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## IMPLICATIONS AND IMPORTANCE OF PHILOSOPHY IN EDUCATION

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### **Abstract:**

*The Philosophy of education is a field of applied philosophy that examines the aims, forms, methods, and results of education as both a process and a field of study. It is influenced both by developments within philosophy, especially questions of ethics and epistemology, and by concerns arising from instructional practice. The subject is often taught within a department or college of education, rather than within a philosophy department. Philosophical treatments of education date at least as far back as Socrates, but the field of inquiry only began to be recognized as a formal sub discipline in the nineteenth century. Though the field often seems to lack the cohesion of other areas of philosophy, it is generally, and perhaps therefore, more open to new approaches.*

**Key Words :** *Education is a field of applied philosophy, instructional practice, cohesion of other areas of philosophy, more open to new approaches.*

## **INTRODUCTION:**

Philosophy is a search for a general understanding of values and reality by chiefly speculative rather than observational means. It signifies a natural and necessary urge in human beings to know themselves and the world in which they live and move and have their being. Western philosophy remained more or less true to the etymological meaning of philosophy in being essentially an intellectual quest for truth. Hindu philosophy is intensely spiritual and has always emphasized the need for practical realization of Truth. Philosophy is a comprehensive system of ideas about human nature and the nature of the reality we live in. It is a guide for living, because the issues it addresses are basic and pervasive, determining the course we take in life and how we treat other people. Hence we can say that all the aspects of human life are influenced and governed by the philosophical consideration. As a field of study philosophy is one of the oldest disciplines. It is considered as a mother of all the sciences. In fact it is at the root of all knowledge. Education has also drawn its material from different philosophical bases. Education, like philosophy is also closely related to human life. Therefore, being an important life activity education is also greatly influenced by philosophy. Various fields of philosophy like the political philosophy, social philosophy and economic philosophy have great influence on the various aspects of education like educational procedures, processes, policies, planning and its implementation, from both the theoretical and practical aspects. In order to understand the concept of Philosophy of education it is necessary to first understand the meaning of the two terms; Philosophy and Education.

## **MEANING OF PHILOSOPHY & EDUCATION**

### **Meaning of Philosophy:**

The word *philosophy* literally means *love of wisdom*; It is derived from two Greek words i.e. 'phileo' (love) and 'Sophia' (wisdom). This tells us something about the nature of philosophy, but not much, because many disciplines seek wisdom. Since times immemorial there have been various pursuits for unfolding the mystery of the universe, birth and death, sorrow and joy. Various ages have produced different thoughts throwing light upon the mystic region. The ultimate truth is yet to be found out. This eternal quest for truth 'lends the origin of philosophy. A

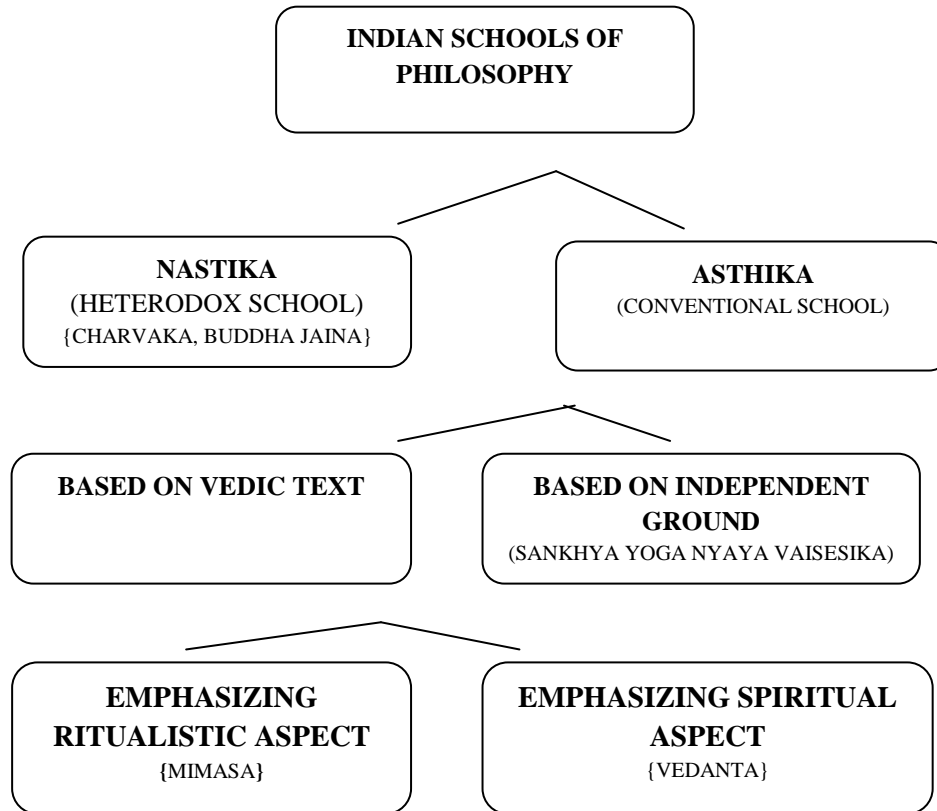
love of wisdom is the essence for any philosophy investigation. On the standard way of telling the story, humanity's first systematic inquiries took place within a mythological or religious framework: wisdom ultimately was to be derived from sacred traditions and from individuals thought to possess privileged access to a supernatural realm, whose own access to wisdom, in turn, generally was not questioned. However, starting in the sixth century BCE, there appeared in ancient Greece a series of thinkers whose inquiries were comparatively secular (see "The Milesians and the Origin of Philosophy"). Presumably, these thinkers conducted their inquiries through reason and observation, rather than through tradition or revelation. These thinkers were the first philosophers. Although this picture is admittedly simplistic, the basic distinction has stuck: philosophy in its most primeval form is considered nothing less than secular inquiry itself. The subject of philosophical inquiry is the reality itself. There are different schools of philosophy depending on the answers they seek to the question of reality. It is the search for understanding of man, nature and the universe. There are different branches of philosophy-Epistemology, Metaphysics, etc. There are different fields of philosophy such as educational philosophy, social philosophy, political philosophy, economic philosophy etc. There are also different philosophical approaches such as idealism, naturalism, pragmatism, materialism, and so on.

## MEANING OF EDUCATION

Etymologically, the word education is derived from *educare* (Latin) "bring up", which is related to *educere* "bring out", "bring forth what is within", "bring out potential" and *ducere*, "to lead". **Education** in the largest sense is any act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character or physical ability of an individual. In its technical sense, education is the process by which society deliberately transmits its accumulated knowledge, skills and values from one generation to another. Webster defines *education* as the process of educating or teaching (now that's really useful, isn't it?) *Educate* is further defined as "to develop the knowledge, skill, or character of..." Thus, from these definitions, we might assume that the purpose of education is to develop the knowledge, skill, or character of students.

## CONCEPT OF PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

All human societies, past and present, have had a vested interest in education; and some wits have claimed that teaching (at its best an educational activity) is the second oldest profession. While not all societies channel sufficient resources into support for educational activities and institutions, all at the very least acknowledge their centrality—and for good reasons. For one thing, it is obvious that children are born illiterate and innumerate, and ignorant of the norms and cultural achievements of the community or society into which they have been thrust; but with the help of professional teachers and the dedicated amateurs in their families and immediate environs (and with the aid, too, of educational resources made available through the media and nowadays the internet), within a few years they can read, write, calculate, and act (at least often) in culturally-appropriate ways. Some learn these skills with more facility than others, and so education also serves as a social-sorting mechanism and undoubtedly has enormous impact on the economic fate of the individual. Put more abstractly, at its best education equips individuals with the skills and substantive knowledge that allows them to define and to pursue their own goals, and also allows them to participate in the life of their community as full-fledged, autonomous citizens. Equips individuals with the skills and substantive knowledge that allows them to define and to pursue their own goals, and also allows them to participate in the life of their community as full-fledged, autonomous citizens. But this is to cast matters in very individualistic terms, and it is fruitful also to take a societal perspective, where the picture changes somewhat. It emerges that in pluralistic societies such as the Western democracies there are some groups that do not wholeheartedly support the development of autonomous individuals, for such folk can weaken a group from within by thinking for themselves and challenging communal norms and beliefs; from the point of view of groups whose survival is thus threatened, formal, state-provided education is not necessarily a good thing. But in other ways even these groups depend for their continuing survival on educational processes, as do the larger societies and nation-states of which they are part; for as John Dewey put it in the opening chapter of his classic work *Democracy and Education* (1916), in its broadest sense education is the means of the —social continuity of life (Dewey, 1916, 3).



Dewey pointed out that the —primary ineluctable facts of the birth and death of each one of the constituent members in a social group make education a necessity, for despite this biological inevitability —the life of the group goes on (Dewey, 3). The great social importance of education is underscored, too, by the fact that when a society is shaken by a crisis, this often is taken as a sign of educational breakdown; education, and educators, become scapegoats. It is not surprising that such an important social domain has attracted the attention of philosophers for thousands of years, especially as there are complex issues aplenty that have great philosophical interest. abstractly, at its best education equips individuals with the skills and substantive knowledge that allows them to define and to pursue their own goals, and also allows them to participate in the life of their community as full-fledged, autonomous citizens. But this is to cast matters in very individualistic terms, and it is fruitful also to take a societal perspective, where the picture changes somewhat.

**Comparison of Attributes of Educational Philosophies**

Categories	Traditional		Contemporary	
<b>Philosophical Orientation</b>	<b>Realism</b>	<b>Idealism and Realism</b>	<b>Pragmatism</b>	<b>Pragmatism</b>
<b>Theoretical Orientation</b>	<b>perennialism</b>	<b>Essentialism</b>	<b>Progressivism</b>	<b>Reconstructionism</b>
<b>Direction in Time</b>	Preserving the past		growth, reconstruct present, change society, shape future	
<b>Educational Value</b>	Fixed, absolute, objective		Changeable, subjective, relative	
<b>Educational Process</b>	Focuses in teaching		Focuses on active self- learning	
<b>Intellectual focus</b>	Train, discipline the mind		Engae in problem solving, social-task	
<b>Subject-matter</b>	for its own self-importance		all have similar value	
<b>Curriculum</b>	composed of three Rs		three Rs, arts, sciences, vocational	
<b>Learning</b>	cognitive learning, disciplines		exploratory, discovery	
<b>Grouping</b>	homogeneous		heterogeneous, culturally diverse	
<b>Teacher</b>	disseminates, lectures, dominates instruction		facilitates, coaches, change agent	
<b>Student</b>	receptacle, receives knowledge, passive		receptacle, receives knowledge, passive	
<b>Social</b>	direction, control, restraint		Individualism	
<b>Citizenship</b>	cognitive, personal		personal, social development	

	development	
<b>Freedom and Democracy</b>	conformity, compliance with authority, knowledge and discipline	creativity, self-actualization, direct experiences
<b>Excellence vs. Equality</b>	excellence in education, academic, rewards and jobs based on merit	equality of education, equal change to disadvantaged
<b>Society</b>	group values, acceptance of norms, cooperative and conforming behavior	individual growth, individual ability, importance of individual

It emerges that in pluralistic societies such as the Western democracies there are some groups that do not wholeheartedly support the development of autonomous individuals, for such folk can weaken a group from within by thinking for themselves and challenging communal norms and beliefs; from the point of view of groups whose survival is thus threatened, formal, state-provided education is not necessarily a good thing. But in other ways even these groups depend for their continuing survival on educational processes, as do the larger societies and nation-states of which they are part; for as John Dewey put it in the opening chapter of his classic work *Democracy and Education* (1916), in its broadest sense education is the means of the —social continuity of life (Dewey, 1916, 3). Dewey pointed out that the —primary ineluctable facts of the birth and death of each one of the constituent members in a social group make education a necessity, for despite this biological inevitability —the life of the group goes on (Dewey, 3).

The great social importance of education is underscored, too, by the fact that when a society is shaken by a crisis, this often is taken as a sign of educational breakdown; education, and educators, become scapegoats. It is not surprising that such an important social domain has



attracted the attention of philosophers for thousands of years, especially as there are complex issues aplenty that have great philosophical interest. The following are some issues that philosophers have deeply thought about and philosophy is still in the process of answering these questions. Is Education as transmission of knowledge versus education as the fostering of inquiry and reasoning skills that are conducive to the development of autonomy (which, roughly, is the tension between education as conservative and education as progressive, and also is closely related to differing views about human —perfectibility—issues that historically have been raised in the debate over the aims of education); the question of what this knowledge, and what these skills, ought to be—part of the domain of philosophy of the curriculum; the questions of how learning is possible, and what is it to have learned something—two sets of issues that relate to the question of the capacities and potentialities that are present at birth, and also to the process (and stages) of human development and to what degree this process is flexible and hence can be influenced or manipulated; the tension between liberal education and vocational education, and the overlapping issue of which should be given priority—education for personal development or education for citizenship (and the issue of whether or not this is a false dichotomy); the differences (if any) between education and enculturation; the distinction between educating versus teaching versus training versus indoctrination; the relation between education and maintenance of the class structure of society, and the issue of whether different classes or cultural groups can—justly—be given educational programs that differ in content or in aims; the issue of whether the rights of children, parents, and socio-cultural or ethnic groups, conflict—and if they do, the question of whose rights should be dominant; the question as to whether or not all children have a right to state-provided education, and if so, should this education respect the beliefs and customs of all groups and how on earth would this be accomplished; and a set of complex issues about the relation between education and social reform, centering upon whether education is essentially conservative, or whether it can be an (or, the) agent of social change.

## **SCOPE OF PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION**

The scope of philosophy of education is confined to the field of education. Thus, it is philosophy in the field of education. The scope of philosophy of education is concerned with the problems of education. These problems mainly include –

- interpretation of human nature, the world and the universe and their relation with man,
- interpretation of aims and ideals of education,
- the relationship of various components of the system of education,
- relationship of education and various areas of national life (economic system, political order, social progress, cultural reconstructions etc),
- educational values,
- theory of knowledge and its relationship to education.

The above mentioned problems constitute the scope of philosophy of education and explain its nature. Thus, the scope of philosophy of education includes following.

### **AIMS AND IDEALS OF EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY**

Education critically evaluates the different aims and ideals of education. These aims and ideals have been prorogated by various philosophers in different times. They are character building, man making, harmonious human development, preparation for adult life, -development of citizenship, -utilization of leisure, training for civic life, training for international living, achieving social and national integration, -scientific and technological development, education for all, equalizing educational opportunities, strengthening democratic political order and human source development. These and other aims of education presented by educational thinkers in different times and climes are scrutinized and evaluated. Thus, philosophy of education critically evaluates different aims and ideals of education to arrive at.

#### ➤ **Interpretation of Human Nature:-**

A philosophical picture of human nature is a result of the synthesis of the facts borrowed from all the human science with the values discussed in different normative, sciences. The philosophical picture, therefore, is broader as compared to the picture of man drawn by biology, sociology, psychology, economics and anthropology and other human science.

#### ➤ **Educational Values:-**

Value is typically a philosophical subject since it is more abstract, integral and universal. Philosophy-of education not only critically evaluates the values but also systematizes them in a

hierarchy. Educational values are' determined by philosophical values. Educational values propagated by different philosophers have been derived from their own world, view and their outlook on the purpose of human life. Therefore, a scrutiny of the world views, outlook, beliefs is the specific function of philosophy and it is necessary for the philosophical treatment of the values.

➤ **Theory of Knowledge:-**

Education is related to knowledge. It is determined by the source, limits, criteria and means of knowledge. The discussion of all these falls within the jurisdiction of epistemology, one of the branches of philosophy, therefore, an important area of the functioning of philosophy of education is related to theory of knowledge.

➤ **Relationship of education and various area of national life and various components of the system of education:-**

One of the most important contributions of the philosophy of education to the cause of education is the provision of criteria for deciding the relationship of state and education, economic system and education, curriculum, school organization and management, discipline etc. These problems have led to the evaluation of different philosophies of education. The criteria of judgment everywhere are determined by philosophy, therefore, philosophy of education provides the criteria for critical evaluation and judgment in these fields.

### **Nature of Philosophy of Education**

Philosophy of education is one of the areas of applied philosophy. There are three branches of philosophy namely 'metaphysics, epistemology and axiology.

**a) Metaphysics** is a branch of philosophy that investigates principles of reality transcending those of any particular science. It is concerned with explaining the fundamental nature of being and the world. *Metaphysics* is the study of the nature of things. Metaphysicians ask what kinds of things exist, and what they are like. They reason about such things as whether or not people have free will, in what sense abstract objects can be said to exist, and how it is that brains are able to generate minds.

**b) Axiology:** the branch of philosophical enquiry that explores:

- **Aesthetics**: the study of basic philosophical questions about art and beauty. Sometimes philosophy of art is used to describe only questions about art, with "aesthetics" the more general term. Likewise "aesthetics" sometimes applied even more broadly than to "philosophy of beauty" :to the "sublime," to humour, to the frightening--to any of the responses we might expect works of art or entertainment to elicit.
  - **Ethics**: the study of what makes actions right or wrong, and of how theories of right action can be applied to special moral problems. Subdisciplines include meta-ethics, value theory, theory of conduct, and applied ethics.
- c) **Epistemology** is the branch of philosophy that studies knowledge. It attempts to answer the basic question: what distinguishes true (adequate) knowledge from false (inadequate) knowledge? Practically, this question translates into issues of scientific methodology: how can one develop theories or models that are better than competing theories? It also forms one of the pillars of the new sciences of cognition, which developed from the information processing approach to psychology, and from artificial intelligence, as an attempt to develop computer programs that mimic a human's capacity to use knowledge in an intelligent way. When we look at the history of epistemology, we can discern a clear trend, in spite of the confusion of many seemingly contradictory positions. The first theories of knowledge stressed its absolute, permanent character, whereas the later theories put the emphasis on its relativity or situation-dependence, its continuous development or evolution, and its active interference with the world and its subjects and objects. The whole trend moves from a static, passive view of knowledge towards a more and more adaptive and active one.

## **FUNCTIONS OF PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION**

Philosophy of education performs various functions. They are discussed below:

- a) **Determining the aims of education** Philosophy of education provides original ideas regarding all aspects of education particularly educational aims. It is said that educational philosophy gives different views, but this situation is not harmful, rather it helps in providing education according to the need of society. The difference in view of philosophy of education reflects the multiplicity and diversities of human life. Philosophy of education guides the process

of education by suggesting suitable aims from the diversities of life and selecting the means accordingly.

**b) Harmonizing old and new traditions in the field of education-** In the process of social development the old traditions become outdated for the people. They are replaced by the new traditions. But this process of replacement is not always smooth. It is faced with lots of opposition from certain orthodox sections of the society. At the same time it must be kept in mind that every 'old' is not outdated and every 'new' is not perfect Therefore, there is a need of co-coordinating the two in order to maintain the harmony between both. This function can be performed by philosophy of education.

**c) Providing the educational planners, administrators and educators with the progressive vision to achieve educational development:-** Spencer has rightly pointed that only a true philosopher can give a practical shape to education. Philosophy of education provides the educational planners, administrators and educators with the right vision which guides them to attain the educational goals efficiently.

**d) Preparing the young generation to face the challenges of the modern time:-** Social commentators have given many labels to the present period of history for some it is the information age and for others it is post modernity, later modernity, high modernity or even the age of uncertainty. One more addition to this list may be that 'present age is an age of Globalization as a phenomenon arrived on the economic scene in the 1990 in India. This watchword has had its implications in the social political, economic fabric of the country of which education is a part. Philosophy of education is a guiding, steering and liberating force that helps young people to and society at large to face the challenges of the modern time.

## **Conclusion**

It is here that philosophy of education plays an important role in providing direction to education on the following issues as well as providing a theory of knowledge for education to work upon. Philosophy of education is essentially a method of approaching educational experience rather than a body of conclusions. It is the specific method which makes it philosophical. Philosophical method is critical, comprehensive and synthetic. Therefore,

Philosophy of education is the criticism of the general theory of education. It consists of critical evaluation and systematic reflection upon general theories. It is a synthesis of educational facts with educational values. In brief, it is a philosophical process of solving educational problems through philosophical method, from a philosophical attitude to arrive at philosophical conclusions and results. Thus, it aims at achieving general as well as comprehensive results.

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