

Introduction

The proposed thesis can be described as a “problems approach”, offering a set of educational problems, each with a distinctly philosophical aspect. There is, in fact, an organic relationship between the two. There are obvious philosophical considerations pertinent to the analysis and understanding of the problems in the idea of education. The proposed thesis, in all likelihood, can be called a piece of writing on Philosophy of education. “Philosophy of Education” was previously called “History of Educational Ideas” and “Principles of Education”. It was only since 1960 that R.S. Peters first used the phrase “Philosophy of Education”.

Philosophy of Education, is a newly emerging and self-conscious discipline. Recently it has taken two forms:

- a) To identify distinctive philosophical schools such as, realism, pragmatism and existentialism, and then to explore the possible educational implications in a holistic way. This approach or form of philosophy of education has been strongly challenged in America by Israel Scheffler.
- b) Analytic Philosophy of Education drawing freely from general philosophy for models of arguments, methods of analysis, logical structure of theories of education and substantive positions. In this way educational principles and practices have been revealed as genuinely problematic. This openness has, in turn, generated some new interests in philosophical inquiry about education.

So far researches in philosophy of education are concerned education has been defined

- 1) As manifestation – the process of making manifest what is latent in each child.
- 2) As acquisition – the ability of man to acquire information by inquiring into the nature of the external world.
- 3) As transaction – the process of give and take between man and his environment.

All the three approaches mentioned above are based on some conception of man and his universe. Some works in this direction has already been done in the West by philosophers from Plato to Dewey, and in India by the educational ideas propounded by Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo and J. Krisnamurti. The proposed thesis has attempted to arrive at an integral view of a Philosophy of Education, taking into account the findings of the aforesaid thinkers.

In view of what has been stated in the foregoing paragraphs the hypothesis can now be stated in clear terms as follows:

Four main branches of philosophy have been found of most help to Philosophy of Education:

- 1) Questions raised in Ethics concerning value relating to the aims and justification of overall conceptions of education and to the more particular area of moral education;
- 2) Social Philosophy is most relevant to principles of organizations within schools and on the pattern of institutional provision, raising issues to do with freedom and authority, rights and equality and also political accountability;

- 3) Epistemology is a third important area, especially for such questions of curriculum construction as “whether certain sorts of knowledge are fundamental. How far integration is possible, and whether all knowledge is ideological”?
- 4) And since the learner is at the center of educational process, “philosophy of mind” is the fourth area of major relevance that “can contribute to a better understanding and explanation of emotions and behaviour”.

In order to provide more details for better understanding of the hypothesis following chapterization has been made.

The proposed thesis is divided into four sections. Each consists of several chapters. But the general philosophical orientation remains the same. Three of the opening sections are devoted to the general discussions on the nature of Philosophy of Education, and its various aspects. The meanings of “Philosophy”, “Education” and “Philosophy of Education” are determined in this section. When we try to educate a person actually we try to educate his mind. So, the question of training the mind is discussed in this section. When we deal with the process of education, it should be aimed at progress or development. So, we deal with the nature of Progressive Education.

The two sub-sections of the 4th Chapter of the second section are devoted to two contrary, if not contradictory, concepts of mind represented by the Classical Rationalism and British Empiricism respectively. We have taken Plato as representing Classical Rationalism. The chapter on Plato primarily deals with two topics:

- a) the educational programme and philosophy as we find in the *Republic* and
- b) the educational value of the ‘allegory of the cave’ in Book VII of the *Republic*.

In Book VI we are presented with the figure of the 'line' with its four ascending segments. The lowest is eikasia, the second is pistis, the third is dionia and at the top there is noesis. It should be noted in this context that according to Plato mind or soul also has these four parts. It is also interesting to observe that the father of British Empiricism Bacon could be said to have simply looked back to Plato when he talked about idols. There is of course another story in Plato which has an important bearing on the concept of education. This is the doctrine of anamnesis or recollection. Education is intended, according to this aspect of Plato's theory, just to help the learner to remember what he perhaps already knows. The classical example of this a priori knowledge forgotten through birth is found in the Men where Socrates elicits geometrical reasoning from a slave boy.

The two sub-sections of the 5th Chapter of second section are concerned with John Lock. Lock's refusal to admit the so-called innate ideas is significant and important on two counts. First, Lock mentions the fact that children do not possess innate ideas, nor does any one else. Education of children presupposes either the Platonism of the Men or takes into account the innocent Locking children. If Locke is correct then knowledge becomes, by definition, empirical knowledge. And such discursive subjects as mathematics remains to be explained as a possibility. Even Hume, the sceptic, had a room for relation of ideas or synthetic truths, quite apart from the solid and sensuous matters of fact.

The Lockean line of argument based on the theory of mind as *tabula rasa* enjoys the support of common sense so far education is concerned. It endows a great educational responsibility on the educator, whereas the Platonic model distributes the

responsibility equally both on the educator and the learner. In this case education becomes a dialogue of between the two.

The chapter that follows after the 4th of this section considers a theory of education entailed by Pragmatism. We have considered Dewey's Philosophy of Education in particular in this chapter. The next chapter of this section is concerned with the views of Herbert Spencer on education.

I have opened the 3rd section of the thesis with considerations of recent Indian educator-philosophers who have written and thought extensively on matters of education and have made significant contributions to the theory of education.

Chapter 8 of this section is concerned with the educational ideals of Swami Vivekananda. The aim of education as conceived by him in terms of a mission of "man making". In his scheme of education, the guiding principle is Aristotelian. For him, the process of educating a child is to help the child in becoming a man. The word "man" is used as a non-empirical concept, rather as an ideal. It designates a large looming potentiality that has to be made actual. The passage from potentiality to actuality is a kind of *sat-karyavada* in Vivekananda. His thought is expressed in terms of an enigmatic assertion: "Each soul is potentially divine".

The educational implications of Sri Aurobindo evolutionary metaphysics are discussed in chapter 9. The metaphysical scheme of Sri Aurobindo is spelt out in terms of a theory of emergent evolution. He starts with a concept of mind as an instrument of ignorance pulled downwards by dark biological forces from which it has emerged, and upwards by its higher possibilities. Mind, as we know it, is consciousness in its cognitive mode. Cognition is an open concept and it grows as possibilities of consciousness as it enlarges itself. The argument then is, if we accept the premise that

consciousness is ever enlarging, becoming more and more comprehensive then education has something very important to do with it. To educate is to help and direct the growth and enlargement of consciousness. To be educated is to have an enlargement of mental awareness, to be more conscious, and realising at the same time the potentialities and possibilities of the human self, not mechanically, but creatively. Aurobindo believes that divinity is involved in man and it is analytic for him to say that education is the evolution of what is already involved.

Chapter 10 is devoted to the ideas of the educational philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore. Tagore started with a concept of mind which has evolved from life. But it is not mechanically logical. It is creatively imaginative. Imaginative creativity or imagination is a more distinctively human faculty than mere rationality. Rationality serves our ends of biological survival, prudential thinking and pragmatic considerations. In holding this view Tagore is, in fact, looking back in a way, to David Hume. Hume has been reminding us that we choose our ends and judgements of life through passions (emotions and feelings). Reason has no office in deciding the choice. Reason is calculative. It merely evaluates the relative merits and demerits of the means to be adopted in our attainment of ends. Education, properly speaking, is to make the learner more sensitive to the world around him or nature, as Tagore calls it, which includes the presence of other human beings. Education, in Tagore's sense of the term, is an ecologically significant enterprise.

In the 11th Chapter of this section I am concerned with the educational ideals of M.K. Gandhi, I have considered the Gandhian concept and purpose of education as a way of life. The next chapter of this section has discussed the educational teachings of J. Krishnamurti. To him education should practically try to cultivate awareness.

The last section of the thesis consists of two chapters. The first chapter deals with different programmes on education adopted by the Govt. of India since 1947. We have considered some important recommendations made by different Education Commissions. Moreover the basic stands of our country regarding education depicted in our Constitution are also mentioned.

The final chapter of this section contains the appraisal of programmes adopted to develop education in India, an evaluation of the present state of education and some humble suggestions for overall development of "Education" in this country.