 1992 are important policy documents adopted by the Government of India to bring about certain revolutionary changes to the Indian Education System. The National Policy of 1986 marked a significant step in the history of post independent India. Both NPE 1986 and POA 1992 provided a significant formulation regarding the content and process of education.

Emphasis was given on the values of secularism, socialism, democracy to be imbibed by the citizens of the country. The Programme of Action (POA) 1992 aimed to fulfill the objective of universal enrolment and retention of children and successful completion of education up to 14 years. The NPE and POA laid considerable stress on the need of value education and inculcation of proper perspective about the country's

cultural traditions. Access to education of a comparable quality for all irrespective of caste, creed, location or sex. Introduction to the norms of minimum levels of learning for different stages and provision of threshold facilities so that learning becomes a more enjoyable experience even for the slow learners.

Child-centered approach was given prominence in NPE and POA. A child-centered and activity-based process of learning should be adopted at the primary stage. First generation learners should be allowed to set their own pace and be given supplementary remedial instruction. As the child grows, the component of cognitive learning will be increased and skills organized through practice.

Teaching of mathematics was considered as the vehicle to train a child to think, reason, analyze and to articulate logically. Apart from being a specific subject, it should be treated as a concomitant to any subject involving analysis and reasoning. With the recent introduction of computers in schools, educational computing and the emergence of learning through the understanding of cause-effect relationships and the interplay of variables, the teaching of mathematics will be suitably redesigned to bring it in line with modern technological devices.

By strengthening science education will enable to develop in the child well defined abilities and values such as the spirit of inquiry, creativity, objectivity, the courage to question, and an aesthetic sensibility. Science education programmes will be designed to enable the learner to acquire problem solving and decision making skills and to discover the relationship of science with health, agriculture, industry and other aspects of daily life. Every effort will be made to extend science education to the vast numbers who have been devoid of the opportunity of pursuing formal education.

- Eminence was given to integrate the physically and mentally handicapped with the general community as equal partners, to prepare them for normal growth and to enable them to face life with courage and confidence. It suggested measures as:
- Wherever it is feasible, the education of children with motor handicaps and other mild handicaps will be common with that of others.
- Special schools with hostels will be provided, as far as possible at district headquarters, for the severely handicapped children.
- Adequate arrangements will be made to give vocational training to the disabled.
- Teachers' training programmes will be reoriented, in particular for teachers of primary classes, to deal with the special difficulties of the handicapped children.
- Voluntary effort for the education of the disabled will be encouraged in every possible manner.

The Synthesis:

Education has always been accorded an honoured place in Indian society. The great leaders of the Indian freedom movement realized the fundamental role of education and throughout the nation's struggle for independence, stressed its unique significance for national development. Gandhiji formulated the scheme of basic education seeking to harmonize intellectual and manual work. This was a great step forward in making

education directly relevant to the life of the people. Many other national leaders likewise made important contributions to national education before independence.

Problems of educational reconstruction were reviewed by several commissions and committees. Some steps to implement the recommendations of these Commissions were taken, as a result the development of science, technology and scientific research received special emphasis. Education Commission (1964-66) advised the Government on 'the national pattern of education and on the general principles and policies for the development of education at all stages and in all aspects'. The Government of India was convinced that a radical reconstruction of education is essential for economic and cultural development of the country, for national integration and for realizing the ideal of a socialistic pattern of society. This will involve a transformation of the system to relate it more closely to the life of the masses.

A deep perusal of the different pedagogical aspects through the different periods in history, it can be said that all the exponents, education commissions and education policies have referred to play-way methods, project methods, learning by doing, excursions, etc. But what is important to reflect upon is since the last many decades our education system has been surrounded by such rich ideologies, but some serious gaps have been witnessed between what is planned and what is implemented. The teaching learning process seems to have gone haywire as the products that the education system is preparing is not an 'overall developed personality'. A psycho-socio-educationist is aware that every individual is born with individual differences and with their own speed of receiving knowledge and learning. The teachers are not trained to handle the individual differences in cognitive, affective and conative spheres as per the needs of the child. As a result children with specific learning disabilities in reading, writing, numeracy, and social skills are largely observed. These children think differently and out of the box. These children are highly creative. The big names in the world history like Pablo Picasso or the Hollywood stars like Tom Cruise and even our Indian star Abhishek Bachan were detected as children at-risk of being learning disabled. These people with timely and specialized interventions have excelled in their respective fields of creativity. At this juncture it can be recommended that the teacher training institutions should have an essential component in the curriculum which includes knowledge about the children with special needs and specific learning disabilities faced by any normal individual. Varied efforts to sensitize the parents and communities about learning disabilities should be widely taken up by the educational institutions and various organs of civil society. It is saddening to note that our present education system is not producing any Newton's and Einstein's, but churning out mediocre's. For the nation to progress we must identify the individual talents and accordingly prepare them for the global challenges.

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