PGED S1-01

Philosophical Foundation of Education

SEMESTER - I

EDUCATION

BLOCK 2



KRISHNA KANTA HANDIQUI STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY

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BLOCK INTRODUCTION (COURSE 1, BLOCK 2)

This is the Second block of the course. It comprises of total seven units. All the units deal with the life sketch and the educational philosophy of the great philosophers of India and the world. Here, the *Ninth Unit* deals with the life sketch and educational philosophy of Froebel. The *Tenth Unit* explains the contribution of Johann Henrich Pestalozzi to the educational thought and practice. The *Eleventh Unit* tries to reflect on the Educational Philosophy of Maria Montessori and her contribution to the present education system. The *Twelfth Unit* deals with the Educational Philosophy of Swami Vivekananda and relevance of his educational philosophy to the present education system. *The Thirteenth Unit* deals with the Educational Philosophy of Aurobindo Ghosh and his contribution to the educational thought and practice.The *Fourteenth Unit* deals with Gandhiji's Educational Philosophy and the relevance of his philosophy to the present education system. *The Fifteenth Unit* deals with the educational philosophy of Sankardeva and the relevance of Sankardeva's Educational Thought and Practice at present time.

While going through this block, you will come across some along-side boxes, which are put on the left side or right side of the text. These boxes will explain you meaning of some words and concepts within the text. Apart from this, there will be some broad and short questions which have been included under 'ACTIVITY' and 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS' in every unit. Activities will increase your thinking capacity because qestions put in Activity are not directly derived from text. Hints on the answers to the short questions have been put under section 'ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'. Besides, a few text-related questions have been put in 'POSSIBLE QUESTIONS'. These questions will help to draw your attention on the probable topics for the examination so that you can prepare for the examination with confidence.

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UNIT 9: FROEBEL AND HIS EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT

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9.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to–

- discuss the life and philosophy of Froebel;
- explain the main idea of educational philosophy of Froebel;
- recognize the contributions of Froebel to educational thoughts; and
- critically evaluate the educational system of Froebel.

9.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit introduces you to the philosophy of Friedrich Froebel and his contributions to the educational field– both theoretical and practical. His

contribution to the Western education system is one of the most prominent ones. The 'new education' of the nineteenth century is based on the works of Froebel, Pestalozzi and Herbart. Froebel's life and philosophy is influenced by the Napoleonic wars and nationalism of Germany, and therefore has also influenced the educational thoughts and practices.

9.3 LIFE SKETCH

Friedrich Froebel was born in Oberweisbach in Germany on 21st April, 1782. He lost his mother at the very young age of nine months. His father's re-marriage resulted in deprivation of parental affection. This deprivation led him to the lap of nature and he developed a love for nature. This company of nature inspired him with a new life which found its expression in his views about nature. His extremely unhappy childhood gave him ample opportunity for introspection. He also developed intensive sympathy for children. His father was a clergyman, from whom he inherited the religious mentality. Later, it developed into idealism.

At the age of 10 years, he was adopted by his maternal uncle and was admitted to a school. He was not at all interested in education and left school at the age of fifteen years. After working as an apprentice to a forester for two years, he went to the University of Jena, but could not complete his education due to financial constraints. He started seeking work to earn his livelihood. First he tried as a craftsman but later he got a job in a school. After joining the teaching job, he realized that this was the most suited profession for him. But he also realized that the job of a teacher required greater preparation. At the age of 20 years, he went to Pestalozzi's school in Yerdon to become a teacher. There he taught as well as learnt the methods and principles of Pestalozzi. But he did not agree with them because of lack of clarity and concreteness of the ideas. Therefore, he migrated to Berlin for further study. His educational capacities were encouraged when he became a teacher of drawing at Frankfurt. He established a school at Keilhau in the year 1817. Later he established several schools in Switzerland. In 1837, he established a Kindergarten, a school for small children, at Blankenburg. He

devoted all his time to the founding of Kindergartens and elaborating his methods and principles, and devising apparatuses for kindergartens till his death. One of his important work is *The Education for Man* (1862) along with some other German works.

In 1851, the German government closed all the kindergartens under the impression that his schools are spreading revolutionary ideas, which was actually extreme democratic nature of his education. However, he envisaged that his ideas can have full expression in the United States. He died in the year 1852.

9.4 FROEBEL'S PHILOSOPHY

Since the educational thoughts and practices developed by Froebel are based on his philosophy, so it is necessary to understand it before going to discuss his educational system. Froebel's philosophy has been founded on sound psychological and scientific lines. His philosophy is based on his conviction of the ultimate oneness of life, of nature and spirit. According to him, the destiny of all things is to unfold their divine essence and to reveal God in their transient being. As a child, Froebel was very troubled by the contrast between 'spirit' and 'the flesh' in the Christian supernaturalism and moralistic dualism of his father. Then he discovered the pervasive beauty of nature and the mystery of sex life in the whole creation. His conviction about the inner unity of the cosmos was confirmed by his scientific studies, his reading of the Zend-Avesta, and his acquaintance with Friedrich Schelling's philosophy of identity.

Froebel articulated the following idealist themes– (1) all existence originates in and with God; (2) humans possess an inherent spiritual essence that is the vitalizing life force that causes development; (3) all beings and ideas are interconnected parts of a grand, ordered, and systematic universe. Froebel based his work on these principles, asserting that each child at birth has an internal spiritual essence– a life force– that seeks to be externalized through self-activity.

In conformity with his metaphysics, Froebel conceived of education as a continuation of the world's unceasing evolution on the level of

consciousness, with the child's play being the first sign of life's urge towards purposeful activity. So, he believed that education consists in leading man, as a thinking, intelligent being, growing into self-consciousness, to a pure, unsullied, conscious and free representation of the inner law of divine unity, and in teaching him means thereto. Considering the inner law of unity, the instructional process should be organized in such a way that the order of the subjects to be taught supports the learner's inner development. The whole program of studies should help the student to realize the reflection of the unity of life in the unity of knowledge.

The basic principles of the philosophy of Froebel may be discussed under the following heads–

a) Law of unity– Froebel was a perfect theist and believer in the Almighty God. God is regarded as all powerful and the creator of nature and man. According to him, everything animated from the Almighty and therefore intrinsically there is unity. He categorized this unity into three types. Unity of substances refers to the premise that man and nature is made of one substance, i.e. spirit or soul which animated the mode of life. Unity of origin means unity of things, nature, etc. for growth within one source, i.e. God. Unity of purpose refers to the principle that everything in this world whether it be man or nature tries to reach a divine perfection which is nothing but God.

b) Theory of spontaneous growth– Froebel was very much influenced by the thinking of Leibniz in his theory of spontaneous growth. Leibniz propounded the theory of organic growth which says that the growth of a plant, animal or man takes place in an organic manner. Froebel propounded that in the same manner, proper development of the child can take place if like the plant, he is provided with good manure which is nothing but education.

c) Place and importance of God– According to Froebel, God formed the basis of the law of unity. He was a great believer in the power of God and its nature.

9.5 FROEBEL'S EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Froebel's educational theory and practice was determined by his conviction of the ultimate oneness of life, of nature and spirit. The educational thoughts of Froebel were shaped by the German philosophical idealism that was marked by the work of Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), and Georg Wilhelm Hegel (1770-1831). The central theme in Froebel's educational work is mostly present in *The Education of Man*, which makes a unique attempt to provide an ontological explanation of the process of human learning.

His educational principles may be understood through the following points–

- The teaching of science, the humanities, and religion should demonstrate that the development of nature reveals itself in the development of the individual mind.
- Education should be structured to harmonize with the natural inner development of the pupil.
- Education should unfold the whole man in each person.
- Religion should be taught in order to cultivate the emotions.
- Nature should be studied because it is the self-revelation of God.
- Mathematics should be appreciated as the symbol of universal order.
- Language connects man with the order and rhythm of things and should therefore take its part in education.
- Art should be taught, as it is a general human talent and conducive to the harmonious unfolding of a person's inner life.

He designed an educational environment which was based on these principles. Child development follows the doctrine of unfolding the latent in the individual. According to him, knowing, feeling and willing are the three activities of mind and they should be so balanced as to bring about development as a whole. He believed that mind is based on the law of unity. It means that all its faculties grow and work in a united manner. That is home and the school should be inter-linked and there should be a unity between various stages of the mental development and growth. He pleaded

for co-ordination between various activities of the mind and various aspects of the life of the child. He gave a vital place to play in the education system. According to him, children are by nature attracted towards play because it incites their interests and brings a sense of joy to them. Education should be so designed as to make the children feel that it is play, not work. Therefore the foundation of the education system developed by Froebel is play.

9.6 FROEBEL'S EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM



Kinder means child and ***Garten*** means garden.

Froebel was very interested in early childhood education. He developed the famous Kindergarten method. Kindergarten is a German word composed of two words– ***Kinder*** and ***Garten*****.** Thus the word kindergarten means the 'garden of children'. The school is said to be a garden and the children are the plants of the garden. As the plants in a garden are allowed to grow freely under the care of the gardener, the children in kindergarten are allowed to grow freely under the care and guidance of the teacher. The kindergarten is a special educational environment in which self-active development occurs. The kindergarten's gifts, occupations, and social and cultural activities, especially play, promote this self-actualization.

In the school established by Froebel at Blackenburg, children used to play, jump, laugh, roam about and do many acts freely. There were no restrictions regarding time. There were small gardens in the compound of the school and the children used to do gardening themselves freely. The children were taught by the teacher in play. Children used to play together, think together and express their views together. The activities used to teach the children in kindergarten include paper folding, mat-weaving, clay modeling, symbolic games and action songs which were used in a methodical and systematic procedure.



LET US KNOW

- Froebel was a German educator and philosopher.
- He is regarded as the father of kindergarten system of education.

- He regarded children as plants and the school as garden.
- His philosophy is based on–
  - Law of unity
  - Spontaneous growth of the child
  - Great importance to power of God

9.6.1 Aims of Education

The aims of education are always based on the educational philosophy. According to Froebel, education should bring about harmonious and proper development of the personality of the child and elevate him to a higher level so that he may be a useful member of society. Education should be so organized that it should enable the child to know about his existence and start seeking his place in the human society. He does not separate nature from education, rather always keeps nature in the background while imparting education.

Froebel believed that the aim of education is to acquire knowledge of the eternal law of the unity of all things and to find one's place within this unity. The purpose of instruction is to bring more out of man rather than to put more and more into him. It is believed that human nature, like the spirit of God, is ever unfolding its inner essence. The ultimate aim of his education system was to unlock a child's inner powers by linking his inner being with the fundamental forms around him.

The aims of education according to Froebel may be summarized under the following heads–

- Self-realization– Every child has its own individuality. Each child grows in its own way. Self-realization may be described as an individual's development of natural inclination towards right direction. Education should aim at self realization of the child.
- Creativity– Each child has a tendency to make new forms and combinations which suggest the new ideas and images arising in him. Education should aim at providing children opportunities

for self-expression. Encouraging the child when he is young increases the chances of developing creative patterns in the later years.

- Cultivation of senses– According to Froebel, true education should always cultivate our senses, especially hearing and vision. This also includes the cultivation of awareness, love and independence. Considering facts as secondary, he gave more importance to development of perception for acquiring knowledge.
- Balanced development– Froebel advocated harmonious and balanced development of the child as the ultimate aim of education. According to him, the mind's power of prompting and nourishing, of maintaining and directing its own activities must never be neglected. But he was comprehensive in considering mental development which included knowing, feeling and willing.

9.6.2 Curriculum

Based on Froebel's belief on spontaneous growth of the child, certain principles are laid down for curriculum, which are–

a) Importance of child– The curriculum should be based on the principle that child is the most important aspect in the whole education system. So, the curriculum should be developed considering the inner tendencies and natural impulses of the child.
b) Self-activity– Froebel believed that the real growth and development of the child can take place only through self activity. If children are left by themselves they carry out certain activities and movements and their thoughts develop accordingly.

The curriculum in Froebel's kindergarten included small stories told in songs. The children are taught to sing songs and those songs relate to some stories. In this way, the children learn many things through the songs. Then the stories are told by means of various gestures. The teacher teaches the children how to make gestures and express the stories through gestures. Further the children are taught how to make and construct things. For this, the

children are asked to draw sketches of fruits, birds, etc. In this way, the children develop their faculties and attain knowledge.

Froebel developed a series of gifts and occupations in his kindergarten system of education. A gift was an object given to a child to play with– such as a ball– which helped the child to understand the concepts of shape, dimension, size and their relationships. He identified the gifts as the fundamental forms. They had both actual physical appearance and a hidden symbolic meaning. They were to stimulate the child to bring the fundamental concept that they represented to mental consciousness. Froebel's gifts included the following items–

- Six soft coloured balls
- A wooden sphere, cube and cylinder
- A large cube divided into eight smaller cubes
- A large cube divided into eight oblong blocks
- A large cube divided into twenty-one whole, six half, and twelve quarter cubes
- A large cube divided into eighteen whole oblongs: three divided lengthwise; three divided breadth wise
- Quadrangular and triangular tablets used for arranging figures
- Sticks for outlining figures
- Whole and half wire rings for outlining figures
- Various materials for drawing, perforating, embroidering, paper cutting, weaving or braiding, paper folding, modeling, and interlacing

All the gifts of Froebel involved three aspects– Forms of Life, Forms of Knowledge and Forms of Beauty. Forms of Life meant the child can use the gifts to create something they find in their life– such as a building, house, table, sofa or tree. Forms of Knowledge meant the child can use the gifts to explore maths, science and logical ideas. This enables them to develop their sense of proportion, equivalence and order. Forms of Beauty meant the child can use the gifts to create beauty.

The occupations were items such as paints and clay which the children could use to make what they wished– which helped them to externalize the concepts existing within their minds. The Occupations were crafts that could not be undone. The occupations were items such as paper, pencils, wood, sand, clay, straw, and sticks for use in constructive activities. Kindergarten activities included games, songs, and stories designed to assist in sensory and physical development and socialization. The occupation fixes the impressions made by the gift. They invite controlling, modifying, transforming and creating activities. They lead to invention. They train the hands to move long paper strips in an up and down fashion through precut slits on a paper mat. Both manual dexterity and intellect along with appreciation of beauty, creativity, gentleness and patience are developed. They introduce the child to pattern-forming and the world of primary and secondary colours and colour combinations.

Froebel published *Mutter-und-Kose-lieder,* (Mother's songs, games, and stories), a collection of kindergarten songs, in 1843. The 'Mother Songs' is a small book of about 50 songs. Each song is accompanied with a separate picture. The book has a motto for each picture and then a verse for mother and child. The songs are based on the plays and activities of the children. They are according to the taste of the children and therefore are very useful for the mental, physical and spiritual development of the children. Froebel describes family situations from daily life. One of the purposes of the book was to develop a child's body, limbs and senses in various plays and games with its mother.

It is evident that while the occupations are one-sided, the gifts are many-sided and universal. The occupations touch only certain phases of being and the gifts enlist the whole being of the child.

9.6.3 Methods of Teaching

Froebel's educational system is based on play-way method. The gifts, occupations, the mother's song and nursery songs are

the educational materials used for play. As a series, the gifts began with the simple undifferentiated sphere or circle and moved to more complex objects. Following the idealist principle of synthesis of opposites, Froebel's cylinders represented the integration of the sphere and the cube. The various cubes and their subdivisions were building blocks that children could use to create geometrical and architectural designs. Using the sticks and rings to trace designs on paper, children exercised the hand's small muscles, coordinated hand and eye movements, and took the first steps toward drawing and letter writing.

On the basis of his educational principles, Froebel emphasized on the following methods of teaching—

- Self-activity: Froebel believed that the child is born with some instincts and these instincts lead the child to be active. It means that children are active by nature. So method of teaching should involve this natural urge of children to do activities. They should be involved in self activities and have their self development.
- Learning by playing: Froebel strongly advocated the idea that by nature children like playing. So he laid a strong emphasis on teaching children through play. He says that play is the purest and most spiritual activity of children and it gives joy, contentment, rest and peace.
- Social participation: According to Froebel, children can develop their self activities only in the society. So he says that collective plays are necessary for the children. Collective games develop the feeling of co-operation, sympathy and oneness.
- Respect for the individual child: The teaching methods used for the children should always consider the individual differences among them. The individuality of each child should be respected.
- Guided play: As Froebel advocated for freedom of the child, guided play is the methodology used to draw out the child's creative self-activity. That is, the child is given the freedom to play under the guidance of the teacher.

Some important plays involved in Froebel's kindergarten method are–

a) Amusement and constructive plays– This involves the plays by which children derive amusement or construct something. For example, walking, running, swimming, paper-boat making, etc.

b) Plays developing imagination– These are the plays which provide opportunity for the development of the imagination capacity of the children. For example, flower making, modeling, etc.

c) Plays developing social feeling– Some plays develop social feeling among the children, particularly, the group plays. For example, group songs, group dance, group games, dramas, etc.

d) Plays building character– These involve the educational plays through which the character of the children can be built up. The children gain some knowledge. For example, earthen beads for counting, making sketches/drawings, etc.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: What are the factors that shaped Froebel's philosophy?

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Q.2: What are the basic principles of Froebel's philosophy?

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Q.3: How did he design the educational environment?

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Q.4: Name the book on education written by Froebel.

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Q.5: Mention the aims of education according to Froebel.

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Q.6: How do gifts and occupations help in achieving the aims of Froebel's education system?

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Q.7: What are the different types of plays suggested for the children in kindergarten system of education?

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9.6.4 Discipline

Froebel's concept of freedom and discipline is quite modern and up to date. He wanted to give an opportunity for self expression so that they enjoy freedom. He believed more in inner discipline than the discipline being imposed, i.e. repressionistic discipline. He pleaded for freedom in education so that self-activity could be possible. The inner tendencies of the child would develop only when there was freedom of the atmosphere. However, this freedom was to be governed by certain limitations. The freedom he advocated was the freedom with responsibility, i.e. a child will be allowed to enjoy freedom keeping in view the freedom of his fellow children. The outer discipline is visible only when there is inner discipline.

9.7 CRITICAL EVALUATION OF FROEBEL'S SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

Froebel's kindergarten was a radical educational system which challenged the traditional system. It was the result of Froebel's dissatisfaction with the contemporary educational system, his scientific and psychological mind set and his acquaintance with nature. When we go for a critical evaluation of the system we can find both merits and demerits of the system.

9.7.1 Merits of Kindergarten System

Following are the merits of the kindergarten system of education–

a) Scientific and psychological: The kindergarten education system is very scientific and psychological in the sense that it takes care of the needs, interest, abilities and natural tendencies of children.

b) Self activity: The children are taught through self activities. They get the opportunity for self expression. The children learn many constructive activities. There are no books as burden and no strict time schedule.

c) Interesting and joyful: Teaching through play in the kindergarten system makes it interesting and joyful for the children to learn. Children are by nature attracted to play and therefore very eager to learn through play.

d) No repression: The teacher is the guide and care taker of the children. He does not use repression to maintain discipline among the children. They are allowed to move and learn freely. There is no compulsion for the children to learn.

e) Moral and social development: The children learn in groups. So they develop the moral and social values through playing together. They develop love, sympathy, affection and kindness.

f) Training of senses: Playing with different toys, singing songs and doing activities through occupations provide sense training to the children.

g) Aesthetic development: The children are taught in a natural environment with gardens, natural sceneries. They are made to realize the beauty around themselves which leads to their aesthetic development.

9.7.2 Demerits of Kindergarten System

The following demerits of kindergarten system may be pointed out for constructive criticism–

a) Freedom is limited: Although education is supposed to be given in free atmosphere, yet the freedom given to the children is limited. It is limited to the prescribed gifts and occupations.

b) Symbolism is not psychological: The gifts (toys) are supposed to be the symbols of the thoughts of children in this method. But they are not able to understand these symbols, which makes it un-psychological.

c) Defective theory of epistemology: Froebel opines that the children develop their tendencies themselves and in this way give education to themselves. But it is not wholly correct. The society and the social environment also influence the knowledge process of the children.

d) Lack of correlation: The subjects taught in the kindergarten system lacks correlation among themselves. There should be a correlation among the subjects.

e) Expensive: It is difficult to arrange the gifts and occupations through which education is provided. These may not be available in remote areas. Even if they are available, it will be expensive to arrange these for a large group of children.



9.8 LET US SUM UP

- In 1837, Froebel established a Kindergarten, a school for small children, at Blankenburg.

- According to him, the destiny of all things is to unfold their divine essence and to reveal God in their transient being.
- Froebel articulated the following idealist themes: (1) all existence originates in and with God; (2) humans possess an inherent spiritual essence that is the vitalizing life force that causes development; (3) all beings and ideas are interconnected parts of a grand, ordered, and systematic universe.
- The basic principles of the philosophy of Froebel are the law of unity, law of spontaneous growth and the belief in Almighty God.
- According to him, knowing, feeling and willing are the three activities of mind and they should be so balanced as to bring about development as a whole.
- The kindergarten is a special educational environment in which self-active development occurs. The kindergarten's gifts, occupations, and social and cultural activities, especially play, promote this self-actualization.
- The aims of education according to Froebel are self realization, developing creativity, cultivation of senses and balanced development.
- The curriculum of Froebel's education system includes gifts, occupations and mother's songs.
- His methods of teaching were based on play way method which included self activity, learning by doing, social participation and guided play.
- He believed in inner discipline. He pleaded for freedom in education so that self-activity could be possible.
- A critical evaluation of the kindergarten system of education leads to both merits and demerits. Merits are– it is scientific and psychological, based on self activity, free from repression, interesting and joyful, gives training to senses and considers moral, social and aesthetic development. The demerits are– freedom is limited in this method, teaching through symbolism is un-psychological, based on defective theory of epistemology, lack of correlation and is expensive.



9.9 FURTHER READING

1) Rai, B. C. (1991). *History of Western Education*. Lucknow: Prakashan Kendras.

2) Sharma, Y. K. (2006). *The Doctrines of the Great Western Educators– From Plato to Bertrand Russell*. New Delhi: Kanishka Publishers.



9.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans. to Q. No. 1: The factors that shaped the philosophy of Froebel are his closeness to nature, scientific studies, reading of Zend-Avesta and acquaintance with Friedrich Schelling's philosophy of identity.

Ans. to Q. No. 2: The basic principles of Froebel's philosophy are– law of unity, theory of spontaneous growth and the importance of the power of God.

Ans. to Q. No. 3: He designed an educational environment which follows the doctrine of unfolding the latent in the individual. It should be designed in such a way as to harmonize the development of the children with the natural development.

Ans. to Q. No. 4: The Education of Man (1817).

Ans. to Q. No. 5: According to Froebel, the aims of education are self-realization, creativity development, cultivation of senses and balanced development of the child.

Ans. to Q. No. 6: Gifts help the child to understand the concepts of shape, dimension, size and their relationships. They also help in the cultivation of senses. Occupations lead to invention and give power. They help in development of manual dexterity and intellect along with appreciation of beauty, creativity, gentleness and patience.

Ans. to Q. No. 7: Different types of plays for the children in kindergarten system are– amusement plays, constructive plays, plays developing imagination, plays developing social feeling and plays building character.



9.11 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

A) Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q.1: Give a brief sketch on the life of Froebel.

Q.2: Write a short note on the educational system developed by Froebel.

Q.3: State the importance of play in kindergarten method of education.

B) Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q.1: What type of discipline is followed in kindergarten method of education? How is it related to Froebel's philosophy?

Q.2: How did Froebel's philosophy shape his system of education?

Q.3: Make a critical appraisal of the kindergarten system of education.

Q.4: Discuss the relevance of Froebel's education system at present times.

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UNIT 10: JOHANN HEINRICH PESTALOZZI AND HIS EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT

UNIT STRUCTURE

10.1 Learning Objectives

10.2 Introduction

10.3 Life Sketch

10.4 Pestalozzi's Philosophical Thoughts

10.5 Pestalozzi's Educational Philosophy

10.6 Pestalozzi's Education System

- 10.6.1 Aims of Education
- 10.6.2 Curriculum
- 10.6.3 Methods of Teaching
- 10.6.4 Discipline

10.7 Critical Evaluation of Pestalozzi's Education System

10.8 Relevance of Pestalozzi's Education System in Present Context

10.9 Let Us Sum Up

10.10 Further Reading

10.11 Answers to Check Your Progress

10.12 Possible Questions

10.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to–

- describe the life and philosophy of Pestalozzi;
- explain the educational philosophy of Pestalozzi;
- discuss the contributions of Pestalozzi to educational thoughts;
- identify the contributions of Pestalozzi to educational practice; and
- evaluate Pestalozzi's education system.

10.2 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, you will get acquainted with one of the most famous educationists– Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi. Pestalozzi is regarded as the father of modern education. He was an able pedagogue and educational

reformer who believed that every individual has the ability to learn and the right to education. He was the person who turned education into child-centred from teacher-centred. Paul Munroe aptly mentioned about him as: “It was he who first made clear and forced upon the public disposition that the whole problem of education was to be considered from the point of view of developing the mind of the child.” Many of the principles of modern pedagogy have their roots in Pestalozzi’s philosophy and practice. These include the ideas of student-centered education, inquiry-based learning, importance on the child’s needs and interests, cooperation and communication between teachers and parents and active learning. This makes it important to study his educational thoughts and practices.

10.3 LIFE SKETCH

Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi was born in January 1746 in Zurich, Switzerland. He lost his father at the tender age of 5 years. He inherited the traits of being emotional, affectionate, sensitive and generous from his mother. On holidays Pestalozzi would visit his maternal grandfather, a clergyman. He travelled the countryside with his grandfather. There he witnessed the intense poverty suffered by the peasants and the consequences of putting children to work in the factories. He was also disappointed at seeing the ineffectiveness of the local schools. These experiences subsequently influenced the development of his educational theories.

Pestalozzi could not learn much at the elementary and Latin schools. He attended the higher school at Zurich. Here he became acquainted with many political and social currents of that time. Philosophically, Pestalozzi was most influenced by Rousseau and his book *Emile*. Pestalozzi tried his hand in politics and farming before turning to education. He attempted to create a school for the poor in the 1770s, known as Neuhof, where peasants would be liberated from their poverty by learning to weave and by selling their products. He believed that he could prevent children’s alienation from the educational process by financing their own education through work. However, Neuhof ended in financial ruin for him and his family. In 1798, the

French army invaded the town of Stans, leaving many children without parents or homes. It was then that Pestalozzi was asked by the Swiss government to create an orphanage for the children. Here, with little support from the Swiss government, he became headmaster, teacher and nurse to the children. By 1804, Pestalozzi's fame had spread to Germany, France, Italy, England, Russia and the U.S. People started to study and follow his methods there. Pestalozzi was an impressive personality, highly esteemed by his contemporaries. His concept of education embraced politics, economics, and philosophy, and the influence of his "method" was immense. He died on February 17, 1827 and was buried at Neuhof, site of his first school.

10.4 PESTALOZZI'S PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHTS

Pestalozzi's philosophy was shaped by his life experiences and observations. Pestalozzi believed in the ability and right of every individual human being to learn. He believed that it was the duty of society to put this right into practice. His beliefs made education democratic; particularly in Europe.

Pestalozzi was particularly concerned about the condition of the poor. Some of them did not go to school. If they did, the school education was often useless for their needs. He wanted to provide them with an education which would make them independent and enable them to improve their own lives.

His philosophy was based on psychological tendency. He believed in naturalism, which stood for child-centred education. The main features of his philosophy are discussed under the following heads–

- **Psychological Basis of Human Development:** According to this principle, the psychology or the mental traits of the child should be properly understood before imparting education to him. Pestalozzi was of the view that the development of the human beings is dependent upon the psychological characteristics of the individual like interest, aptitude, attitude, mental abilities, etc.
- **Naturalistic Philosophy:** Naturalism is related to the psychological basis of human development. This philosophy believes that the child should be given to grow naturally, i.e. the child should be left to nature.

This philosophy was originally developed by Rousseau. But Pestalozzi's naturalism was different from that of Rousseau in that he believed in guided freedom. The child should be led into nature with the care and guidance of parents and teachers. According to this philosophy, the child's natural development should be led by the teachers through careful guidance whenever necessary.

- **Positivism:** Pestalozzi wanted to adjust education according to the nature of the child. He regarded man as prone to instinctive behaviour like animal if proper education was not provided to him. He wanted to direct the growth of the child along definite lines, because he believed in the inherent moral, intellectual and physical power of man.
- **Ethical Society:** Pestalozzi maintained that society is a dire necessity for man. It controls the animal drive in man through laws and religion which develop the sense of right and wrong. However, society often enforces the wrong laws and protects the guilty. Pestalozzi felt that the claims of the society are not absolute. More than often they conflict with our ethical ideals. He wanted to establish a truly ethical society in which God was worshipped, morality was recognized and human creativity was stimulated.
- **Theory of Anschaunng:** Pestalozzi laid great emphasis on self-reliance. So, according to him, the knowledge investigated and experienced by oneself is most useful. He held that 'thought' must be cultivated by oneself free from any influence from others' 'love', by one's own act of loving and 'faith' by one's own act of believing and not by discussions about faith. Pestalozzi named this direct method of acquiring knowledge, thought, love and faith 'Anschaunng' or intuitive apprehension.

10.5 PESTALOZZI'S EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

The educational thoughts of Pestalozzi are influenced to a great extent by his life experiences and philosophy. Pestalozzi's educational philosophy was based on psychological tendency. He believed in naturalism, which stood for child-centred education.

Pestalozzi believed that education should develop the powers of 'Head', 'Heart' and 'Hands'. He believed that such education would help create individuals who are capable of knowing what is right and what is wrong and of acting according to this knowledge. Thus the well being of every individual could be improved and each individual could become a responsible citizen. He believed that empowering and ennobling every individual in this way was the only way to improve society and bring peace and security to the world. His aim was for a complete theory of education that would lead to a practical way of bringing happiness to humankind.

Pestalozzi saw teaching as a subject worth studying in its own right. Therefore he is aptly known as the father of pedagogy (the method and practice of teaching, especially as an academic subject or theoretical concept). He made education a separate branch of knowledge, alongside politics and other recognized areas of knowledge.

Under the principle of Anschaunng by Pestalozzi, it can be concluded that one should try to establish immediate acquaintance with the object of learning in order to understand it in real sense. Immediate experience of objects– simple or complex, sensory, visual or auditory– comes under the theory of Anschaunng. Anschaunng stands for first-hand knowledge acquired by the pupil's own experience.

10.6 PESTALOZZI'S EDUCATION SYSTEM

In 1774, Pestalozzi established his first educational institute, a self-supporting agricultural and handicraft school at Neuhof. At its height, the school enrolled fifty pupils, many of whom were destitute or orphaned. Here, Pestalozzi devised simultaneous instruction, a group method to teach reading, writing, and arithmetic. However, financial indebtedness forced the school to be closed in 1779.

In 1799, Pestalozzi re-entered active educational service when he was appointed as the director of the orphanage at Stans by the Napoleonic-backed Helvetian Republic. Here, he developed his concept of a residential school in which children were educated within an emotionally secure setting.

Operating for less than a year, the orphanage closed when French and Austrian armies battled in its vicinity.

Pestalozzi then conducted a residential and teacher training school at Burgdorf from 1800 to 1804. He trained such educators as Joseph Neef, who would introduce Pestalozzianism to the United States, and Friedrich Froebel, the founder of the kindergarten.

In 1804 Pestalozzi relocated his institute to Yverdon, where he worked until 1825. Both schools relied for funds on fee-paying pupils, though some poor children were taken in, and these institutes served as experimental bases for proving his method in its three branches—intellectual, moral, and physical, the latter including vocational and civic training. They also were to finance his life's "dream," an industrial (*i.e.,* poor) school. The Yverdon Institute became world famous, drawing pupils from all over Europe as well as many foreign visitors.

While dedicated assistants carried on the teaching, Pestalozzi remained the institute's heart and soul and continued to work out his method. *Wie Gertrud ihre Kinder lehrt* (1801) (*How Gertrude Teaches Her Children*) contains the main principles of intellectual education: that the child's innate faculties should be evolved and that he should learn how to think, proceeding gradually from observation to comprehension to the formation of clear ideas. Although the teaching method is treated in greater detail, Pestalozzi considered moral education as most important.

10.6.1 Aims of Education

The aims of education as propounded by Pestalozzi can be properly understood only when we study the influence of Rousseau and his naturalism on him. However, he was not a blind follower of Rousseau. He advocated that education should be imparted in a natural atmosphere free from interference but under the guidance, love, affection, sympathy, encouragement, etc. of the parents and others. He believed that the aim of education is the natural, progressive and harmonious development of all the powers and capacities of human beings. The ultimate aim of education is to make

every individual's life happier and more virtuous. Pestalozzi wants education to lead to a person who is well thought of and respected by his family and neighbours, one who understands the importance of relationships and appropriate behavior. He wanted education to be based on the development of innate tendencies, intellectual and moral powers and faculties. Education of the individual is to be guided by his natural dispositions toward thinking, learning and feeling.

10.6.2 Curriculum

Pestalozzi's curriculum was modelled after Jean-Jacques Rousseau's plan in 'E*mile'.* It emphasized on group rather than individual recitation. It focused on participatory activities such as drawing, writing, singing, physical exercise, model making, collecting, map making, and field trips. His ideas were considered radically innovative at the time. He laid great importance on individual differences. He preferred grouping students by ability rather than age, and encouraging formal teacher training as part of a scientific approach to education.

Pestalozzi's curriculum was in accordance with his philosophical views and the requirements of education. Before him certain important subjects like geography, language and geometry were not included in the curriculum. He prescribed the following subjects in the curriculum– music, moral and religious education, physical education, agriculture, etc. along with geography, language and geometry. Geography was considered necessary for encouraging children to observe things by themselves. He wanted the children to learn language efficiently and develop the power of expression. He wanted children to learn language and geometry in a psychological, scientific and natural manner.

He also wanted to include religion and virtue in the curriculum. The children should be given instructions in these subjects through maxims, songs, etc. Another important subject of school instruction is reading. He considered reading as the principal means of acquiring

knowledge for future. Reading should include the tone, accent, fluency and understanding instead of just rote reading.

10.6.3 Methods of Teaching

As Pestalozzi's education system was based on psychological tendency, his methods of teaching were scientific in nature. Pestalozzi's pedagogical doctrines stressed that teaching should proceed from the familiar to the new. It should incorporate concrete experience of actual emotional responses. It should be paced to follow the gradual unfolding of the child's development. His ideas are similar to those of Johann Friedrich Herbart, Maria Montessori, John Dewey and more recently Jean Piaget and also the advocates of the language experience approach such as R. V. Allen.

Pestalozzi's methods of teaching rested on two major premises: (1) children need an emotionally secure environment as the setting for successful learning; and (2) instruction should follow the generalized process of human conceptualization that begins with sensation. Emphasizing sensory learning, the special method used the *Anschauung* principle, a process that involved forming clear concepts from sense impressions. Pestalozzi designed object lessons in which children, guided by teachers, examined the form (shape), number (quantity and weight) of objects, and named them after direct experience with them. Teaching through objects was the most popular and widely adopted element of Pestalozzi's educational practice.

Pestalozzi developed two related phases of instruction—the general and special methods. The general method involves creating an emotionally secure environment for the students in the school. This was also a necessary condition for implementing the special method. Pestalozzi designed an elaborate series of object lessons, in which children examined minerals, plants and animals and human-made artifacts found in their environment. Teaching proceeds from simple to complex, easy to difficult, and concrete to abstract in a sequence.

Introduction of subjects like geography and natural science in the curriculum demanded teaching methods like guided field trips. Children explored the surrounding countryside, observing the local natural environment, topography, and economy. Another result of Pestalozzi's work was the movement to redirect instruction from the traditional recitation (each child recited a previously assigned lesson) to simultaneous group-centered instruction.

Pestalozzi's methods of teaching were based on the naturalistic and realistic philosophy of education. He was very disappointed at the un-psychological methods of teaching adopted in the traditional educational systems. He was in favour of child-centred methods of teaching. He proposed for the following methods of teaching–

a) Education through experience and discovery: Pestalozzi believed that real education was provided only when the child acquired it through experiences and discovery. Attempt should be made to create an atmosphere that would encourage the child to discover knowledge.
b) Based on individuality of the child: He believed that education should be based on the interest, aptitude and innate abilities of individual child. He regarded education as the birth right of each individual.
c) Simple to difficult: He was of the view that education should proceed from simple to complex. With the growth of the child his power of thinking, reasoning and attention grows which influences his ability to deal with difficult and complex subject matters.
d) Natural atmosphere: He believed that the child should be educated in a natural atmosphere but under the guidance, care and patronage of the parents or the teacher.
e) Motivation: Pestalozzi regarded words as only secondary instruments for acquiring knowledge and motivational foundations as the carrier of knowledge.

f) Home-like atmosphere: Pestalozzi believed that the atmosphere of the school should be like that of the home which is full of love, kindness and sympathy.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: List the factors which influenced Pestalozzi's philosophy.

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Q.2: Why Pestalozzi's naturalism is called positivistic?

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Q.3: What is the implication of Pestalozzi's theory of Anschaunng on education?

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Q.4: What is the ultimate aim of education according to Pestalozzi?

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Q.5: What are the new subjects introduced in the curriculum by Pestalozzi?

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Q.6: What are the two basic premises on which Pestalozzi's methods of teaching are based?

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10.6.4 Discipline

Pestalozzi maintained that the classroom should be like a family. The atmosphere must be loving and caring, where the members are cooperative, loving and kind to one another. He developed the idea of the "family classroom" from the way his mother raised him and his sister. He regarded family as an essential component of education. He suggested that teachers always need to be loving and kind, and earn the trust of the children. He believed that without love, neither the physical nor the intellectual powers will develop naturally. He considered harsh discipline that was prevalent at that time as something which isolates children from the teachers. It prevents the normal and natural development of the child, particularly in areas of morality and ethics. However, Pestalozzi realized that punishment was sometimes unavoidable particularly when the children misbehave. So, he prescribed its use sometimes.

10.7 CRITICAL EVALUATION OF PESTALOZZI'S EDUCATION SYSTEM

Pestalozzi was not only a great educator and father of modern education, but a torch bearer in many regards in the field of education. He made tentative attempts. But his attempts inspired, guided and helped both his contemporaries as well as his successors. The positive aspects of his educational thoughts and practices are listed as–

- Child-centred education: Pestalozzi revolutionized the education system by making the child centre of education. The whole education system has to be designed on the basis of the requirements of the child.
- Scientific and psychological: Pestalozzi's educational system is based on psychological tendency which means that it considered the psychological characteristics and needs of children.
- Natural education: The children are taught through self activities. They get the opportunity for self expression. The children learn many

constructive activities. There are no books as burden and no strict time schedule.

- Belief in individual's potentialities: Pestalozzi believed in the greatness of the individual who is believed to have unlimited possibilities if opportunity is given for harmonious development.
- Education as an eternal quest: He believed that education is man's eternal quest for meaning, significance and enlightment. It helps in rising above our passion and to identify ourselves with mankind.
- Education for the poor: His education system was devised considering the needs of the poor people. It aimed at elevating the poor from their destitute condition.

Pestalozzi's educational system is criticized only on the basis that his contemporaries regarded his thoughts and ideas as obscure. Pestalozzi's works lacked the scientific precision that is demanded in present age. His efforts in education were tentative. In later times, Yverdon became a showplace. There were two causes of the ultimate collapse of the school. Pestalozzi's fame brought out some of his more disagreeable characteristics, and the original atmosphere of fellowship disappeared in the influx of visitors to the school. The school closed amid disputes and lawsuits. But his ideas were used in establishing national school systems during the 19th century, and his influence among educators continues to be great to this day.

10.8 RELEVANCE OF PESTALOZZI'S EDUCATION SYSTEM IN PRESENT CONTEXT

Pestalozzi's approach had a great influence on education. The scientific spirit in Pestalozzi's educational philosophy has made it relevant for all the times. His influence as well as his relevance to present education is put in the following points–

- Interests and needs of the child: Pestalozzi's emphasis on the needs and interest of the child in the education system is very relevant in the present education system.
- Child-centred approach to teaching: Child-centred rather than teacher-centred approach to teaching was advocated by Pestalozzi.

Today the whole world is making all the efforts to make education child centred.

- Active participation of the child: He was an advocator of active rather than passive participation of the child in the learning experience. Learning by doing is one of the most sought of principles of the present education system.
- Positive naturalism: He believed that education should be based on the freedom of the child, on his or her natural development balanced with the self-discipline to function well as an individual and in society.
- First-hand experience: The child having direct experience of the world and the use of natural objects in teaching leads to effective education. Direct sensory experience is regarded as the best teaching method in the present education system.
- Integrated effort of school and the home: Education is a matter of cooperation between the school and the home and between parents and teachers. In the present educational scenario, the influence of both home and school related factors on learning of the child is given importance.
- All-round education: The modern concept of education is all round development of the individual. Pestalozzi was very right in stressing the education of the head, the heart and the hands.
- Importance on both curriculum and method: Education which puts emphasis on how things are taught as well as what is taught is effective in the views of Pestalozzi. Therefore, he emphasized on teacher training, which is an immensely stressed aspect of the present education system.
- Practical discipline: Pestalozzi's discipline was practical in nature. He believed in authority based on love, not fear. But he did not negate the necessity of punishment in some cases.



10.9 LET US SUM UP

- Pestalozzi was a great educator and an educational reformer.
- His educational philosophy was based on psychological tendency of education.
- Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi was born in January 1746 in Zurich, Switzerland. He inherited the traits of being emotional, affectionate, sensitive and generous from his mother.
- He witnessed intense poverty suffered by peasants and the consequences of putting children to work in the factories. He was also disappointed at seeing the ineffectiveness of the local schools.
- He attempted to create a school for the poor in the 1770s, known as Neuhof, where peasants would be liberated from their poverty by learning to weave and by selling their products.
- His concept of education embraced politics, economics, and philosophy, and the influence of his “method” was immense.
- Pestalozzi believed in the ability and right of every individual human being to learn. He believed that it was the duty of society to put this right into practice. His beliefs led education to become democratic.
- His philosophy was based on psychological tendency. He believed in naturalism. However, his naturalism is positivistic in nature. He felt that the claims of the society are not absolute. In his theory of Anschaunng, he believed knowledge investigated and experienced by oneself is most useful.
- Pestalozzi believed that education should develop the powers of ‘Head’, ‘Heart’ and ‘Hands’.
- He saw teaching as a subject worth studying in its own right and therefore, he is known as the father of pedagogy.
- In 1774, Pestalozzi established his first educational institute, a self-supporting agricultural and handicraft school at Neuhof.

- Pestalozzi then conducted a residential and teacher training school at Burgdorf from 1800 to 1804, which was later relocated to Yverdon.
- He believed that the aim of education is the natural, progressive and harmonious development of all the powers and capacities of human beings. The ultimate aim of education is to make every individual's life happier and more virtuous.
- He prescribed the following subjects in the curriculum– music, moral and religious education, physical education, agriculture, etc. along with geography, language and geometry.
- Pestalozzi's pedagogical doctrines stressed that instructions should proceed from the familiar to the new, incorporate the performance of concrete arts and the experience of actual emotional responses, and should be paced to follow the gradual unfolding of the child's development.
- Pestalozzi believed that discipline should be maintained in an environment of love and care. However, he also voted for punishment sometimes when necessary.
- His education system was scientific in the sense that it was child centred, natural and gave importance to individual's potentialities. His education system served the poor people. However, his system is criticized for being obscure and tentative.



10.10 FURTHER READING

1) Barnard, H. (1859). *Life, Educational Principles and Methods of John Henry Pestalozzi with Biographical Sketches of Several of His Assistants and Disciples*. New York: F. C. Brownell.
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3) Rai, B.C. (1991). *History of Western Education*. Lucknow: Prakashan Kendras.
4) Sharma, Y.K. (2006). *The Doctrines of the Great Western Educators– From Plato to Bertrand Russell*. New Delhi: Kanishka Publishers.

5) Silber, K. (1973). *Pestalozzi: The Man and His Work*. New York: Schocken Books.



10.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans. to Q. No. 1: The factors which influenced Pestalozzi's philosophy are his mother's love and care, his experiences with the poor people, ineffectiveness of the local schools and Rousseau's book, 'Emile'.

Ans. to Q. No. 2: Naturalism believes that the child should be given to grow naturally, i.e. the child should be left to nature. But Pestalozzi's naturalism was positivistic in nature in that he believed in guided freedom. The child should be led into nature with the care and guidance of parents and teachers.

Ans. to Q. No. 3: According to the principle of Anschaunng, Pestalozzi advocated that the children should be given education through first-hand experiences.

Ans. to Q. No. 4: According to Pestalozzi the ultimate aim of education is to make every individual's life happier and more virtuous.

Ans. to Q. No. 5: The new subjects introduced by Pestalozzi are geography, language and geometry.

Ans. to Q. No. 6: Pestalozzi's methods of teaching are based on two major premises: an emotionally secure environment as the setting for successful learning and following the generalized process of human conceptualization in instruction beginning with sensation.



10.12 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

A) Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q.1: Write a short note on the educational philosophy of Pestalozzi.

Q.2: Mention the aims of education according to Pestalozzi.

Q.3: What type of discipline was suggested by Pestalozzi?

B) Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q.1: Give an account of the efforts made by Pestalozzi to establish educational institutions.

Q.2: Discuss the basic principles of Pestalozzi's philosophy.

Q.3: Explain the methods of teaching advocated by Pestalozzi.

Q.4: Critically analyze Pestalozzi's educational system.

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UNIT 11: MARIA MONTESSORI AND HER EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT

UNIT STRUCTURE

11.1 Learning Objectives

11.2 Introduction

11.3 Life Sketch

11.4 Montessori's Philosophy

11.5 Montessori's Educational Philosophy

- 11.5.1 Principles of Education
- 11.5.2 Aims of Education
- 11.5.3 Curriculum
- 11.5.4 Method of Teaching
- 11.5.5 Place of Teacher
- 11.5.6 Discipline

11.6 Contributions of Montessori to the Present Education System

11.7 Conclusion

11.8 Let Us Sum Up

11.9 Further Reading

11.10 Answers to Check Your Progress

11.11 Possible Questions

11.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to–

- describe the life and philosophy of Maria Montessori;
- explain the main idea of educational philosophy of Maria Montessori;
- identify the contributions of Maria Montessori to educational thoughts; and
- discuss the contributions of Maria Montessori to educational thought and practice.

11.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit introduces you to the philosophy of Maria Montessori and her contributions in the field of education. Today, Maria Montessori enjoys global acclaim as one of the world's great educators. Her life story is a remarkable one in which a dedicated woman used her scientific training, her experience, and her insights to develop a method of education that challenged conventional patterns of education. The conventions she challenged were not only educational ones, she had to surmount the obstacles that limited the freedom of women to enter into new careers. Graduating from Rome University Medical School in 1896, she was appointed assistant doctor at the Rome University Psychiatric Clinic. Her work during the next three years with retarded children reflected not only deep compassion but also rigorous scientific quality. Her contribution to the education of early childhood, especially mentally challenged children has revolutionized the world of education.

11.3 LIFE SKETCH

Dr. Maria Montessori was born on August 31, 1870 in Chiaravalle, a hill town overlooking the Adriatic Sea, in Italy's Ancona province. She was the only child of Alessandro Montessori, a business manager in the state-run tobacco monopoly and Renilde Stoppani, the well-educated daughter of a highly respected family. Maria Montessori wanted to become an actress and for this purpose she actually joined a drama school. Then she decided to become an engineer. But after her schooling she changed her mind and decided to become a doctor of medicine. But no women were admitted to the medical college in those days. So, she used a trick to get herself admitted to a medical college. She signed herself as M. Montessori in the application form. The authority admitted her thinking she was a man. In this way, she became the first Italian woman to get the degree of Doctor of Medicine.

She worked as a professor of Anthropology in the University of Rome from 1900 to 1907. Here she got an opportunity to supervise a ward of mentally challenged children. She studied those children very intensively

and reached the conclusion that mental deficiency was due to the dullness of sense. So from her experience and observation she thought that training of sense organs could achieve marvelous results. In 1907 she was appointed as a supervisor of schools by the Director of Roman Association for Good Building. Under this there was a school where the children between 3 to 7 years who were neglected by their parents could play and work under the guidance of a teacher. Dr. Montessori opened a new school in 1907, and called it 'Children's House'. Here she developed a unique method for the education of young children through a process of sense training. She used a self-learning and self-correction apparatus known as 'Didactic Apparatus'. Like a true scientist, she studied these children deeply and developed a novel method of teaching which is based on sense training. Her method attracted the attention of the whole world.

Though she was a doctor by qualification, she entered the field of education through her interest in mentally deficient children. By coming into contact with feeble-minded children she realized that such children were more in need of education than of medical treatment. Through some experiments she discovered that the defective children trained by her did better than many normal children taught in other schools. This encouraged her to apply her new method in the teaching of normal children as well as their mental development.

From 1912 till the end of her life, she put her ideas into twenty-five books and pamphlets on various aspects of her educational theory and practice. Dr. Montessori died in Holland in 1952 at the age of 82 years.

11.4 MONTESSORI'S PHILOSOPHY

Maria Montessori believed that education should be regarded as a development from within. Montessori's philosophy is based on love for the child, respect for the child's dignity as a person and a strong desire to help the child realize his or her fullest potential in the society. She observed children's need for independence, for self-confidence, for control over their own impulses and emotions and a natural curiosity and desire to learn. Following points can help us to understand the philosophy of Montessori–

- Education must help in the complete unfolding of child's individuality.
- Suitable environment should be provided so that the child may grow and develop the potentialities within him.
- Freedom is the birth right of every individual. She advocates spontaneous development of the child with full liberty.
- Montessori believes in self education or auto education. The child should remain undisturbed by adult interference.
- The sensory training is the key to intellectual development.

11.5 MONTESSORI'S EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Children can absorb information from their surroundings without any conscious effort. Montessori called this phenomenon "absorbent mind". It means that learning does not have to be forced upon them. If the environment is orderly and readily accessible and if the children are free to work at their own pace, they can learn to read, write and calculate in the same natural way that they learned to walk and talk. According to her, 'Child is a body which grows and a soul which develops these two forms, physical and psychic have an eternal front, life itself". She wants each child to develop himself from within and not from without. Education should guide the process of unfolding the hidden powers of the child. In her words, "Education is the active help given to the normal expansion of the child." She says that every child is different from the other, physically as well as mentally. So the child's individuality must be respected and not suppressed through collective teaching. Each child should be bestowed individual attention and allowed to grow at his own pace. In order to develop his physical, intellectual and spiritual powers to the fullest, he must have a freedom achieved through order and self-discipline. From the chaos, the child must gradually create order and learn to distinguish among the impressions that come in contact with his senses. Following points can help us to know in a better way about her educational philosophy.

11.5.1 Principles of Education

- ***Respect for the child:*** Respect for the child is the keystone on which all the other Montessori principles rest. Teachers show respect for children by providing them with the opportunity to do, think, and learn for themselves. Through freedom of choice, children are able to develop the skills and abilities needed to become confident learners.
- ***The Sensitive Periods:*** Maria Montessori believed that children pass through specific stages of development. In these developmental periods they are most willing and able to learn specific skills and knowledge. She referred to these times as 'sensitive periods.' During this period, children should have the opportunity to work on activities without interruptions. As a result, children follow their natural interests, and progress naturally. In Montessori classroom, the role of the teacher is to be a skilled observer of sensitive periods. Based on these observations, the Montessori teacher guides children towards activities and materials that are suited to their stage of development.
- ***The Absorbent Mind:*** Montessori believed that the first six years of life are crucial to the development of the child. In her research, Montessori refers to this period of development as the 'absorbent mind,' which describes the period of time when the child's mind readily absorbs information from the world around them. The first phase of the absorbent mind occurs from birth to age three, and is known as the period of 'unconscious creation.' During this time, children learn to walk, talk and develop their sense of self through experiences with their environment. From the ages of three to six, children move into the second phase of development, known as the 'conscious absorbent mind.' In this period the children begin to actively seek out experiences that will help them to develop their intelligence, coordination, and independence.

- ***Mixed Age Groupings:*** In Montessori system of education, it is common for students to be grouped with children within a three-year age range. This structure of the Montessori environment encourages older children to take leadership roles, and the younger children to learn through imitation. In mixed age classes children are taught how to engage socially with both younger and older children. In effect, mixed age class groups lead to imitative learning, peer tutoring, and mixed-age team work.
- ***Prepared Environment:*** According to Montessori, children learn best in a prepared environment where they have freedom of movement and independent choice. Accordingly, she prepared a child-centered learning environment that makes the educational experience available in an orderly format. Montessori materials are displayed in progression, ordered from left to right within their specific curriculum area. The goal of the Montessori classroom is to create a harmonious learning space that encourages independent learning. Elements of Montessori environment include– freedom, structure, order, beauty, nature and the integration of the social and intellectual aspects of child development.
- ***Learning as a developmental process:*** The Montessori curriculum is divided into five key areas of learning: practical life, sensorial, mathematics, language and culture. The curriculum emphasizes that learning is a developmental process that cannot be determined by a child's age. As a result, the learning process is viewed as a process that is determined by the rate and speed that a child can acquire one skill or knowledge area before they progress to the next.
- ***Sensory experiences:*** Montessori materials are sensory based learning tools that are designed to teach children through hands-on experience. Each material is designed with an inbuilt control of error. In effect, this unique design allows children to discover the outcome of the learning material independent of an adult.

This also encourages children to organize their thinking. In addition, they learn to solve problem in a clear way, and absorb the outcome of the material, under the careful guidance of their teachers.

An important opportunity to implement her educational principles came in 1907, when she was asked to establish a school in a slum area in Rome. The invitation to Montessori was an attempt to resolve a very practical problem. When parents who lived in the remodeled housing development went to work, their children, under school-age, were left alone and unsupervised. The association decided to establish the school as a kind of day-care center for these children. She got the opportunity to create a school that could serve as a laboratory to test her ideas. Montessori opened her first school, the Casa dei Bambini, or Children's House, in a large apartment in Rome's poverty-ridden San Lorenzo district, on January 6, 1907. Her first pupils were fifty children, from ages three to seven, whose families resided in the tenement.

Montessori's philosophy and method of education emphasizes the potential of the young child and develops this potential by utilizing specially trained teachers and special teaching materials. She recognizes the natural curiosity and desire to learn in the child. The Montessori materials awaken the desire and channel this curiosity into a learning experience which the child enjoys. Montessori materials help the child to understand what he learns by associating an abstract concept with a concrete sensorial experience. In this manner, the Montessori child is actually learning and not just memorizing. The Montessori Method stresses that children learn and progress at their own pace. Montessori's *Children House,* is a place where children are taught in homely atmosphere and provides them everything necessary to develop in their own way. The children house has many rooms for study, assembly, lunch, rest, manual work, gymnasium, bathing and lab. Montessori classrooms are: bright, warm and attractive. It is filled with pictures

of plants and animals, art, music, books and specialized hands-on materials which are designed to allow children to move around and work independently or in small collaborative groups. There are small gardens where children can enjoy the open air, play, work, take rest or sleep. A pedometer and a weighing machine are used in this house to measure the height and weight of the students. Didactic apparatus is used to provide sensory training, motor training and teaching language and arithmetic.

11.5.2 Aims of Education

The main aims of Montessori education are–

- To develop essential skills already within the child.
- To inculcate the thirst of knowledge in the child.
- To develop a sense of order.
- To nurture functional creativity.
- To boost self-confidence.
- To bring in a sense of independence.
- To allow the child to have hands-on experience by exploring the choices available and picking his own choices.
- To help the child with specific information.
- To care, love and give attention to the child along with a proper learning environment.
- To show respect to the children's individuality.
- To develop natural curiosity of the child that helps him in later life for continuous learning process even outside the classroom.
- To help the child to cultivate his own desire to learn naturally.
- To develop the habits of persistence and initiative.

11.5.3 Curriculum

The curriculum is not compartmentalized into separate subjects. The concepts are introduced simply and concretely and are reintroduced several times over succeeding years at increasing degrees of abstraction and complexity. The integrated approach is

one of Montessori's great strengths. The curriculum is interrelated so that concepts are reinforced across the classroom culture. The curriculum emphasizes that learning is a developmental process that cannot be determined by a child's age. Her curriculum includes first of all sensory training then children are taught reading, writing and arithmetic. In Montessori schools, students spend the majority of their time participating in different sessions of uninterrupted activities that last approximately three hours. These projects consist of independent and group problem-solving tasks and other sensory activities related to mathematics, science, language, history, geography, art, music and nature. The integrated curriculum follows a chronological order based on Montessori's Five Great Lessons– The story of the universe, the timeline of life, the story of language, the story of numbers, and the timeline of civilization.

Based on her theory of sensitive periods, her observation and experimentation, she designed a curriculum that sought to develop children's competencies in three areas– practical life skills, motor and sensory training, and more formal literary and computational skills and subjects.

First Group: Exercises of Practical Life

Montessori designed the practical exercises so that children could use them to develop the skills needed in everyday life, such as serving food, sweeping their rooms, dusting and cleaning the furniture, washing one's hands and face, cleaning their nails, brush their teeth, dressing and undressing, tying a shoelace, or buttoning a shirt or blouse, polishing their shoes and combing their hair. The aim of the exercises was to move children from being dependent on adults to performing the exercises independently. The practical skills were generic in that once a child had mastered a particular skill, it could be transferred to the many occurrences when it was needed in daily life. Designed to exercise and develop motor, muscular, and coordination skills, the successful performance of everyday skills gave children a sense of independence and self-confidence that they

could do things without adult assistance. The school also utilized ordinary household objects—washbasins, dishes, silverware, and gardening tools. Cabinets to store materials were accessible so that children could reach them and then return materials to their proper locations.

Second Group: Sensory Training

Montessori assigned greater importance to sense training than learning or thinking. So, she used a device called *Didactic Apparatus* to sharpen the pupil's sense and to accelerate learning. She designed the materials and activities for sensory education to develop the children's ability to perceive distinctions in colour and shade and in sound and tone. The curriculum included the skills needed to manipulate various kinds of objects. Montessori developed an order to use the materials. They began with a series of solid insets– wooden cylinders of different sizes, to be inserted in holes of the same size in a wooden block. Then, with ten pink wooden cubes of graduated size, the child built a tower, then knocked it down and rebuilt it. In addition, there were ten brown wooden prisms and ten red rods with which the child built a broad and long stair. There were geometric solids (pyramids, spheres, cones), little boards with rough and smooth surfaces and forms of different weights and colours, and pieces of fabric of different textures. There were wooden plane insets, a little cabinet of drawers, each containing framed geometrical figures– blue triangles, circles, squares of different sizes– to be taken out and replaced correctly in their frames. There were cards with paper geometrical shapes pasted on them, a series of cylindrical boxes filled with different materials that produced different sounds when shaken; sixty-three little tables in nine different shades, from light to dark of seven different colors. A series of musical tone bells was used with a wooden board that had musical staff lines and a set of wooden disks to represent the notes. The tone bells were used to develop the child's ability to discriminate between various tones. Sensory boxes included those filled with spices with

distinctive odours. As the child worked with the didactic materials, he or she learned to recognize, group and compare similar objects and contrast them from dissimilar ones.

Third Group: Language Development

Montessori believed that muscular skill in children is very easily developed through the teaching of writing rather than reading. She is of the view that writing is purely mechanical activity, and reading partly intellectual. Didactic apparatus was used to impart language and arithmetic teaching. The children were taught reading, writing and arithmetic only after sensory training.

11.5.4 Method of Teaching

Dr. Montessori wrote, ''The most important period of life is not the age of university studies but the period from birth to age six." It is also true that children mature at different rates and their periods of readiness for academic subjects vary greatly. Montessori observed that a young child has periods of intense fascination for developing various skills such as climbing stairs or counting. During these sensitive periods it is easier for the child to acquire particular skills than at any other time in his/her life. The Montessori classroom allows each child freedom to select activities which correspond to his/her own periods of interest and readiness.

The structure of Montessori learning involves the use of many materials with which the child may work individually. At every step of his learning, the teaching material is designed to test his understanding and to correct his errors. Dr. Montessori recognized that the only valid impulse to learning is the self-motivation of the child. Children themselves move towards learning and the teacher prepares the environment, programmes, offers the child stimulations etc. But it is the child who learns, who is motivated through the work itself (not the teacher's personality) to continue his chosen task. If the Montessori child is free to learn, it is because he has acquired from his exposure to both physical and mental order, and "inner

discipline." This is the core of Dr. Montessori's educational philosophy. Social adjustment is a necessary condition for learning in a school, but it is not the purpose of education. Patterns of concentration, determination and awareness established in early childhood, produce a confident and competent learner in later years. Montessori introduces children to the joy of learning at an early age and provides a framework in which intellectual and social disciplines go hand in hand. Didactic apparatus is a concrete material used to educate the young children who are mentally challenged. The word 'Didactic' means instructive. This is a great contribution of Montessori by which learning becomes joyful. She recommends the use of this apparatus to control every error and to help the child to correct himself automatically. Thus, this apparatus is a substitute for teacher which enables even the dull and challenged children to receive education.

After sensory training, children are taught reading, writing and arithmetic. She suggested that writing should be started before reading. In this regard she depends on psychological principle of 'Transfer of Training'. There are three factors involved in the procedure of teaching of writing they are– recognizing the form of letters, learning of phonetic sounds and manipulating the pen. In the words of Montessori, "Reading is the interpretation of an idea from written signs and not merely looking at print. Until the child receives a transmission of ideas from the written words, he does not read". Next is arithmetic where she wants to teach the four fundamental rules of arithmetic– addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.

11.5.5 Place of Teacher

The function of the teacher in a Montessori classroom differs considerably from that of the traditional teacher. Dr. Montessori used the term "director/directress" for teacher. Here the word directress means a teacher should be a sympathetic guide having instinctive understanding of the needs and difficulties of the child. The directress brings the child into contact with the world in which he lives and the

tools by which he learns to cope with his world. She is, first of all a very keen observer of the individual interests and needs of each child. The daily plan proceeds from the observation rather than from a prepared curriculum. The correct use of materials is demonstrated, as they are individually chosen by the children. The directress carefully watches the progress of each child and keeps a record of his work. The individual child's total development as well as his progress toward self discipline is fully guided by the directress who prepares the environment, directs the activities, and offers the child enticement and stimulation. The mutual respect of the student and the teacher is the most important factor in this process. Montessori believed that "it is necessary for the teacher to guide the child without letting him feel her presence too much, so that she may be always ready to supply the desired help, but may never be the obstacle between the child and his experience".

The Montessori teacher demonstrates the following key behaviors to implement child-centered approach–

- Make children the center of learning by preparing and arranging a series of motives for cultural activity in a special environment made for the child.
- Encourage children to learn by providing freedom for them in the prepared environment.
- Observe children so as to prepare the best possible environment, recognizing sensitive periods and diverting inappropriate behavior to meaningful tasks.
- Prepare the learning environment by ensuring that learning materials are provided in an orderly format and the materials provide for appropriate experiences for all the children.
- Respect each child and their work.
- Introduce and demonstrate learning materials, and support children's learning. The teacher introduces learning materials after observing each child.

- Montessori replaced the word 'teacher' by the word 'directress' because she thinks that the duty of teacher is to direct and not to teach the child.
- Teacher should have knowledge of child's mind and character.
- Teacher should be partly a doctor, partly a scientist and a completely religious missionary.

11.5.6 Discipline

Montessori believed that discipline cannot be attained by way of commands, by sermons, by any of the disciplinary methods universally known. Therefore she suggested that discipline should be fostered in the child indirectly by developing activity in the spontaneous work. In this way each child is expected to learn how to control himself by his own efforts and through calm, silent activities which is directed towards no external aim but is meant to keep alive that inner flame on which his life depends.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: Give a short life sketch of Maria Montessori.

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Q.2: Why sense training is important according to Montessori?

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Q.3: What is Didactic Apparatus?

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Q.4: What is the Montessori's concept of freedom in the classroom?

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Q.5: Why should we send the child to Montessori school?

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11.6 CONTRIBUTIONS OF MONTESSORI TO THE PRESENT EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Dr. Maria Montessori is one of the greatest pioneers of child education of both normal and the mentally challenged children of the pre-school age. Her work has considerably influenced modern educational theories and practices especially in the case of nursery school stage. Some of her contributions are–

- ***Scientific approach to education*:** Montessori was a physician and educationist. She formulated her method of teaching in the light of her observation, experience and experiments. She applied scientific methods in education. The scientific approach to education has been accepted and put into practice in modern education.
- ***Psychological approach to education*:** She accepted that every child has a peculiar interest, aptitudes, capacities and endowments. The child, therefore, can learn according to his own interest, rate and speed. The physical and mental difference of the individual must be recognized and collective method of teaching or group activities which crush the individuality should be shunned. Therefore, she advocated individualized instruction based on the interest and the ability of the child.
- ***Learning through exercise:*** The most important contribution of Montessori is the introduction of "Didactic Apparatus." She used this mechanical and artificial devise for imparting sensory training, muscular coordination and instruction in 3R's. Learning through practical life experience is a valuable contribution of Montessori.
- ***Role of teacher*:** In her system of education, teachers are regarded as directresses. Teacher's work is to direct and guide the movement of children. They must have love, sympathy, patience and humanity for the child.
- ***Method of teaching writing:*** She paid due attention to the muscular movement and exercise needed in the process of writing. She insisted that the child should be taught the art of writing before he learns how to read. Her attention to muscular movement and exercises in the process of writing is a unique contribution to modern education.
- ***Emphasis on self-education:*** She emphasized the child's development from within through his/her own efforts. For this she advocated self education or auto education in an atmosphere of freedom, joy and activity. There should be no strain or effort on the education of children. Children should be provided an educationally rich and aesthetically attractive environment so that they can learn naturally by their own experiences and observation.

11.7 CONCLUSION

The word Montessori is freely associated with schools, meant for young children. Montessori Method as described above has the potential to bring about some positive changes not only to our education system but to the society at large. The question then remains, if the Montessori Method offers such a potential for success why is it not used in every school? One very simple answer is that not every educator is familiar with the Montessori Method. Those educators who are familiar with it try to use it or at least some aspects of it. There are many private schools all over the world that use Montessori Method to teach young children and adolescents. There are many other schools, institutions, and research institutes that use the Montessori-based programming for education, therapy and research.



11.8 LET US SUM UP

- Dr. Maria Montessori was born on August 31, 1870, in Italy and died in 1952 at the age of 82.
- She was the first Italian women who got the degree of Doctor of Medicine.
- She worked as a professor of anthropology in the University of Rome from 1900 to 1907.
- In 1907 she was appointed as a supervisor of schools by the Director of Roman Association for Good Building.
- She developed a unique method for the education of young children through a process of sense training.
- She used a self-learning and self-correction apparatus known as 'Didactic Apparatus'.
- Though she was a doctor by qualification, she entered the field of education through her interest in mentally deficient children.
- The philosophy of Montessori is based on love for the child, respect for the child's dignity as a person, and a strong desire to help the child realize his or her fullest potential in society. Therefore the

foundation of her approach is respect for the child as a worthy individual, developing himself into a mature human adult.

- Learning does not have to be forced upon the children. If the environment is orderly and readily accessible and if the children are free to work through their own cycles of activity at their own pace, they can learn to read, write and calculate in the same natural way that they learned to walk and talk.
- The main aims of Montessori education are– to develop essential skills already within the child, to inculcate the thirst of knowledge in the child, to develop a sense of order, to boost self-confidence, to bring in a sense of independence, to care, love and give attention along with a proper learning environment, to show respect to the children's individuality.
- The Montessori curriculum is divided into five key areas of learning: practical life, sensorial, mathematics, language and culture.
- She suggested that discipline should be fostered in the child indirectly by developing activity in the spontaneous work.



11.9 FURTHER READING

1) Gutek, G. L. (Ed.) (2004). *The Montessori Method– The Origins of an Educational Innovation: Including an Abridged and Annotated Edition of Maria Montessori's The Montessori Method*. USA: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
2) Montessori, M. (1989). *Education for a New World*. Oxford: Clio Press.
3) Montessori, M. (1995). *The Absorbent Mind*. New York: Henry Holt.
4) Rai, B. C. (1991). *History of Western Education*. Lucknow: Prakashan Kendras.
5) Sharma, Y. K. (2006). *The Doctrines of the Great Western Educators– From Plato to Bertrand Russell*. New Delhi: Kanishka Publishers.

11.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans. to Q. No. 1: Dr. Maria Montessori was born on August 31, 1870 in Chiaravalle, a hill town overlooking the Adriatic Sea, in Italy's Ancona province. She was the only child of Alessandro Montessori, a business manager in the state-run tobacco monopoly and Renilde Stoppani, the well-educated daughter of a highly respected family.

Ans. to Q. No. 2: She believes that mental deficiency was due to the dullness of senses, and therefore, proper training of sense was necessary for acquiring knowledge. From her study she found that sense of children were particularly very active between the age of 3 to 7. As such a lot of learning could take place during this period. She therefore devised a graded apparatus called didactic apparatus.

Ans. to Q. No. 3: "The didactic apparatus" are concrete materials used to educate young learners who are mentally challenged. They are not a set of mere separate toys nor are used simply for the purpose of sense training. In the fullest sense they are the instruments of the psychological laboratory.

Ans. to Q. No. 4: The Montessori environment includes a fine balance between structure and freedom. The concept of freedom carrying responsibility is gradually introduced from the time the child enters school. The Montessori child has a wide variety of constructive paths to choose; he gains the skills and tools to accomplish his choice and he is taught the social values that will enable him to become enlightened. An undisciplined and unskilled child is not free, but rather he is a slave to his immediate desires. Freedom does not involve being able to do what you want to do. It does involve being able to distinguish what is constructive and beneficial.

Ans. to Q. No. 5: Montessori is education not a preschool. The best time to start the child's education is during the early years 2 ½ to 4 ½ when most of his intelligence and social characteristics are formed.

Fifty percent of the child's mental development occurs before 4 years of age. In a Montessori school, the child will learn to think in logical patterns and to deal with reality. He will become better prepared to cope with the complex challenges of tomorrow's world.



11.11 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

A) Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q.1: Write a short note on the educational system developed by Montessori.

Q.2: State the importance of sense training in the method of education.

Q.3: Mention the aims of education according to Montessori.

B) Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q.1: Do you support Montessori's idea of 'respect the child'? Justify your answer.

Q.2: Discuss the basic principles of Montessori's philosophy.

Q.3: How did Montessori design the educational environment of 'Children's House'?

Q.4: Discuss the relevance of Montessori's education system at present times.

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UNIT 12: SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND HIS EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT

UNIT STRUCTURE

12.1 Learning Objectives

12.2 Introduction

12.3 Life Sketch of Swami Vivekananda

12.4 Vivekananda's Philosophy

12.5 Vivekananda's Educational Philosophy

- 12.5.1 Aims of Education
- 12.5.2 Curriculum
- 12.5.3 Method of Teaching
- 12.5.4 Discipline
- 12.5.4 Place of Teacher
- 12.5.5 Place of Women

12.6 Contribution of Vivekananda's Philosophy to Present Education System

12.7 Conclusion

12.8 Let Us Sum Up

12.9 Further Reading

12.10 Answers to Check Your Progress

12.11 Possible Questions

12.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to–

- describe the life and philosophy of Swami Vivekananda;
- explain Vivekananda's educational thoughts; and
- discuss the contributions of Swami Vivekananda to educational thoughts.

12.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit introduces you to the philosophy of Swami Vivekananda and his contributions to the educational field– both theoretical and practical.

He was a practical saint of modern India, who wanted to revive the ancient Vedic wisdom and succeed in re-establishing the glorious traditions of great India. In his dynamism of thought he laid emphasis on the amelioration of body and soul for human excellence. The central theme of his inspiring speeches for the whole world was man– his growth, development and fulfilment. Work and more work to strive for excellence of body, mind and spirit were noticeable in all his teachings and preaching. He is considered as a key figure in the introduction of Indian philosophies of Vedanta and Yoga to the Western world, mainly America and Europe. He was also one of the contemporary Indian philosophers who revolted against the imposition of British system of education in India. He criticized such education on the ground that it is not related to India's culture and pointed out that it brings about external change without any profound inner force. He emphasized on new ideas such as mass education, physical education, religious education, vocational education and women education based on Indian culture and needs of the society.

12.3 LIFE SKETCH OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Swami Vivekananda, a philosopher, preacher and a reformer, dedicated his whole life for the upliftment of humanity. He was a great teacher as well as practical saint of modern India. He was born in a Bengali Kshatriya family on Monday, 12 January, 1863, in Kolkata. His real name was Narendranath Dutta. His father Vishwanath Dutta was a famous lawyer in Kolkata High Court. His mother Bhuvaneshwari Devi was a pious lady. The Dutta family was rich, respectable and renowned for charity, learning with a strong spirit of independence. Narendranath's grandfather, Durgacharan Dutta was well-versed in Persian and Sanskrit and was skilled in law. But after the birth of his son Vishwanath, he renounced the world and became a monk. The atmosphere of Narendranath's home was indeed religious. He inherited a religious temperament and far sighted intelligence from his parents. He was deeply interested in the study of philosophy and religion. He studied History, Literature and Philosophy since very early age. Herbert Spencer and J. S. Mill were his favorite philosophers and Wordsworth was his favorite poet.

He passed the matriculation examination at the age of 16 and joined the Presidency College. His headmaster Mr. Heasty introduced him to Shri Ramkrishna Paramhansa. He remained in his contact for about six years. Shri Ramkrishna Paramhansa inspired him to lead the life of a monk and spread the light of Indian philosophy throughout the world. Here he got initiated into saintly order and was given the title of Swami Vivekananda. When Shri Ramkrishna Paramhansa died in the year 1876, Swami Vivekananda established Ramkrishna Mission to carry on further the unfinished religious assignments of his Guru further. He set out for the Himalayas in 1890 and stayed there for 2 years. In 1892, he reached Kanyakumari and visited the sacred shrine of the goddess. He jumped into the sea and reached a rock. He started meditation there. He then went to Chennai where people were impressed by his personality. They collected funds to send him to America to participate in the Vishwa Dharma Sammelan in September 1893. He introduced to the world Indian religion, culture and philosophy to the world. As a consequence, the unknown monk of India suddenly leapt to fame and gained international attention at the Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893. As a philosopher he proved that the ancient philosophy of Vedanta could successfully meet the challenges of today and solve the modern problems very effectively. He was actually the person who synthesized the idealistic philosophy of the West and creative Vedantic philosophy of Hindu religion. He preached universal brotherhood and interpreted humanism in his idealistic manner. He died on July 4, 1902 at a very young age of 39 years.

12.4 VIVEKANANDA'S PHILOSOPHY

Swami Vivekananda describes God as supreme power and omniscient. God is of infinite existence, infinite knowledge and infinite bliss. He is present in man. Vivekananda has a firm faith on different world religions. He thinks that every religion is progressive and has many good points. He advocates that no religion is inferior or superior to another. The goal of all religion is reaching god through spiritualism and brotherhood. By synthesizing the idealistic philosophy of the west and creative philosophy of the ancient Hindu Dharma, he got glory and greatness in the Hindu way of living. One of

the most significant contributions of Swami Vivekananda to the modern world is his interpretation of religion as a universal experience of transcendent reality, common to all humanity.

He believes that one can serve God best only when he serves the world of creatures. Vivekananda thus brought religion down to earth from supernatural mysticism and made religion relevant to worldly existence. Vivekananda met the challenge of modern science by showing that religion is as scientific as science itself; religion is the science of consciousness. On the other hand, his interpretation of ancient Hindu scriptures, philosophy, institutions etc. prepared the mind of Indians to accept and apply in practical life two best elements of western culture in practical life, namely science and technology and humanism. He taught Indians how to master western science and technology and at the same time develop spiritually. Swamiji has also taught Indian how to adopt western humanism to Indian ethos. He gave Indians proper understanding of their country's great spiritual heritage and thus gave them pride in their past. Furthermore, he pointed out to Indians the drawbacks of western culture and the need for India's contribution to overcome these drawbacks. The main essence of his philosophy of life is to become fearless through struggle and serve humanity with peace. He wanted to develop the individuals, who are without fear from enemies, face all the challenges boldly and confidently without any suppression. He firmly believed in the equality of mankind and preached extensively to remove biases and exploitation based on caste, creed, race and gender.

12.5 VIVEKANANDA'S EDUCATIONAL THOUGHTS

Vivekananda has been ranked among the greatest educationists of the world. His philosophy of education is based on permanent truths of Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita and Advaita Vedanta. To him education is the manifestations of the perfection, already in man. No knowledge comes from outside; it resides in the human mind. Man manifests knowledge and discovers it within himself which already exists there through eternity. Generally we regard that man as educated, who obtains some degree, has passed out of some examinations and is able to deliver fluent lecture. But this is not real

education. Education is not the mass of knowledge or information inserted into the minds of children by force. Real education is that which prepares a man for struggle of existence. It prepares a man for social service, develops his character and finally imbues him with the spirit and courage of a lion. He emphasized on spiritual development of child along with material advancement. According to Swamiji, if education means information only, then libraries could be the great saints of the world and encyclopedia the seers and rishis. Education is that process which prepares a man for struggle of existence by making himself reliant and by developing his character and intelligence. It is in fact, a lifelong process.

He further observes, "The education which does not help the common mass of people to equip philosophy and the courage of a lion is it worth the name? Real education is that which enables one to stand on one's legs". These words of Swamiji give a very practical concept of education. In other words, real education is meant for character formation, and intellectual and vocational development in the child.

To Vivekananda, education is not the amount of information, put into brain, which may lie there undigested all one's life. It is, rather a life-building assimilation of ideas. He stressed on positive education. He felt that the existing system of education provided only negative education, an education which took the individual far away from our culture, religion and original thinking. It did not train our will and inner conscience. So according to Swamiji, real education is that training by which the current and the expression of will are brought under control and made fruitful.

According to him we have a hold on the spiritual and secular education of the nation. We must dream it, talk it, think it, and must work it out. The education that we are getting now has some good points, but it has a tremendous disadvantage which is so great that the good things are all weighted down. In the first place, it is not a man making education, it is merely and entirely a negative education. We must have life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas. He added that if we can assimilate five ideas and make them our life and character we have more education than any man who has got by heart a whole library.



LET US KNOW

- Born on January 12, 1863 in Calcutta, Vivekananda's name at birth was Narendranath.
- His father was Sri Vishwanath Dutta, a very successful and distinguished lawyer and mother Bhuvaneshwari Devi, a very pious lady.
- Mr. Heasty introduced Narendranath to Shri Ramkrishna Paramhansa.
- He gained international attention at the Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893.
- His Philosophy of Life is "To become fearless and through struggle, serve humanity".
- His significant contributions to the modern world are his interpretation of religion as a universal experience of transcendent reality, common to all humanity.
- He has taught Indian how to adopt western humanism to Indian ethos.
- He gave Indians proper understanding of their country's great spiritual heritage and thus gave them pride in their past.
- His educational thought is that man manifests knowledge and discovers it within himself which already exists there through eternity.
- Real education is that which enables one to stand on one's feet.

12.5.1 Aims of Education

Swamiji has summed up the aims of education in two words "man making". According to him, "the ultimate aim of all education and training is man making". Thus, education aims at bringing about an all round development in an individual.

- ***Making a man perfect:*** Education makes a man perfect by diagnosing the perfection which is already present in him. All

materials and spiritual knowledge is already present in man but it is covered with a veil of ignorance. Education should remove these and bring him to the level of self actualization. It is only through self-reliance and self-realization that a person can attain perfection and achieve the glory of life.

- ***Create self-confidence and self-realization*:** Education should create self-confidence and self-realization, based on balanced human relationships. Education must provide self-knowledge, which makes a man conscious about his hidden powers, which brings material prosperity and freedom from the bondage of worldly existence. Man must know that he is neither the perishable body frame nor the changing mind. All knowledge, he discovers within himself. Education should aim at removing the veil of ignorance from our mind and make us understand what we actually are and what we should ultimately be.
- ***Physical and mental development:*** He remarks that aim of education is producing men of iron muscles and steel nerves to promote national development and produce fearless and physically well developed citizens of tomorrow. In his words power is life and weakness is death. Stressing the need for mental development of the child he wants the kind of education which enables the child to stand on his own feet. For this he stressed on the study of Vedanta and modern science.
- ***Moral and character development:*** Swamiji emphasized on the practice of Brahmacharya for building a strong character leading to purity in thoughts, words and deeds. According to him what is needed by us today is men and women endowed with quality of character. Education is not meant for information but for life building, man making, character making and assimilation of ideas. Hence fostering moral development and formation of character in child should be the aims of education.
- ***Development of personality:*** Personality is the influence, the impression, one creates on the others. It is the personality of a

man that counts. According to Vivekananda, personality is two third and his intellect and words are only one third in making the real man. The ideal of all education and all training should be this man making.

- ***Development of spirituality:*** Without spiritual development we cannot experience the highest power. He believes that spiritual development is possible only through social setting, by people. This spirituality should lead to development of a spirit of fellow-feeling, sympathy and sharing and solution of common problems aiming at the people themselves.
- ***Serving to mankind:*** Another important aim of education is serving the God in man. It is not the God in symbols and images that we generally find in temples. It is the God in the sick, the poor, the miserable, the ignorant and the down trodden that we should worship. He therefore wanted that education enable everyone to stand on his own feet and satisfy his own primary needs, at least.
- ***Promotion of universal brotherhood:*** He stands for the unity of mankind and universal brotherhood. He says "Through education, we should gradually reach the idea of universal brotherhood by flinging down the walls of separation and inequality. In every man, in every animal, however weak or miserable, great or small, resides the same omnipresent and omniscient soul. The difference is not in the soul, but in manifestation".
- ***Scientific and technological progress:*** He believes that material, technological and scientific progresses are essential to prepare the child for survival in this world. He advocates teaching of western science and technology for the prosperity and fulfilment of the basic necessities of human life.

12.5.2 Curriculum

He said the education that did not help the common people to equip themselves for struggle of life and which did not bring out

strength of character, was not worth the name. We want the education through which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, intellect is expanded and by which one can stand on one's own feet.

In order to achieve the aims of education advocated by Swamiji, curriculum included those subjects through which material progress along with spiritual development can be brought. According to him a curriculum should have three parts– (a) *For spiritual perfection*, Swamiji prescribed Religion, Philosophy, Puranic lore, Upanishads, company of saints and their preaching. (b) *For material advancement and prosperity*, he recommended languages, geography, science, political science, economics, psychology, art, agriculture and technical subjects. (c) *For physical development*, he advised games, sports and other physical exercises. Religious education should be imparted through sweet impressions and fine conduct of teachers rather than through books. He especially recommended the study of Sanskrit language for all, to enable them to go through religious scriptures. In philosophy different branches of knowledge, quite independent of foreign control should be included in curriculum. He looked upon religion as the innermost core of education. Along with Sanskrit and other Indian vernaculars he also recommended the teaching of English language and literature. The study of humanities, with special reference to Indian culture, Science, Geography, Social Science, Economics, Psychology, Arts, Agriculture, Industrial and Technical and Physical Education were also emphasized by him.

12.5.3 Method of Teaching

To him there is only one method of attaining knowledge and that is concentration. The more the power of concentration, the greater the knowledge is acquired. High achievements in art, science, music and literature etc. are the result of concentration. When the mind is concentrated and turned back on itself, all within us will be our servant and not our master. He prescribed the same ancient

methods of instruction which were in practice in Gurukula like yoga, meditation, self-learning etc. In that system Guru and his disciples lived in close association like the members of a family. Other characteristics of his methods of teaching are given below–

- Practice of yoga for controlling the mind and emotions.
- Deep meditation for the development of mind.
- Brahmacharya is necessary for the power of concentration.
- Self-learning, guru will work as guide and helper only.
- Activities for developing creative potentials.
- Lecture and discussion methods for elaborating essential facts.
- Guidance and counseling by the teacher is essential and helpful to remove doubts of the child.
- Behavioral change through a fine model presented by teacher.
- Individual guidance of the students by the teacher.

12.5.4 Discipline

He emphasized child-centred education in which child is given full freedom for activity and self learning. Child should be given full opportunity to develop in a natural environment. According to Swamiji, each child is his own teacher. He has knowledge latent in his mind. The task of the external teacher is only to guide and inspire the child so that his inner knowledge is brought out.

12.5.5 Place of Teacher

According to Swami Vivekananda a person with an attitude of renunciation, influencing children through his ideal example and love for his students, sympathy at their difficulties, teaching according to their needs, abilities and interests, contributing to their spiritual development can be a good teacher.The personal life of the teacher is more important than the knowledge he posseses. He should be pure in speech and deeds and a model for his students. He must know the true spirit of the text he teaches, before he tries to

disseminate knowledge. The external teacher only guides and inspires the inner teacher (soul) to rise up and start working to develop the child. Hence discussing the role of teacher Swami Vivekananda said "Teacher is a philosopher, friend and guide helping the students to go forward in this own way." It is the teacher whom the students trust most after their parents and sometimes more than their guardians. So, it is a must for the teachers to maintain their dignity while being friendly and supportive to their students. Their distraction from morality can lead the students towards evil.

Vivekananda emphasizes the fact that education should be child centred. He states that the true teacher is he who can immediately come down to the level of the students, and transfer his soul to the students' soul and see through and understand through his mind. Such a teacher can easily teach. The main function of the teacher is to eliminate obstacles on the way of the self-development of the child and help him in making the potential actual. The main duty of a teacher is to provide a suitable environment for the all round development of the child. The teacher should share with the student the conviction that they are both truly one in spirit– at the same time cultivating in the student a feeling of dignity and self-respect. A teacher should be a *tyagi*.

12.5.6 Place of Women

Swami Vivekananda was particularly worried about the degradation of women in India. He was emphatic that women must be educated, for he believed that it is the women who mould the next generation, and hence, the destiny of the country. According to Vivekananda, there is no chance for welfare in the world unless the condition of woman is improved. He felt that it was impossible to get back India's lost pride and honour unless the condition of women was improved. Swami Vivekananda said that since the *atman* (soul) has neither sex nor caste, it is wrong to discriminate between sexes.

He suggested not to think of people as men and women, but as human beings. He believed on restoring the dignity and image of women by citing the words of Manu who said, 'where women are respected, there the God's delight, and where they are not, there all work and effort come to naught'. He had seen with his own eyes how women in America and in other Western countries being highly educated and trained, worked, shoulder to shoulder with men in the service of their nation. But in India they were totally neglected and prompted under all sorts of restrictions. He wanted a female education which will put them in a position to solve their own problems in their own way. This is only possible through education. He stated, "If you do not raise the women who are the living embodiment of the divine Mother, don't think that you have any other way to rise". He stressed that the country and the nation which do not respect woman have never become great, nor will ever be in future. He pleaded that *Brahmacharinis* of education and character should take up the task of teaching. This will help in the real spread of female education in the country. Vivekananda observed that women education should be spread with 'religion as its center'. All other things should be secondary to religion.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: What was the real name of Vivekananda?

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Q.2: What are the basic principles of Vivekananda's philosophy?

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Q.3: What are the basic principles of Vivekananda's philosophy of education?

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Q.4: Mention the aims of education according to Vivekananda.

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Q.5: Mention the curriculum suggested by Vivekananda.

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Q.6: What kind of methods of teaching did Vivekananda suggest?

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Q.7: Explain the role of teacher suggested by Vivekananda.

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12.6 CONTRIBUTION OF VIVEKANANDA'S PHILOSOPHY TO PRESENT EDUCATION SYSTEM

Swami Vivekananda strives for the reconciliation of human contrast and conflicts and the establishment of the brotherhood of men. To the world

he held out the vision of the universal religion which would recognize divinity in every man and woman and which would help humanity to realize its own true, divine nature. He stood impartially between East and West, prizing the virtues and condemning the defects of both together. Making an objective assessment of Swami Vivekananda's contributions to world culture, the eminent British historian A. L. Basham stated that "in centuries to come, he will be remembered as one of the main moulders of the modern world…" Some of the main contributions that Swamiji made to the modern world are mentioned below—

a) ***The bases of modern education:*** Vivekananda felt that modern education all over the world has so far concentrated on the 'learning to do' aspect and not on the 'learning to be' faculties of education. He says that education must focus on the requirements of the human mind. His philosophy of education is based on universal principles of morality and ethics. He wanted to teach the common masses of India the ideals of synthesis, tolerance and universal harmony. His philosophy gives equal importance to the claims of spirit and matter. To him diversity is as real as unity. Matter is only 'veiled spirit'. Thus he creates a metaphysical synthesis reconciling the claims of spirit and matter, and makes it one of the chief bases of its philosophy of education.

b) ***Free and compulsory mass education:*** He is a great champion of free and compulsory mass education. He stresses the ideas that education should be universal and it must be provided to cottages because India lives in them. He remarks that neglecting mass education is a great national sin and is one of the causes of our downfall.

c) ***National system education:*** Vivekananda is in favour of a national system of education based on the needs and requirements of the country. A national system of education should include a study of India's philosophy, culture, arts, religion, history and language. The scheme of studies should be built around it.

d) ***The importance of 'yoga' in education:*** Vivekananda wants to place maximum emphasis on concentration and meditation in the teaching-

learning process. He is convinced of the fact that all knowledge is in the human mind and that the same can be experienced by practicing concentration and meditation.

e) ***Transmission of knowledge:*** To Vivekananda, all teaching implies giving and taking. The teacher gives and the student receives. Here he stresses the need for effective participation in the teaching-learning process. Teacher should motivate the students to acquire knowledge and develop in them scientific temper, secular outlook and civic responsibility.

f) ***Learning through activity:*** Vivekananda anticipated many modern thinkers in suggesting that learning through activity should be the guiding principle of any scheme of education. He wanted every activity in Indian schools and colleges. Inter-school and inter-collegiate competitions are also required in order to enable the students learn how to sacrifice personal and selfish interests for the sake of the larger interests of society.

g) ***The ideal of womanhood in India:*** Vivekananda suggested that the women should be made ambitious through a good system of education. He made a strong appeal for raising the status of women along with that of man. He felt that it was much against the ancient ideal of India that women were not given enough opportunities for self-development.

h) ***Emphasis on Western science and technology:*** He emphasized the teaching of modern science and technology for prosperity and progress and to meet all the basic necessities of life.

i) ***Ramakrishna Mission:*** The greatest contribution of Swamiji in the educational social sphere is the establishment of Ramakrishna Mission in 1889. The mission has opened many centres all over India in order to preach the teaching of Ramakrishna and render social services for the welfare of our nation. The mission has its own hospitals, charitable dispensaries, maternity clinics, clinics, and mobile dispensaries. Orphanages and homes for the elderly are included in the mission's field of activities, along with rural and tribal

welfare work. The mission has established many renowned educational institutions in India, having its own university, colleges, vocational training centres, high schools and primary schools, teacher-training institutes, as well as schools for the visually handicapped.

12.7 CONCLUSION

Swami Vivekananda's ideas are a great heritage of India and it can be very useful for our society and the nation. He was actually the greatest synthesizer of ever time. He wanted to remove the evils of the society by giving re-orientation to politics, sociology, economics and education. Swami Vivekananda laid stress on education as a powerful weapon for this change. As an educationist he believed in absolute values which have to be realized by a good system of education. Education should be the preparation for life. It should develop a feeling of nationalism and international understanding, it should lead to the development of character and make individuals self-dependent. Today there is a deterioration of cultural ethics and standards. The supreme need of the hour is to counteract this emotional, moral and cultural collapse. Only a process of a good system of education can bring about a healthy political and social life. Swami Vivekananda stands for this and his message is for all time.



12.8 LET US SUM UP

- Narendranath Dutta was born in Shimla Pally, Kolkata, West Bengal, India on January 12, 1863 as the son of Viswanath Dutta and Bhuvaneswari Devi.
- Even as he was young, he showed a precocious mind and keen memory. He practiced meditation from a very early age.
- Narendra met Ramakrishna for the first time in November 1881.
- In the West Vivekananda was received well at the 1893 World Parliament of Religions in Chicago, where he delivered a series of lectures.

- His philosophy of life was "To become fearless and through struggle, serve humanity"
- According to him, "Education is the manifestation of perfection already reached in man."
- Basic principles of educational philosophy– Knowledge lies hidden in the mind of man, concentration is the key to all knowledge, purity of thought, speech and deed is self-discipline, education should develop the child physically, mentally and spiritually, education should develop character, mental power, intelligence and inculcate self-confidence with self reliance, religious education should be imparted through sweet impressions and fine conduct in preference to books, and boys and girls should receive the same education.
- Aims of education are– Making a man perfect, Creating self-confidence and self-realization, Physical and mental development, Moral and character development, Development of personality, Development of spirituality, Serving mankind, Promotion of universal brotherhood, Scientific and technological progress.
- His curriculum included– Religion, Philosophy, Puranic lore, Upanishads, company of saints and their preaching, languages, geography, science, political science, economics, psychology, art, agriculture, games, sports and other physical exercises.
- Methods of teaching suggested by him are– Brahmacharya, Self-learning, Lecture and discussion methods, Guidance and counseling by the teacher, Individual guidance, etc.
- The true teacher is he who can immediately come down to the level of the students, and transfer his soul to the students' soul and see through and understand through his mind.
- There is no chance for welfare in the world unless the condition of woman is improved.
- Vivekananda's contributions are in the form of– New understanding of religion, spirit of humanism, reconcilation of spirit and matter as the base of modern education, free and compulsory mass education, national system education, the importance of 'yoga' in education, learning through activity, the ideal of womanhood in India.



12.9 FURTHER READING

1) Bhatia & Bhatia (1996). *The Great Educators of the East and West.* Delhi: Doba House Booksellers Publishers.

2) Rolland, R. (1947). *The Life of Vivekanda and the Universal Gospel.* U.P: Advaita Ashrama.



12.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans. to Q. No. 1: Narendranath Dutta.

Ans. to Q. No. 2: Vivekananda's philosophy are– Doctrine of divinity, Patriotism, Humanism, Service, Equal position to women.

Ans. to Q. No. 3: Basic principles of Vivekananda's educational philosophy are–

- Only study of books is not education.
- Knowledge lies hidden in the mind of man. He uncovers and develops it by his own efforts.
- Concentration is the key to all knowledge.
- Purity of thought, speech and deed is self-discipline.
- Education should develop the child physically, mentally and spiritually.
- Education should develop character, mental power, intelligence and inculcate self-confidence with self reliance.
- Religious education should be imparted through sweet impressions and fine conduct in preference to books.
- Boys and girls should receive the same education.
- Mass education.
- Technical education.

Ans. to Q. No. 4: Making a man perfect, creating self-confidence and self-realization, Physical and mental development, Moral and character development, Development of personality, Development of spirituality, Serving mankind, Promotion of universal brotherhood, Scientific and technological progress

Ans. to Q. No. 5: Cultural heritage in terms of History, Poetry, languages, Vedantic studies, Scientific knowledge & technological studies, Vocational studies, Subjects for girls, Games, Sports & Physical education.

Ans. to Q. No. 6: Lectures, discussions, self-experience, developing the mind by concentration & meditation & yoga Individual guidance by the teacher.

Ans. to Q. No. 7: Role of the teacher is to motivate, demonstrate, and persuade individuals to discover their own potential, intellect and to properly understand their mind, body and spirit. Love, affection & empathy, dedication, commitment, understanding of the scriptures and value-based life.



12.11 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

A) Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q.1: Write a short note on family background of Vivekananda.

Q.2: Write a note on the educational philosophy of Vivekananda.

Q.3: Write a note on man making education system of Swami Vivekananda.

B) Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q.1: Swami Vivekananda is a great educational philosopher and humanist. Explain.

Q.2: State the contribution of Swami Vivekananda to education.

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UNIT 13: AUROBINDO GHOSH AND HIS EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT

UNIT STRUCTURE

13.1 Learning Objectives

13.2 Introduction

13.3 Aurobindo's Life Sketch

13.4 Aurobindo's Philosophical Thoughts

13.5 Aurobindo's Educational Philosophy

13.6 Aurobindo's Educational System

- 13.6.1 Aims of Education
- 13.6.2 Curriculum
- 13.6.3 Method of Teaching
- 13.6.4 Discipline

13.7 Merits and Demerits of Aurobindo's Education System

- 13.7.1 Merits of Aurobindo's Education System
- 13.7.2 Demerits of Aurobindo's Education System

13.8 Contribution of Aurobindo's Education System in Present Context

13.9 Let Us Sum Up

13.10 Further Reading

13.11 Answers to Check Your Progress

13.12 Possible Questions

13.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to–

- describe the life and philosophy of Aurobindo;
- explain the main ideas of educational philosophy of Aurobindo;
- discuss the educational system of Aurobindo;
- identify the positive and negative aspects of Aurobindo's education system;
- give reasons for the application of Aurobindo's educational philosophy in present time; and

- discuss the contributions of Aurobindo to educational thoughts and practice.

13.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit will introduce you to Sri Aurobindo Ghosh, a great philosopher of 20th century India. He was an extra-ordinary personality. He outshined all the spiritual and noble personalities by virtue of his versatile genius and splendid personality across the entire human race. His contributions to spiritual philosophy and thus to Indian philosophy is matchless. Sri Aurobindo's philosophy is the foundation of his educational philosophy. His life was different from others and he was deeply immersed in gaining insight into the spiritual realm. Being an idealist and spiritualist to the core, he devoted the last part of his life after leaving politics to develop his spirituality in his own Ashram at Pondicherry through Yoga and meditation. To his credit he penned a few, namely 'Bande Mataram', 'Karm Yogin', 'Dharm' and his magnum opus 'Life Divine'.

13.3 LIFE SKETCH

Sri Aurobindo Ghosh was born on 15th August, 1872 in Calcutta, West Bengal. His father, Dr. D. K. Ghosh was totally westernized in his lifestyle while his mother, Swarnalata Devi was the daughter of a great nationalist. Aurobindo's education began at the age of 5 years in a Christian convent school, Loretto Convent, Darjeeling. At the age of 7 years, he was sent to England for further studies. Later he entered the University of Cambridge, where he became proficient in two classical and several modern European languages including German, French and Italian. After returning to India in 1892, he held various administrative and professorial posts in Baroda (Vadodara) and Calcutta (Kolkata). Turning to his native culture, he began the study of Yoga and Indian languages, including classical Sanskrit. Here, besides devoting himself to cultural and literary activities, he learnt Sanskrit, Bengali, Gujarati and Marathi.

From 1902 to 1910 Aurobindo took part in the struggle to free India from the British rule. He joined the Indian National Congress and became

an active freedom fighter. He declared 'Swaraj' (self-government) as the goal for India. He started the Bengali daily 'Yugantar' and English daily 'Bande Mataram' to promote his revolutionary ideas. He was considered as one of the most dangerous leaders by the British government. In 1908, he was sent to jail for the Alipore Bomb case. During this time, he turned to yoga, meditation and study of religious, philosophical and spiritual literature. He became a philosopher and seer. He went to Pondicherry in 1910 and spent his remaining 40 years in his Ashram there. He devoted the rest of his life to the development of "integral" yoga, which was characterized by its holistic approach and its aim of a fulfilled and spiritually transformed life on earth. He changed himself and involved in several educational and social activities.

He set up an International Ashram and International Centre of education and social activities. His educational philosophy is only a corollary to his philosophy. Therefore, before going to the educational thoughts and practices of Aurobindo, a brief view of his philosophical thoughts is necessary.

13.4 AUROBINDO'S PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHTS

Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of life emerged out of his own life, education, experiences and insight. At a philosophical plane, Aurobindo Ghosh claimed that he acknowledges the divergence between Indian ascetic transcendental idealism and Western secularist materialism. His views on life were based on the synthesis of the Eastern and Western culture, spiritual and material values and science and Vedanta. According to him, the Indian mind had achieved tremendous credit in the realm of intellectual, vitalistic and political activities. Aurobindo's philosophy laid emphasis on *Sadhana*, Integral Yoga and divine life. He believed that the highest truths– the truth of science and religion were already contained in the Vedas.

The evolutionary philosophy underlying Aurobindo's integral yoga is explored in his main prose work, *The Life Divine* (1939). He rejected the traditional Indian approach of striving for *moksha* (liberation from the cycle of death and rebirth, or *samsara*) as a means of reaching happier, transcendental planes of existence. Instead, he held that terrestrial life itself, in its higher evolutionary stages, is the real goal of creation. He believed that the basic

principles of matter, life and mind would be succeeded through terrestrial evolution by the principle of supermind as an intermediate power between the two spheres of the infinite and the finite. Such a future consciousness would help to create a joyful life in keeping with the highest goal of creation, expressing values such as love, harmony, unity and knowledge and successfully overcoming the age-old resistance of dark forces against efforts to manifest the divine on earth.

Sri Aurobindo's philosophy is based on the concept of 'reality of Being and consciousness' amidst the big universe in which we live. He taught people to become aware of their true self and feel the presence of divinity lying within them. He asked people to feel the spirit while spending each and every moment of their lives. He asked people to integrate spirit in their daily lives. He said that the main object is to experience the delight of existence. He showed a different path of enjoying and deriving pleasure. He said that if a person wants to experience delight, then he must strive to discover the higher spiritual nature. He was of the opinion that when a person discovers his true self and the power of divinity lying within, it brings about a rise in his level of consciousness. This enables him to rise above his ego, which often tends to hinder his progress. Ignorance is thus replaced by knowledge, which paves way for the success of a person.

The main principles of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy may be crystallized as–

a) Yoga– Aurobindo's philosophical system contains four-fold Yoga– Jnana (knowledge) Yoga, Bhakti (devotion) Yoga, Karma (activity) Yoga and Dhyana (concentration) Yoga. Yoga divides the whole man bringing down the super mind to transform the human mind, life and body. The moment this aims get fulfilled man becomes a superman. He believes in traditional concept of man and accepts the classical views about the union of individual soul with supreme soul. He considers all forms in the universe as multiple cells of one consciousness. He holds that Yoga is the means through which one can come in contact with the true self and unite the separate parts of oneself and can also see the same divine in others. According to him, 'All life is Yoga'.

b) Supermind– Aurobindo has given a new concept of the process of evolution. He believes that there is not only an evolution of forms but also an evolution of consciousness. The forms are developed and more consciousness dawned. From a stage of unconsciousness, the organized matter, life and mind come into being. This evolution of consciousness does not end with mind but extends to greater consciousness called 'supermind'. This higher consciousness gives a possibility of the future emergent of evolution of man into superman. Sri Aurobindo aimed at gradual spiritualization of the society. He welcomed an age of super mind where the realization of good freedom and unity will predominate in all social groups.

c) Integralism– According to Aurobindo, integralism is possible through transformation of human mind, life and body into supermind. As this transformation takes place, man becomes superman. Usually, this transformation takes place in a supramental plane. Diverse elements get transformed and then integrated. It begins with psychic change. He holds that there is a dynamic relationship between the human mind and the higher level of consciousness. He believed that for attaining unity among human beings, integral living and development of integral personality is necessary which are possible through Yoga. His philosophy is based on an experienced integralism. It is a synthesis of idealism, realism, pragmatism and spiritualism.

d) Ignorance– Sri Aurobindo interpreted the concept of ignorance in a different manner. According to him, man with a mind cannot be ignorant. He holds that man is conscious of his personality and oblivious of the rest of his infinite being.

According to Aurobindo, both the Indian and the European philosophical understanding are on the extremes. He hoped that Indian spiritualism and European secularism and materialism could be reconciled. He felt that this reconciliation is possible only by creating a philosophy that gives equal importance to both spirit and matter. He attempted this reconciliation through his philosophical books.

13.5 AUROBINDO'S EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Aurobindo's educational philosophy emerged directly from his general philosophy of life. His life was a unique experience in harmonizing the two important ends of existence, namely, mind and spirit. It was this ideal, which he tried to translate into the system of education. The important features of Aurobindo's educational philosophy are–

- ***Three focal points:*** Aurobindo said that these are three things that education must take into account: (i) the man (ii) the nation or people and (iii) universal humanity. Inter-relationship among these three points is important to realize the purpose of life.
- ***True basis of education:*** Aurobindo holds that the true basis of education is the mind. It is the principal instrument of education. Education is a building up process of the powers of the human mind; it is the formation of knowledge and will of the power to use knowledge, character and culture.
- ***Development of the spirit:*** The guiding principle of Aurobindo's educational philosophy lies in awakening of man as a spiritual being. According to Aurobindo education should act as the instrument for the real working of the spirit in the mind and body of the individual and the nation.
- ***Education according to child's own nature:*** Education must be according to the child's own nature. The child must be induced to expand in accordance with his own nature. Every child has in him something divine, the task is to find it, develop it and use it.
- ***Perfect liberty for the child:*** According to Aurobindo every child is an enquirer, an investigator, analyser and a merciless anatomist. He is endowed with intellectual curiosity, patriotic zeal and idealistic spirit. He has in him a combination of the gift of imitation and a touch of imaginative power. Let all these faculties and qualities be put to use to their best by the teachers and education will automatically be turned into a self learning process.

- ***Religious education:*** Aurobindo doubted whether direct teaching in any form of religion is important or not. The essence of education, which is to live for God, for humanity, for country, for others and for oneself, must be made the ideal for every school. He said that religious education should be imparted by the practice of religious life.
- ***Moral education:*** The best method of moral education is by personal example, daily conversation and extensive reading of good books. The child must habituate himself to the right emotions, the noblest associations, the best mental, emotional and physical habits. The teacher must remember that the first rule of moral training is to "suggest and invite, not command and impose".

13.6 AUROBINDO'S EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

The educational system advocated by Aurobindo is known as '**Integral Education**'. Integral Education implies two things–

- Education gives an integrated view of the universe to the pupil. A synthetic understanding, a holistic view of the universe and the life around is required.
- Education attempts at all-round, balanced, harmonious and integrated development of the individual.

Sri Aurobindo believes that the function of education is to study the mind of the individual, the people, the nation and the universe. Man and society can be changed through the study of human mind. Human mind consists of four layers– *chitta* (the storehouse of memory), *manas* (the sixth sense), *buddhi* (the intellect) and the *atimanas* (supramental).

In the integral education system, attempts are made for integral development of the physical being, vital being, psychic being and mental being. All these are necessary for transforming man into a spiritual being. Accordingly, the four principles of Aurobindo's Integral Education are–

a) Physical Being: Aurobindo believed that beauty is the ideal of physical life. When beauty grows, liberation gradually takes place. Education should try to build a body that is beautiful in form, harmonious in posture and powerful in functions.

b) Vital Being: It refers to enabling a man to be conscious of himself and to control and direct himself. It is related to the control of sensations which should be trained to acquire and develop knowledge.

c) Mental Being: For the education of the mental being, emphasis is given on mental silence and concentration, so as to acquire knowledge with the help of Yoga. This helps in gradual liberation from ignorance.

d) Psychic Being: Psychic being is the psychological centre of man. It means the control of mind on the basis of reality.

In 1943, Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education was established at Pondicherry to put into practice the educational views of Sri Aurobindo. He considered the formation of an Education Centre as one of the best means of preparing the future humanity to manifest upon earth a divine consciousness and a divine life. The Centre serves as a field of experiment and research in education. It aims at providing the teachings of Sri Aurobindo. It reflects the character of the community living. Education from kindergarten till the end of studies is imparted to students who are supposed to study here for 10 to 15 years. It provides all the requirements for free growth of the child, according to nature. There is no compulsion for any activity. It has many departments and services, workshops, farms and a number of commercial and industrial undertakings to meet various requirements of teaching.

The international zone seeks unity in diversity. Teachers and students coming from various parts of the world live together. Cultures of different countries are accepted here to promote unity. Painting, sculpture, dance, music, games and sports are conducted to promote unity and integrity. As a whole, the inmates living in the Ashram experience a spiritual and pious life by conducting Yoga.

On 28th February, 1968, Auroville, 'the city of dawn' was inaugurated 5 miles away from Pondicherry. It aimed at searching for a new order of education. The purpose of Auroville is to realize human unity in diversity. It is the first and only internationally endorsed ongoing experiment in human unity and transformation of consciousness. The town itself reflects the character of University where ideologies, cultures, knowledge are synthesized. It is

the 'city of the 21st century man'. The environment of the town is such that the people get themselves humanized. The city has four zones– cultural, industrial, residential and educational. It is the source of constant progress of education.

13.6.1 Aims of Education

Sri Aurobindo did not give any particular aim of education. The educational theory of Sri Aurobindo aimed at the development of the latent powers of the child, training of six senses, training of logical faculties, physical education, principle of freedom, moral and religious education and above all, training for the spiritualization of the individual. He believed that education should aim at integral development of the individual based on reality. On the basis of his views, ideas and principles, following aims of education may be derived–

- Physical development: Education should aim at physical fitness of an individual. According to Aurobindo, physical education helps in disciplining and controlling the physical functions, brings harmonious development of body and its movements, rectifies the body's limitations and defects and brings consciousness in man. As a part of physical education, he suggested physical exercise (*aasana*) and breathing techniques (*pranayama*).
- Vital development: It emphasizes on observation of the impulses, energies and desires of being vital in man. According to Aurobindo, a vital being controls his sense organs. Therefore, education should aim at sense training.
- Mental development: Mental education helps in acknowledging the old knowledge, inventing new ones and practicing the acquired knowledge in real life. Aurobindo believes that *Chitta* is both active and passive. *Buddhi* is the most vital instrument of collecting and disposing the thoughts. *Manas* receives images directly or through senses. Final level (*atimanas*) applies intuition and reveals the vision to grow an extraordinary personality.

Training all these levels help to reorganize ideas, experiences and integrate them into one whole.

- Psychic development: Aurobindo's education begins with the discovery of psychic being. He felt that education should aim at making a man psychic being. Psychic being develops the capacity to realize his potentialities and to prepare him for facing reality.
- Spiritual development: According to Aurobindo, spiritual transformation of man is one goal of education. He suggests that through spiritual education, power of thinking, knowledge, beauty and love can be developed. Spiritual knowledge liberates man from miseries, ignorance and sufferings.

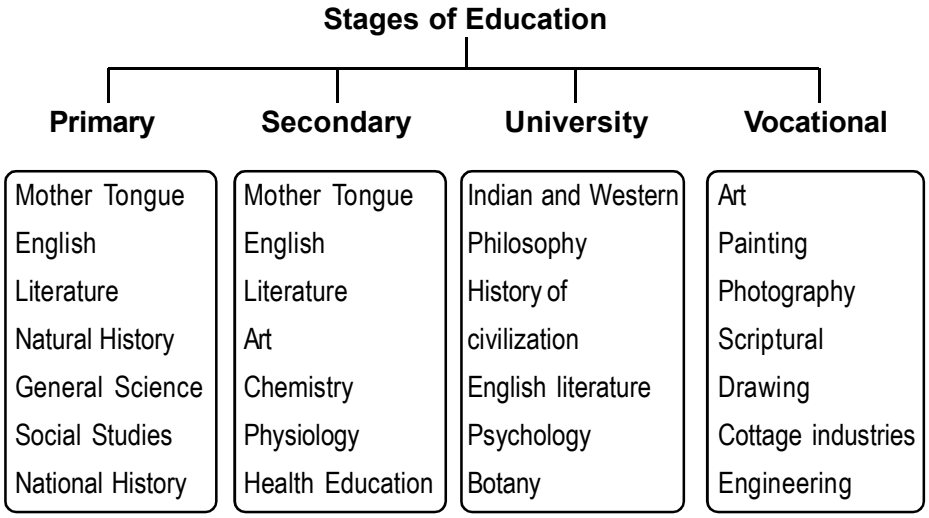
13.6.2 Curriculum

Sri Aurobindo stressed on integrated curriculum for the students which includes activities, subjects and spiritual experiences all in a unifying whole. The nature of this curriculum is flexible, interest based and environment based. He suggested such subjects which could be helpful in all round development of the individual. He suggested reading, writing, geography, history, mathematics, psychology, overall view of modern science, language etc. He also recommended for teaching English and French. On the basis of the four fundamental aspects of his philosophy– physical, vital, mental and psychic, his curriculum may be organized as–

- Physical: Physical training, games, sports, gymnastics, balanced diet and preventive care were given due importance for physical development of the child.
- Vital: Activities like music, art, dance, craft, ballet, etc. improve vital power by channelizing energy through freedom, leadership, responsibility and learning by doing.
- Mental: Various academic studies like mathematics, social science, applied and pure science, language (both Indian and foreign) help in developing mental power.

- Psychic and Spiritual: Aurobindo emphasized on spiritual atmosphere. All curricular and co-curricular programmes should aim at inculcating values like love, truth, faith in God, competence in performance, strength of mind and heart.
- Universal knowledge: Curriculum should include whatever is universal truth. That is the basis of all scientific knowledge and philosophy.
- Vocational: The curriculum for vocational education includes arts, painting, photography, sewing, cottage industries, engineering, nursing, etc.

Aurobindo also provided a stage wise curriculum which may be described as–



13.6.3 Methods of Teaching

Sri Aurobindo suggested activity method, observation, self discovery, discussion method, learning by doing and learning by self experience as teaching methods. Sri Aurobindo has given a very respectable and responsible job for the teacher because in his system, activity was needed more on the part of the students. So the teacher should be careful enough to observe the working of the student minutely so that he could guide those students who were going on wrong track. He suggested the teacher should not teach but suggest the students, organize their work and show them the

direction to responsibility, and to help them to find out inner guidance. His methods of teaching were based on three basic principles–

- Nothing can be taught: The teacher has to show to the child where the true knowledge is and how knowledge can come to the surface. It is the function of the child to bring out the knowledge.
- Individual needs: The child should be consulted in his growth, i.e. education has to be provided according to individual need and will. Flexibility, innovation and initiative are extremely essential for natural growth and education of the child.
- Near to far: Education should follow the principle of known to unknown, which emphasizes experiences as the basis of all learning. So, audio-visual materials are useful in teaching learning process.

The method of teaching should be based on the interest, aptitude, impulse and aspiration of the child. Balance should be maintained between meditation and action and between silent mind and practical learning. Learners should be given free choice of study. Though there is no fixed method of teaching given by Sri Aurobindo, there are some essentialities of education which are to be followed.

- *Freedom of the child*: Free environment should be created for the children so that they may gain more and more knowledge by their own efforts. If any restriction is imposed on them, it will retard their natural growth and development.
- *Mother tongue as medium of instruction*: Use of mother tongue as medium of instruction increases their grasping capacities and it becomes easier for them to learn even the difficult subjects.
- *Love and sympathy for the child*: It is necessary on the part of the teachers that they have love for the children and show sympathy towards them. This will help to reduce the tension of learning from the minds of the pupils.
- *Interest of the learner*: Learners can be motivated only when education is given to them according to their specific interests. It is necessary for the teacher to identify the interest of the learners and teach them based on their interest.

- *Learning through activity*: Learner's teaching through books should be supplemented by activities and experimentations. He supported Montessori method of teaching for primary classes and practice of drawing in secondary classes.
- *Group learning*: Aurobindo believed that teaching learning is a cooperative process. So teaching and learning should be based on cooperative activities among the learners as well as between the teacher and the learners.
- *Based on nature of the child*: Each child is gifted by nature some mental and spiritual potentialities. Teachers should try to develop these potentialities to the maximum level possible. In this way, the elements of divinity present in the child will give him some divine power.
- *Sensory approach*: Senses are the gateway of knowledge. Being a realist, Aurobindo advocated that the senses of the children should be trained properly to acquire knowledge and experience.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: How did Aurobindo contribute to national freedom movement?

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Q.2: How was Aurobindo's philosophy of liberation different from that of traditional Indian approach?

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Q.3: What is Auroville?

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Q.4: Write about the concept of Integral education.

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Q.5: According to Aurobindo, what should the curriculum of primary stage include?

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Q.6: Mention the principles on which Sri Aurobindo based his methods of teaching.

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13.6.4 Discipline

Sri Aurobindo greatly emphasized the child's liberty. The child should be given to develop freely as an organic person. Individuals are competent enough to develop their psychic being. So, maximum liberty for the development of psychic being should be given. There should be no compulsion on any area. He discarded the idea and practice of punishment and the stimulation of fear. The teacher should not interfere in the self experience of the learners. He should not pose as an instructor or task master, but as a guide and helper.

13.7 MERITS AND DEMERITS OF AUROBINDO'S EDUCATION SYSTEM

Aurobindo's educational system is one of the most scientific, progressive and pragmatic education systems of the world. However, it also suffers from some drawbacks. The merits and demerits of Aurobindo's education system are discussed below–

13.7.1 Merits of Aurobindo's Education System

The education system of Sri Aurobindo was a modern scientific system with the foundations of Upanishadic ideals which made it very strong and relevant. The merits of the system are–

- *Synthesis of East and West*: Aurobindo's philosophy is based on the synthesis of Eastern and Western philosophy. So, his education system has the advantages of both the eastern and western education system.
- *Integral education*: Aurobindo advocated integral education which considered the development of all the aspects of the individual. Moreover, it was not confined to the development of the individual only but the nation as a whole.
- *Supramental education*: Sri Aurobindo provided the unique concept of supramental education which means the education that leads to our evolution towards the supramental through evolution of the physical, the vital, the mental and the psychic.
- *Child-oriented*: Aurobindo's education system was totally child-oriented. The curriculum should be planned according to individual difference. The mind has to be consulted in its own growth. The aim of the teacher is to help the growing soul in drawing out his best and to make it perfect for a noble use.
- *Self-discipline*: Aurobindo advocated self discipline for the children. The child is given to develop freely. Individuals are competent enough to develop their psychic being. He discarded the idea and practice of punishment and the stimulation of fear.

The teacher should not interfere in the self experience of the learners.

13.7.2 Demerits of Aurobindo's Education System

The educational system formulated by Sri Aurobindo was very scientific which has made it relevant even in the present context. Therefore, it is difficult to find limitations of the system. It has survived through various tests of time. However, its implementation is confined to Aurobindo's Ashrams only and could not be widely integrated into the general education system.

13.8 CONTRIBUTION OF AUROBINDO'S EDUCATION SYSTEM IN PRESENT CONTEXT

Although Sri Aurobindo had given his theory in the early 20th century, yet his theory is relevant to the modern system of education. His theory is relevant in respect of all round development of the child, compulsory education at least up to the age of 6-14 years, lifelong and continuing education, vocational education, creativity, study of science and technology, literature etc. His main contribution in future education is to prepare for future life. He also gave preference to national integration, international integration, value education and non formal programs for rural and unorganized sectors. Sri Aurobindo's teaching and philosophy is very important if human being wants to live in peace and harmony. He is very much relevant in this 21st century where science and spirituality must be given equal importance. Though, the present age has achieved many miles through scientific developments but real change and progress can be attained through the integration of spirituality and science, which Sri Aurobindo understood very well.

His contributions to the present education system may be organized in the following points–

1) Integral education: Sri Aurobindo provided the unique concept of integral education in which he not only emphasized the integrated development of the individual but also at providing a holistic view of the universe to them.

2) Supramental education: Another important contribution of Sri Aurobindo is the concept of supramental education, which means the education that leads to our evolution towards the supramental through evolution of the physical, the vital, the mental and the psychic.
3) Auroville: The idea of establishing Auroville may be taken as a model to establish an ideal society, where ideologies, cultures and knowledge are synthesized.
4) Aurobindo International Centre of Education: It provides an educational environment which is characterized by community living, free development of the child and diverse learning experiences.
5) Aurobindo was a multifaceted man having a magnanimous personality. He occupies a special place not only in the Indian history, but in the International arena. His profound knowledge in Western and Eastern cultures helped him to integrate them for the development of human potential and growth. Sri Aurobindo's philosophy is based on facts, experience and personal realizations. His spirituality was inseparably united with reason. The goal of Sri Aurobindo was to bring about a spiritual transformation and to bring down the divine nature and a divine life into the mental, vital and physical nature and life of humanity.



13.9 LET US SUM UP

- Aurobindo Ghosh was born on 15th August, 1872 in Calcutta.
- He was educated in the Loretto Convent School and the University of Cambridge. He learnt many languages and studied Yoga.
- He joined the Indian National Congress and became an active freedom fighter in Indian national movement.
- Later he turned to yoga, meditation and study of religious, philosophical and spiritual literature. He spent his later part of life in his Ashram in Pondicherry.
- He devoted the rest of his life to the development of "integral" yoga, which was characterized by its holistic approach and its aim of a fulfilled and spiritually transformed life on earth.

- His philosophy was based on the synthesis of the Eastern and Western culture, spiritual and material values and science and Vedanta. It laid emphasis on *Sadhana*, Integral Yoga and divine life.
- He held that the higher evolutionary stages of terrestrial life is the real goal of creation in opposition to the traditional Indian view on liberation.
- The main principles of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy are four-fold Yoga– Jnana (knowledge) Yoga, Bhakti (devotion) Yoga, Karma (activity) Yoga and Dhyana (concentration) Yoga; Supermind (evolution of consciousness); Integralism (integration of diverse elements) and the principle that man with a mind cannot be ignorant.
- Aurobindo made a five-fold classification of human nature i.e. physical, vital, mental, psychic and spiritual and corresponding five aspects of education– physical education, vital education, mental education, psychic education and spiritual education.
- The educational system advocated by Aurobindo is known as 'Integral Education' –education for integral development of the physical being, vital being, psychic being and mental being.
- In 1943, Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education was established and in 1968, Auroville, 'the city of dawn' was inaugurated at Pondicherry to put into practice his philosophical and educational views.
- The educational theory of Sri Aurobindo aimed at the development of the latent powers of the child, training of six senses, training of logical faculties, physical education, freedom of the child, moral and religious education and above all, training for the spiritualization of the individual.
- Sri Aurobindo stressed on integrated curriculum for the students which includes activities, subjects and spiritual experiences all in a unifying whole. He suggested reading, writing, geography, history, mathematics, psychology, overall view of modern science, language etc.

- Sri Aurobindo suggested activity method, observation, self discovery, discussion method, learning by doing, learning by self experience as teaching methods.
- Sri Aurobindo greatly emphasized the child's liberty and advocated self discipline.
- The education system of Sri Aurobindo was a modern scientific system with the foundations of Upanishadic ideals which made it very strong and relevant.
- The implementation of Aurobindo's education system is confined to Aurobindo Ashrams only and could not be widely integrated into the general education system.
- His theory is relevant in respect of all round development of the child, compulsory education, lifelong and continuing education, vocational education, creativity, study of science and technology, literature etc.



13.10 FURTHER READING

1) Acharya, K. D. (1978). *Guide to Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy*. Pondicherry: Divya Sahitya Parkashan.
2) Aggarwal, J. C., & Gupta, S. (2006). *Great Philosophers and Thinkers on Education*. New Delhi: Shilpa Publications.
3) Chaube, S. P. (1988). *Indian and Western Educational Philosophers*. Agra: Vinod Pusthak Mandir.
4) Pani, R. (1997). *Integral Education Thought and Practice*. New Delhi: A. P. H. Publishing Cooperation.



13.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans. to Q. No. 1: Aurobindo joined the Indian National Congress and became an active freedom fighter. He declared 'Swaraj' (self-government) as the goal for India. He started the Bengali daily

'Yugantar' and English daily 'Bande Mataram' to promote his revolutionary ideas.

Ans. to Q. No. 2: Aurobindo held that terrestrial life itself, in its higher evolutionary stages, is the real goal of creation. He believed that the basic principles of matter, life, and mind would be succeeded through terrestrial evolution by the principle of supermind as an intermediate power between the two spheres of the infinite and the finite.

Ans. to Q. No. 3: Auroville is a city, inaugurated 5 miles away from Pondicherry in1968. It aimed at searching for a new order of education. The town itself reflects the character of the University where ideologies, cultures, knowledge are synthesized. It is the city of the 21st century man. The city has four zones– cultural, industrial, residential and educational. It is the source of constant progress of education.

Ans. to Q. No. 4: Integral Education is the education system advocated by Aurobindo. It gives an integrated view of the universe to the pupil. It also attempts at all-round, balanced, harmonious and integrated development of the individual.

Ans. to Q. No. 5: According to Aurobindo, the curriculum of primary stage should include mother tongue, English literature, natural history, general science, social studies and national history.

Ans. to Q. No. 6: The principles on which Sri Aurobindo based his methods of teaching are– nothing can be taught, importance of individual needs and teaching from near to far.



13.12 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

A) Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q.1: Give a brief sketch of Aurobindo's life.

Q.2: Write a note on the features of Aurobindo's educational philosophy.

Q.3: Mention the methods of teaching suggested by Aurobindo.

Q.4: What is the view of Aurobindo on discipline?

B) Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q.1: Explain the main principles of Aurobindo's philosophy.

Q.2: Explicate the aims of integral education.

Q.3: Analyze Aurobindo's education system.

Q.4: What aspects of Aurobindo's education system are relevant at present?

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UNIT 14: MAHATMA GANDHI AND HIS EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT

UNIT STRUCTURE

14.1 Learning Objectives

14.2 Introduction

14.3 Gandhiji's Life Sketch

14.4 Gandhiji's Philosophy

14.5 Gandhiji's Educational Philosophy

14.5.1 Principles of Education

14.6 Gandhi's Basic Education System

14.6.1 Aims of Education

14.6.2 Curriculum

14.6.3 Method of Teaching

14.6.4 Discipline

14.7 Merits and Demerits of Gandhiji's Education System

14.7.1 Merits of Basic Education

14.7.2 Limitations of Basic Education

14.8 Contribution of Gandhiji's Education System to Present Education

14.9 Let Us Sum Up

14.10 Further Reading

14.11 Answers to Check Your Progress

14.12 Possible Questions

14.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to–

- describe the life and philosophy of Gandhiji;
- explain the main ideas of educational philosophy of Gandhiji;
- analyse the educational system of Gandhiji;
- identify the positive and negative aspects of Gandhiji's education system; and
- discuss the contributions of Gandhiji to educational thought and practice.

14.2 INTRODUCTION

Mahatma Gandhi was a great leader, a practical philosopher and educational thinker of great repute. He wanted to establish a free and casteless society with no exploitation and racial discrimination. For this purpose he devised a potential means and that was education. His philosophy of education was the outcome of his long experience of political, social and economic life of the country.

14.3 GANDHIJI'S LIFE SKETCH

Mahatma Gandhi was born on 2nd October, 1869 at Porbandar in Kathiawar of Gujarat. His father Karamchand Gandhi was a Dewan (Chief Administrator and Chief Revenue Officer) of Rajkot at Porbandar. His mother Putli Bai was a saintly woman who had a strong influence on his life. After completing his studies up to matriculation in1887, he went to England for studying law. He passed his Law examination and was called to the bar in 1891. He started his practice at Rajkot and Mumbai. But he did not do well here. In 1893, he went to South Africa in connection with a civil law case of an Indian company and stayed there for about twenty years and it brought about a turning point in his life. The racist system of South Africa was very much discriminatory against the coloured people including Indians. He found that Indians were treated like animals. He put up tough fight for the rights of his countrymen and the right of black Africans there. He completely devoted himself to the service of the people through *Satyagraha* and *Ahimsa*. He decided to adopt *Brahmacharya* in 1906 for the sake of better dedication to the service of humanity.

From South Africa, Gandhiji came to India, and started taking leading part in struggle for India's freedom. Since then he led the whole nation through Indian National Congress till the attainment of freedom in 1947. He launched three important movements during his leadership– *Civil Disobedient Movement, Non Co-operation Movement and Quit India Movement.* It is really a great irony that this follower of Peace and Non-violence was shot dead on 30th January, 1948.

14.4 GANDHIJI'S PHILOSOPHY

Gandhi did not claim any originality for his thoughts. His philosophy is, however, based on the philosophy of idealism. A brief description of some of his philosophical ideas is given below:

- *His belief in God:* He believed in God implicitly. God is the all pervasive reality. He says, "To me God is Truth and Love. God is Ethics and Morality. God is the source of light and life".
- *Sense of human unity:* Gandhi advocated that as the source of all the rays of the sun is the sun– absolute and one whole, in the same way though the persons are different, yet the same soul pervades in all of them. He experienced and realized unity in diversity or human unity.
- *A new concept of education:* He interpreted education as the development of human personality. This can be matched with any modern concept of education.
- *Truth:* To Gandhiji, truth is the supreme principle. The realization of truth is the only way to realize god. According to Gandhiji, god is truth and truth is god. Truth has a divine significance and is manifested in the voice of the conscience. Truth should be the basis of the whole life– in all the fields of life.
- *Non-violence (Ahimsa):* It is the second main tenet of his philosophy of life. Ahimsa is the only means to realize truth and God. To him truth and Ahimsa are the two sides of the same coin. They are so inter related that it is practically impossible to disintegrate and separate them.
- *Love:* Love is the core of Gandhian philosophy. He advocated that the true religion of man was the religion of love. His love attained the form of universal love.
- *Brotherhood of man:* His motto was to establish a universal community of free persons without racial discrimination and artificial barriers of caste and creed. He has firm faith in the gospel of brotherhood of man.

- *Satyagraha:* Satyagraha is the practical application of non-violence. It is a method of securing a right by personal suffering. It is to achieve change of heart by self-suffering of the adherence to truth and non-violence. It is the justification of truth not by inflicting suffering on the opponent but on one's self.
- *Service into humanity:* It is the core of his philosophy. His greatest creed was service of God through service of humanity. For Gandhi, God lives in the temple of humanity and man becomes great exactly by the degree in which he works for the welfare of his fellow man.
- *Sarvodaya Samaj:* This was the type of socialism he wanted, as opposed to the socialism of the Marxian type. He wanted the structure of the society to be built upon moral principles, humanitarianism and equality.
- *Fearlessness:* He emphasized the fact that without fearlessness, it is practically impossible to practice truth and ahimsa. A coward cannot adhere to these principles of truth and ahimsa.
- *Ram Rajya:* He tried to establish Ram Rajya which he identified with justice, peace, happiness and welfare of all.
- *Useful citizens:* Gandhiji tried to create a society in which the government may guarantee freedom, justice and fraternity for all. He wants that each individual should be trained to be a useful citizen, shouldering responsibilities and fulfilling duties he owes to the society.
- *Economic equality:* He realized that industrialization leads to mass production, over profits, exploitation, accumulation of wealth, evils of capitalism, poverty of the workers, loss of personal joy of the workers and loss of skill of the craftsman. Therefore he despises industrialization which makes the rich richer and the poor poorer. He is in favour of decentralization of capital, promotion and distribution of wealth and income among the masses, absence of competition and co-operation and encouragement of the native skill of the craftsman.

14.5 GANDHIJI'S EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Gandhiji's thoughts on education form the dynamic side of his philosophy. He viewed education as a potent instrument of social reconstruction. His scheme of education is known as 'Basic Education'. Gandhiji is considered as the starting point of modern educational theory and practice of the East. He observes, "By education I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man-body, mind and spirit." Education should not confine itself to the teaching of 3Rs. According to him, teaching of 3Rs is neither the beginning nor the end of education. He paid greater attention towards the personality of the learner. He, in fact proposed a balanced development of the child, physically, psychologically and intellectually, to enable him to be able to achieve the ultimate aim i.e. Truth.

14.5.1 Principles of Education

The basic principles of Gandhiji's philosophy of education are summarized as follows–

- Education for each child up to 14 years of age should be free, compulsory and universal.
- All education should be imparted to the child through the medium of his mother tongue.
- English should not be given any importance in the education of a child.
- Mere literacy cannot be equated with education. Education should develop human values in the child.
- Education should enable the child to realize the ultimate truth (God) through non-violence and purity of means.
- Education should develop all the powers of the child so as to fit him into the community of which he is an integral part.
- Education should develop the total personality of the child, that is, education should aim at achieving harmonious development of his mind, body and soul.
- Education should create vocational efficiency in the child in order to prepare him to earn his living. Hence, craft education should

be emphasized in the curriculum and it should be correlated with the local industries.

- Education should create useful, responsible and dynamic citizens to fulfill the duties they owe to the society.
- Education (Basic Education) should purify the heart and mind of the people and create a society free from all exploitation and aggressions.
- A child should also be given gainful work experiences through practical training without which theoretical knowledge is useless.
- Education should inculcate universal moral values in the child for achieving success in the field of education.

14.6 GANDHIJI'S BASIC EDUCATION SYSTEM

Gandhiji initiated and strengthened several constructive programmes for the economic, educational and social development of the people. He found that the present system of education is not only wasteful but positively harmful. In July 1937, Gandhiji wrote in the Harijan, "Literacy itself is not education, I would, therefore, begin the child's education by teaching it a useful handicraft and enabling it to produce from the moment it begins its training. Thus every school can be made self-supporting, the condition being that the state takes over the manufacture of these schools." He was a practical educational philosopher and an experimentalist to the core. His experiments with truth and education were the instruments for the realization of his ideals in life. For improving the terrible condition of education, Gandhiji advocated a scheme of primary education based on Indian traditional culture through the medium of mother tongue. But this required a huge sum of money. To end this dilemma Gandhiji put forward the proposal of free and compulsory primary education to every child in which the process of schooling could be made self supporting by teaching a useful and productive craft. Gandhiji expressed his views on education as the Scheme of Basic Education and placed it in the Wardha Conference held on 22nd and 23rd October, 1937 under the chairmanship of Dr. Zakir Hussain. The report of the committee, published in March 1938, came to be known as the Wardha

Scheme of Education. It was accepted by the Indian National Congress at its Haripura Session held in March 1938. The following resolutions were passed–

1) Free and compulsory education be provided for seven years on a nation-wide scale.
2) The medium of instruction be mother-tongue.
3) The process of education throughout this period should centre around some productive form of manual work, and that all other abilities, as far as possible, be integrally related to the central handicraft chosen with due regard to the environment of the child.
4) That the conference expects that the system of education will be gradually able to cover the remuneration of the teachers.

The Wardha Scheme of Education is also known as Nai Talim/Basic Education/Buniyadi Talim (Shiksha). The scheme was the outcome of sound thinking of Gandhiji who considered education as an effective instrument of national reconstruction. The word 'Basic' is derived from the word 'Base' which means foundation. Basic education has close relationship with the basic needs and interests of the society as child is the focal point of education. The central point of this scheme is craft, which enables the students to earn livelihood as well as to develop qualities of good citizenship. Moreover it is based on ancient Indian culture and civilization. It is again basic because it lays down the minimum educational standards which every Indian child is entitled to receive without any distinction. It makes use of native potentialities of the child and it is intimately related to the basic occupations of the community. This education is for the common man of the country, who is the foundation and backbone of the national life.

The fundamental features of the basic education scheme are–

1) **Free and compulsory education:** Gandhiji wanted education to be free and compulsory for all boys and girls between the ages of seven to fourteen. Gandhiji believed that primary education is the minimum education that must be available to all.
2) **Craft-centred Education:** The basic idea of this scheme is to impart education through some craft or productive work. Craft work helps

the child to acquire sensory and motor co-ordination and to appreciate the value of honest labour. Gandhiji was of the opinion that the method of training the mind through village handicraft will help to develop self-confidence and working ability and promote the real, disciplined development of the mind as it activates the thinking power in the child and helps his intellectual development.

3) **Self supporting aspect of the Scheme:** 'Earn while you learn and learn while you earn' is another fundamental feature of basic education. The self supporting aspect of the scheme may be interpreted in two ways– (a) Education that will help one to be self supporting in later life, (b) Education which in itself is self supporting.
4) **Medium of instruction:** The medium of instruction in basic education system is mother tongue. It is based on the belief that without the capacity to speak effectively, to read and write correctly and lucidly, no one can develop precision of thought or clarity of ideas. Moreover, it is a valuable means of social education.
5) **Ideal of citizenship:** Basic education aimed at giving the citizens of the future a keen sense of personal growth, dignity and efficiency and social services in a cooperative community. Basic education envisaged to provide the children an opportunity of understanding their own problems, rights and obligations.
6) **Flexible Curriculum and free Environment:** The flexibility of the curriculum and free environment for the child to perform according to their own capacity are another features of basic education. There is no compulsion for completing a prescribed portion for examinations. Necessary changes may be introduced in the curriculum if the situation demands. The teacher is also free to organize necessary environment for the development of the child.

14.6.1 Aims of Education

Gandhi's concept of education has two fold aims before it— immediate aims and ultimate aim of education.

- **Immediate aims of education:** The immediate aims of Gandhiji's education are related to our day-to-day life.
- ***The Utilitarian Aim:*** Considering the basic needs of human life, such as food, shelter, clothing etc., Gandhiji advocated self-supporting education. He was fully aware of the financial condition of our people. It is because of this that he introduced a manual productive craft, the sale of which would make education self-supporting.
- ***Cultural Aim:*** Mere acquisition of knowledge is not enough for a man. He needs culture to refine his personality. Education should develop qualities of mind, which should be reflected through his behaviour.
- ***Moral aim:*** According to Gandhiji, the end of all knowledge should be building up of character. Character building implies cultivation of moral values such as courage, strength of mind, righteousness, self restraint and service of humanity. He, therefore, made this the central purpose of education.
- ***Perfect development:*** Gandhiji observed that man is neither mere intellect, nor gross animal body, nor heart or soul alone. Harmonious development of all powers innate and acquired was the chief goal of Gandhian education.
- ***Ultimate aim:*** Gandhiji's ultimate aim of education is knowledge of God, spiritualism and oneness with God. It is nothing but self-realization which has been in vogue in Indian philosophy since long. All the immediate aims are subordinate and complementary to this supreme aim of life and education. By emphasizing this aim, Gandhiji did not preach for seeking the world for a monastic life. He never suggested isolating education from life. Actually, in his later speeches and writing, Gandhijii emphasized the ideals of education being a preparation for life or it being the training of the whole man as much as that of self realization. He did not find any conflict between these two sets of ideas.

14.6.2 Curriculum

The curriculum of Gandhiji's system of education has been constructed with the definite view of achieving the aims and objectives laid down by him. The curriculum of basic education scheme is aimed at developing the whole man– the intellectual, physical and spiritual powers. The basic education is designed for children between seven and fourteen years of age and accordingly curriculum has been suggested. For the boys, general science and for girls, home science has been emphasized. The various subjects are–

- **Basic Craft:** Spinning and weaving, carpentry, agriculture, fruit and flower cultivation, leather work, culturing fish, pottery, book binding, any handicraft according to the local need, home science for girls.
- Mother tongue
- Mathematics
- Geography, History and Civics to be combined as Social Studies
- Painting and Music
- P.T., Drill and Sports etc.
- General Science comprising Physics Chemistry, Botany, Zoology, Hygiene and Nature Study etc.
- Hindustani: It is the combination of Hindi and Urdu languages spoken in Hindustani speaking areas. The study of Hindustani will be compulsory during the fifth and sixth years of school life in non-Hindustani speaking areas.
- There is no place for religious and moral education in the curriculum.
- External examinations are to be abolished. The day-to-day work of the student is to be the determining factor.
- Text books are to be avoided as far as possible.
- Cleanliness and health, citizenship, play and recreation are to be given sufficient importance.

14.6.3 Methods of Teaching

By discarding subject centred education, Gandhiji, for the first time advocated craft based child centred education. He said that local crafts should be made the medium of education so that child might develop his body, mind and soul in a harmonious manner. The methods of teaching to further craft centred education are given below–

- Learning by doing: Everything is taught to the child by activity and practical works of crafts. Even alphabet is taught through the practice of arts. For this purpose, children are given art training first.
- Learning by experience: Children are not taught everything by the teacher. Knowledge is organized very systematically for them and then they learn many of the things through their own experiences. Efforts are also made to establish correlation between teaching methods and learning experiences.
- Project method: Students are also assigned various projects by the teacher. They complete the projects by cooperation of their fellow being. This project is evaluated on the basis of the usefulness and beauty of items prepared by them.
- Technique of correlation: Basic education envisages that the whole instruction should be imparted through the medium of some activity, experience or craft. The teaching of various subjects should be in the form of correlated knowledge and not in the form of separate subjects.
- Lecture method, questioning and discussions are some more techniques which are employed in the Gandhian scheme of education as and when considered appropriate.

14.6.4 Discipline

Gandhiji's approach to discipline is based on discipline of mind, thought and action. He laid stress on inner discipline or self-

control. Discipline should not be imposed, it should spring from within. Like naturalists, Gandhiji also advocated freedom for the child. At the same time he wanted children to be prepared to accept the appropriate discipline and training. He should be given full opportunity to develop in a natural environment. He did not say that children should be left free to follow their own impulses. According to him, education should stress on self discipline. His concept of discipline was not individual. It was a concept of social discipline. He envisaged the idea of building up of ideal citizens though education. He wanted students to be successful and responsible future citizens of the country. He was against corporal punishment for the child. He also states that if the boys and girls do not learn discipline in their school days, money and time spent on their education is a national loss. He put forward his idea of voluntary discipline. It is a synthesis of freedom and internal control. He wants the children to be prepared to account the appropriate discipline and training.

14.7 MERITS AND DEMERITS OF GANDHIJI'S EDUCATION SYSTEM

Like any system of education, Gandhiji's Basic Education system also had some positive and some negative aspects. It was a radical system of education which was very necessary to make the Indian education system free from blind British influences. But probably the Indian education system was not yet ready to accept such radicalism. The merits and the limitations of the basic education system are discussed below.

14.7.1 Merits of Basic Education

- *Compulsory free education:* Compulsory free education was very necessary for India at that time. Imparting free and compulsory education to all boys and girls, between the age of seven and fourteen, eased the financial burden of the parents.
- *No wastage:* In the scheme of basic education, there was no system of failure which helped in preventing wastage.

- *Ideal citizenship:* Training in ideal citizenship was very necessary at that time. Basic education provided the children opportunity to acquire traits of citizenship and learn to solve the problems of their future life.
- *Close to life:* Basic education was closely related with life. Education was directed towards the needs of life. The subjects taught and the activities or experiments done through craft in the school are correlated with life.
- *Productive and self sufficient education:* Basic education system was not only work centered but also self-supporting. Craft-centred education in basic education system prepares the individual to become self-reliant and self-supporting.
- *Activity based Curriculum:* The curriculum of basic education system was based on activity. It means that the school must be places of work, experimentation and discovery, not of passive absorption of information. Education was imparted through concrete life situations relating to craft or to social and physical environment.
- *Social Activities and Community Life:* Apart from craft, productive activities and occupations find an important place in the curriculum of a basic school. Living together and doing together is the soul of the curriculum and methods of teaching of basic education system.
- *Education through Correlation:* The basic education is an effort to correlate the life of the child with his immediate physical and social environment. It is an effort to make knowledge easier and at the same time more meaningful.
- *Integrated knowledge:* Basic education treats knowledge as an integrated whole. Curriculum is built around three integrally related centers: physical environment, social environment and craft work.
- *Greater freedom for the teacher and the taught:* In basic education, discipline does not mean order and external restraint

but an intelligent use of freedom. The teacher gets opportunities to make experiments, think for himself and put his idea and plan to practice.

14.7.2 Limitations of Basic Education System

- *Concept of basic education is not clear:* Most of the educationists, educational administrators and teachers are in a state of confusion in understanding the concepts and fundamentals of basic education. As a result of this, the government of India was reluctant to implement it and the general masses fail to grasp the significance of basic education.
- *Unsound psychological foundations of Wardha Scheme of education:* Basic education has completely ignored the development of the tender mind of the child. It forces the child to learn a craft before he is twelve. Moreover, it is cruel to make the child earn during the stage when he ought to be playing and enjoying himself.
- *Not suitable for urban people:* This scheme of education is useful only in the villages and not suitable for the urban population.
- *Undue emphasis on craft as the only basis of correlation:* It is impossible to establish any natural association between craft and all the subjects of cultural value as a curriculum.
- *Not suited in an age of industrialization:* Basic education fails to relate to the economic policy. With rapid industrialization of India, knowledge of science and mathematics may become more desirable than skill in handicrafts.
- *Neglect of the child:* Basic education neglects the child. In a basic school only two-third or half the normal time is given to academic education, the rest being taken up by crafts. Moreover, since on the time-table academic subjects generally come after the craft work, students are sometimes too tired to take academic work keenly.

- *Lack of finance and the absence of sound administrative policy:* It was also responsible for the failure of Basic Education. Practically there was no coordination between the official and non-official agencies engaged in the organization and development of Basic education.
- *Lack of adequate supply of efficient, trained and sincere teachers:* Teacher occupies the central position in Basic Education. Suitable orientation and training of teachers of basic schools was highly needed, which was rare. The majority of the teachers had no faith in this system.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: What are the basic philosophies of Gandhiji?

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Q.2: What is the meaning of education according to Gandhiji?

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Q.3: Briefly discuss the educational philosophy of Gandhiji.

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Q.4: What is the implication of the word 'basic' in Basic Education?

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Q.5: What are the reasons for failure of Basic Education?

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14.8 CONTRIBUTIONS OF GANDHIJI'S EDUCATION SYSTEM TO PRESENT EDUCATION

Gandhiji's scheme of basic education has brought about a lot of changes in the educational pattern of this country. The primary schools, more or less, all over India, were converted into basic schools. This system of education made important contributions to the field of education.

- *Psychologically, socially and biologically sound Scheme:* Gandhiji's philosophy of education is sound in all these three respects. He envisaged the craft centred education which would bring about the intellectual development through purposeful and productive physical activities in the light of social objectives. This scheme would also encourage the learners to plan experiment and reflect.
- *Manual work:* Manual work not only encourages the physical activities and brings about the physical development but also encourages intellectual development. Learning by doing would satisfy many of the psychological urges of the child.
- *Opportunity for self-expression:* Self-expression is very necessary for the balanced development of the child's personality. Basic scheme of education made ample provision for creative self-expression. It also provides for the outlet of the creative urges which are innately present in every human being.
- *Provision for affection and respect:* Affection, self respect, creativeness and activity are the psychological need of the child. These activities bring about the sense of security and Gandhiji had the provision for all these in the scheme of education.
- *Pedagogically sound educational theory:* Education should be concrete and realistic. Gandhijis concept of education had provision

for all these things. The child, after acquiring education has to play his role in a non-violent social order. This order of life shall be based on democracy and freedom.

- *Free and compulsory education:* Gandhiji's wanted free and compulsory primary education for all boys and girls between the ages of 7 and 14. Elementary education up to matriculation should be minus English.
- *Women education:* Gandhiji had a firm belief that education of little boys and girls could be more effectively handled by women than by men. He is of the opinion that the education of boys cannot be complete unless equal emphasis is laid on the provision of education for women.
- *Religious education:* He believed that the effective means of development of a personality and character is the study of religion. In fact, religion is the way of life. Hence religious education should be imparted to the child through virtues like truth, peace, love, justice and non violence.
- *Medium of instruction:* He observed that medium of instruction should be in one's mother tongue. He believed that mother tongue makes the process of education natural and meaningful. He was against English to be made as the medium of instruction.
- *Craft-centred education:* He wanted to impart education through the medium of some craft that is all the subjects should be taught around some craft.
- *Self-supporting education:* A great contribution of Gandhiji's Basic Education system is its self supporting aspect. It is not only work-centred but also self-supporting. Earning while learning is the feature of basic education.
- *National education:* He formulated a new system of education keeping in mind the prevalent situation in India. It is his suggestion that every youth should devote one year to social service or service to the country by making craft as a centre of education. This is national education, suitable for the whole country.

- *Comprehensive education:* Basic education system was very comprehensive opposed to the intellectual kind of education prevalent at that time. He visualized a very broad based concept of education. His education system was based on all round personality development of the child.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi secured a unique place in the galaxy of the great teachers who have brought fresh light to the field of education. He successfully synthesized different philosophies of education and emerged as an idealist, naturalist and pragmatist. Gandhiji keenly wanted to create a new social order based on truth and non-violence. This can be brought about only through a silent social revolution. He believed that revolutionary change in the educational system can help to bring this silent social revolution. The scheme of Basic Education does not stand for mere technique, it stands for a new spirit and approach to all education.



14.9 LET US SUM UP

- Mahatma Gandhi was born on 2nd October, 1869 at Porbandar in Kathiawar of Gujarat.
- He is honoured by the people of India as the father of our nation.
- He was a saint, a politician, a patriot and nationalist, an economist, a great freedom fighter and a practical educator.
- His philosophy is based on the philosophy of idealism.
- According to Gandhiji education means, “All round drawing out of the best in child and man– body, mind and spirit.”
- Gandhiji placed his Basic Education System to the nation in the Wardha Conference in 1937.
- The aims of basic education are to help the child to become self-supporting, preserve own culture, character development, moral, spiritual, social development, inculcate democratic ideas etc.
- The curriculum of basic education was life centred, activity centred and craft centred to train man by developing his soul. Mother tongue,

arithmetic, social studies, general science, art, music etc. were included in the curriculum.

- Regarding methods of teaching, it was advocated that the child should be educated through craft. Mother tongue should be medium of instructions. Learning by doing method and engaging students with different creative and productive activities were supported.
- Self discipline was emphasized rather than imposing disciplinary rules.



14.10 FURTHER READING

1) Bhole, L. M. (2016). *Educational Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi and Vinoba Bhave*. New Delhi: Shipra Publications.
2) Patel, M. S. (1958). *The Educational Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi.* Navajivan Publising House.
3) Pillai, P. (1959). *The Educational Aims of Mahatma Gandhi*. Kalyanmandir Publication.
4) Sharma, A. P. (2010). *Indian and Western Educational Philosophy*. New Deli: Unicorn Books Publishers.
5) Singh, Y. K. (2014). *Educational Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi*. APH Publishing Corporation.



14.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans. to Q. No. 1: Gandhiji had belief in God, truth, Ahimsa, love, fearlessness, satyagraha and economic equality.

Ans. to Q. No. 2: According to Gandhiji education means, “All round drawing out of the best in child and man– body, mind and spirit.”

Ans. to Q. No. 3: He synthesized the 3 important philosophies– Idealism Naturalism and Pragmatism. His educational philosophy emerged out of his own experiments with truth and non-violence. He said that education not only moulds the new generation, but also reflects

society's fundamental assumptions about itself and the individuals who comprise it.

Ans. to Q. No. 4: The word Basic means the foundation. Here by using this word with education Gandhiji wanted to make the foundation of the educational structure strong. The aim of this scheme is to make a child self-reliant by enabling him to use his acquired knowledge and skills in practical affairs of life. It has close relationship with the basic needs and interest of the education as child is the focal point of education.

Ans. to Q. No. 5: Vague conception of basic education, ignoring the tender nature of child's mind, unsuitableness for urban areas, undue emphasis on craft and unsuitableness for industrialized age are some of the causes of failure of basic education system.



14.12 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

A) Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q.1: Write a note on Gandhiji's views on education.

Q.2: Write a note on the features of Gandhian educational philosophy.

Q.3: Explain briefly Gandhiji's 'Basic Education'.

Q.4: What is the rationale behind craft centred curriculum in basic education system?

B) Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q.1: Explain the fundamentals of Basic Education.

Q.2: State the contribution of Gandhiji towards Indian education.

Q.3: Is basic education system relevant to the present age? How?

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UNIT 15: SANKARADEVA AND HIS EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT

UNIT STRUCTURE

15.1 Learning Objectives

15.2 Introduction

15.3 Sankaradeva's Life Sketch

15.4 Sankaradeva's Philosophical Thoughts

- 15.4.1 Metaphysics
- 15.4.2 Epistemology
- 15.4.3 Axiology

15.5 Sankaradeva's Educational Philosophy

15.6 Sankaradeva's Educational System

- 15.6.1 Aims of Education
- 15.6.2 Curriculum
- 15.6.3 Method of Teaching

15.7 Relevance of Sankaradeva's Educational Thoughts and Practices

15.8 Conclusion

15.9 Let Us Sum Up

15.10 Further Reading

15.11 Answers to Check Your Progress

15.12 Possible Questions

15.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to–

- describe the life and philosophy of Sankaradeva;
- explain the main ideas of educational philosophy of Sankaradeva;
- recognize the contributions of Sankaradeva to educational thought and practice; and
- discuss the relevance of Sankardeva's educational principles at present times.

15.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit introduces you to the philosophy of the life of Sankaradeva, a great Vaishnavite saint of Assam and his contributions to the field of education, both theoretical and practical. Though his contributions are not direct in the field of education, but his philosophy and teachings have great implications in this field. He was excellent in all the dimensions of human personality– mental, emotional, social, moral and physical. So he is revered for his multi-faceted personality. His contributions to the society cannot be measured in any terms. He has multi-dimensional contributions to the Assamese society.

15.3 SANKARADEVA'S LIFE SKETCH

Sankaradeva was born in the year 1449 in a place called Bordowa in Assam. He was contemporary to an atmosphere of Vaishnavite movements in other parts of India. At a very tender age, his Guru, Mahendra Kandali identified the genius in him. He lost his mother three days after his birth and was brought up by his grandmother. At the age of 23, he married a Kayastha girl, Suryavati, who died four years after marriage leaving a girl child. Sankaradeva looked after the motherless girl. Soon he married her off and in his zeal for the faith he had discovered, he undertook an extensive tour which must have extended for a period of twelve years. He visited places like Gaya, Puri, Vrindavana, Mathura, Dwaraka, Varahakunda, Ayodhya and Badarikasrama.

Sankaradeva's philosophy of life was influenced by many factors like his grandmother's upbringing, the socio-political situations, and his travels to different parts of India among others. His moral philosophy was based on the mouldings of his grandmother during his young days. His religious and social philosophy was a result of his far and wide travel and contact of various Vaishnavite saints. His endeavours had brought an order to a chaotic social order in Assam prevailing during his days.

As a boy, Sankaradeva exhibited qualities of an erudite scholar. He was a prolific writer and had deep knowledge of the *Vedas*, the *Vedanta*, the

Gita and the *Bhagavata-purana*. In order to give a permanent basis to his teachings he created a vast religious literature. The unique feature of his works is that he wrote all of them in vernacular language. He dealt with all branches of literature to fulfil the demands of the people. He was not only the author of works of original thinking, but was also an expert in translating from Sanskrit. He rendered into music, poetry and drama the entire life-story of Krishna. The result was the great output of literature in various branches of learning such as *Kavya*, theology, etc. Dr. B. K. Barua pointed out, "The writings of Sankaradeva had been, for the last few centuries, a source of delight, inspiration and wisdom to the Assamese people. He contributed a good deal to the development of the Assamese language, to the widening of the imaginative range of Assamese literature. He raised it to the classical elegance and richness by imparting into it what is good and beautiful in Sanskrit."

15.4 SANKARADEVA'S PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHTS

The philosophical consistency of Srimanta Sankaradeva is very unique, which is not seen in any other preachers of India. He propagated practical philosophy which inspired people to have a direct, immediate and intuitive vision of the highest truth which is also the Supreme Reality. The equality of *Brahma* and *Iswara*, as preached by Srimanta Sankaradeva was a unique thing. His philosophy was different from all branches of Hindu philosophies– monism, qualified monism dualism, etc. There are elements of all these branches of Hindu philosophies in Srimanta Sankaradeva's philosophy.

The practical philosophy of Sankaradeva inspired people to have a direct, immediate and intuitive vision of the highest truth which is also the Supreme Reality. He not only professed his philosophy, but also gave instructions for the ways of its practical realization. He desisted from building any philosophical system/schools. But he wrote many books of philosophical importance. Metaphysical, social and ethical concepts are distinctly found in his writings. His philosophy may be understood in terms of three branches of philosophy, i.e. metaphysics, epistemology and axiology.

15.4.1 Metaphysics

According to Srimanta Sankaradeva, the supreme reality is Brahman. He is *Parmatman*. He identified Brahman with the highest God of *Bhagavata Purana* and *Gita*– *Vishnu* or *Bhagavan*. According to him, *Brahman*, *Paramatma* and *Bhagavan* are the one and same truth which is manifested in three names. He conceived God as the *Purusottama*– eternal, omnipresent and omniscient. God is regarded as the creator, preserver and destroyer of the universe. He is the possessor of all good qualities– free from all imperfections. God is infinite reality by nature and qualities. There is no other Supreme Reality. He is one and the ultimate truth. He is *advaita* or non-second. His manifestations as souls or matter are neither unreal nor illusion. He is the material and efficient cause of the universe. So, according to Sankaradeva, the world is as real as God.

15.4.2 Epistemology

Sankaradeva claims that valid knowledge is direct and immediate. It is the intuitive knowledge. Immediate knowledge arises in the mind of a devotee through his earnest devotion to God. True knowledge dawns through the devotion to the supreme God or *Bhagavan*. Attainment of true knowledge vanishes the ignorance or wrong knowledge of man. So, according to Sankaradeva, valid knowledge is intuitive.

Sankaradeva also holds that perception, inference and testimony are sources of practical knowledge, but not of real knowledge. Perception is direct knowledge produced by sense of object contact. Inference is mediate knowledge which depends upon the knowledge of invariable relation between two things. Testimony is the source of knowledge acquired from religious source of knowledge, acquired from religious scriptures like the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, the *Bhagavata Purana* and the *Gita*.

Sankaradeva holds that knowledge is intrinsically valid. The validity of knowledge cannot be proved by other knowledge. It is self-

proved. True knowledge arises in the mind of the devotee of God and then only he can realize what is true and real. Knowledge without devotion is unreal and misleading.

15.4.3 Axiology

Sankaradeva built his ethical system upon the socio-ethical thoughts of the *Gita* and the *Bhagavata Purana*. He accepted the authority of the ancient Indian scriptures for the philosophical foundation of his theory of social reform. He accepted the ethical codes prescribed by the ethico-religious literatures of ancient India. He took ethics and religion as the prime means to purify human life.

15.5 SANKARADEVA'S EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

The contemporary society of Srimanta Sankaradeva was inflicted by many problems like illiteracy, religious chaos, practice of social evils, etc. Education was available only to very few people belonging to the upper section of the society. People at large remained in the darkness of ignorance and illiteracy. Srimanta Sankaradeva was not only a religious leader, but also an educationist in his own inimitable way. He could realize the pathetic situation of the Assamese society and as such he set on a literacy mission. Though the disciples of Srimanta Sankaradeva constituted a very small minority in the vast sea of illiterate masses, but he and his followers engaged themselves in the work of propagating knowledge and wisdom in their own ways. He helped the people acquire knowledge of the scriptures as well as of behavioural science. There were even elements of social science and analysis of social conditions in his writings although in a primitive form. His teachings were always full of advices about an ideal life-style. There were exhortions to give up aggressive nature. He asked people to avoid evil. Ethics constituted the main component of his teaching. People were also cautioned against pride. Thus he stood as a teacher of the entire society. He also reminded the devotees to abide by the norms of a disciplined life. He can be regarded as a global pioneer in adult education programme. His plays, discourses and prayer meetings were always full of people. People of all

age groups including old ones and ladies invariably attended these. The main message conveyed to all was that there was no intrinsic difference among people, all being expositions of the same God.

Srimanta Sankaradeva studied all the Vedic literatures in Sanskrit language of that time. He studied four 'Vedas', eighteen 'Puranas' and fourteen different '*Sastras'* (books) of different subjects like Grammar etc. which also includes '*Bhagawata Sastra*'. His ideas about society and people were based on the knowledge gathered from this wide range of studies. He created many literatures like '*Dashama'*, '*Kirtana'*, '*Uttarakanda Ramayana'*, '*Bhakti Pradip', 'Bhakti Ratnakar', 'Nimi Nama Sidha Sambad', 'Hari Chandra Upakhyan', 'Rukmini Haran'* and so on. He propagated the philosophy of '*Vaishnavism'* and '*Bhakti'* (total surrender in front of God) based on these literatures. He studied both Sanskrit and vernacular languages of that time from where he achieved poetic quality of his language. He searched the Sanskrit literature, analyzed and trans-created them to Assamese language by his own style of writing which were understandable to all the classes of people. Another language used by him was Brajawali. All these reflect his educational thoughts. His writings, creations and trans-creations were the basis of his educational system.

Srimanta Sankaradeva did not work directly in the field of education. As such there is no system of education developed by Sankaradeva. But his philosophical principles and practices have profound implications on the education system. He was able to educate a large number of people with his multi-faceted activities or programmes. He understood and undertook education as an instrument for social reforms. His system of education was largely informal, but very scientific and psychological.

15.6 SANKARADEVA'S EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Sankaradeva's education system was based on the institutions of *Namghars* and *Satras*. He took religion as a medium of education probably because it was easier for him to bring more people into the education system through religious activities. Therefore, *Namghars* and *Satras* were used as educational institutions. The system of education provided was mostly

informal. People were deliberately engaged into different activities but they did not know that they were being educated.

The Asomiya language as a popular medium of instruction developed during the medieval period. As an educationist, he introduced the *tol* system of education in the *Namghars* and *Satras* where students were provided with *sachi pat* (tree bark), *tula pat* (cotton-made paper), pen, ink, etc. for reading and writing purpose. Moreover, the *kewaliya bhakats* or young *bhakats* were taught to be self-dependent by producing *sachipāt*, *tulapat*, utensils out of bell and brass metal, wood-craft, ivory-craft, masks, sculptures, etc. Many of these items are preserved in Satras spread across the North East region of India for centuries. For example, the Auniati Satra of Majuli is preserving an ivory comb and mat made by freedom fighter Bahadur Gaonbura who belonged to the Akhorkatia clan.

Srimanta Sankaradeva surveyed the social needs. To organize the society he required knowledge of organizational structure of a society and needs of the individuals. He found out extraordinary talents from general people and the responsibilities of art, music, literature, social works etc. were bestowed on them according to their qualities and talents. He created the titles like '*Gayan'* (Singer) '*Bayan'* (Musician), '*Sutradhar'* (Director), '*Pathak'* (Reader), '*Hatimota'* (Public relation Officer), '*Gandhia'* (Librarian), '*Dhanbharali'* (Treasurer), '*Adhikari'* (Proprietor), '*Medhi'* (Manager), '*Oza'* (Instructor, Teacher), '*Kakati* (Paper producer), '*Lekharu'* (Copy writer) etc. These professionals served the society according to their talents. Srimanta Sankardeva also surveyed the places to establish *Satras* according to the productivity, from the point of condition of society, communication and life style of the people. He established '*Satra'* institutions, where agricultural production was rich. For communication, he searched the places, where river roads were available. He always tried to serve and teach the down-trodden people.

His system of education was a perfect example of inclusive education. He aimed for mass education. He was the first person in Assam to introduce mass-education. No one should be excluded from the education system. In his magnum opus *Kirtan Ghosa*, Srimanta Sankardeva stated all living beings as the creation of one God:

"Kukura srigala gardhabaru atma Ram janiya sabako pari kariba pranam"

According to him, no distinction should be made on the basis of caste. Sankaradeva visualized an equal society, where members from all sections of life irrespective of caste, tribe and community will be able to sit together for the prayer of God and dine together. This great and reformist idea of the saint truly reflects itself when proselytized members from Naga, Miri, Garo and many other tribal communities of the valley were proselytized to form the embryo of an equal society.

15.6.1 Aims of Education

Srimanta Sankaradeva used education as an instrument to bring about social reforms in the then broken Assamese society. So, the main aim of Sankaradeva's education was to bring social reforms.

- He used education to liberate people from the darkness of ignorance. He wanted to show the people of Assam a society free from any discrimination, inequality, hatred, etc.
- Education should free people from the superstitious beliefs, particularly the beliefs that were created by a superficial priestly class.
- Another aim of education was to bring unity among various sections of Assamese people through Vaishnavite movement.
- Education aimed to bring about spiritual consciousness among the people of Assam. Education should be free from the influence of the concept of many gods and goddesses mentioned in the *Puranas*, the practice of *Tantra* and performance of varieties of expensive but ineffective rites and rituals to satiate the sensuous desire of the people, by presenting before us the supreme ideal of *Param Brahma*, the cause of all incarnations of God, creation of the Universe and all other gods and goddesses. He simplified the process of self realization for the people by discarding the sophisticated but ineffective rites and rituals.

- Education was aimed at bringing about a cultural revolution in Assam. He brought various cultural aspects from the places he visited and contextualized them to the Assamese society. It was only after Sankaradeva that the closed Assamese society opened up to the world outside slowly but steadily, following the footsteps of the Guru who alone could sensitively and creatively combine the small with the large, the regional and the local with the national and the global, all in a most harmonious manner thereby transforming Assam from a land of magic and superstition to one of an advanced humanism.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: What are the factors that shaped Srimanta Sankaradeva's philosophy?

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Q.2: What knowledge according to Sankaradeva is valid knowledge?

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Q.3: List the literatures created by Srimanta Sankaradeva.

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Q.4: Why did Sankaradeva use Namghar and Satra as the educational institutions?

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Q.5: How did Sankaradeva organize the society?

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Q.6: What languages did Sankaradeva use in his creations?

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15.6.2 Curriculum

As religion is a very strong component of social life, Srimanta Sankaradeva took it as an instrument to educate people. Though the activities or programmes he took up for reforms had religious basis, they were not restricted to religious aspect only and had immense educative value. Despite the fact that the cultural tools adopted by him were seeped in the love of God, there were many secular elements too in his dance, music, art and craft. He imparted these mainly to his disciples. But gradually the knowledge was passed on to the people at large. He preached people through the medium of art. The art forms evolved by him flourished because he had a keen interest in those things. Though he could have easily preached the people with his influential image, yet he took up the medium of art and culture, and trained people in those. In this respect he went beyond the then residential schools which remained confined to theological teachings. Srimanta Sankaradeva imparted knowledge of vocational education too. He was a master craftsman. He supervised the manufacturing of musical instruments as well as other accessories used by his disciples in rendering of his songs under his guidance. He had also been in charge of one hundred weaver families. He helped those people increase their productivity and income. He was an expert costume designer too. All the costumes of his plays were designed by himself. Over time an institutional arrangement came up within the *Than* to impart all these skills to the new entrants. Srimanta Sankaradeva always advised his disciples to be very cautious about where and

what they ate. He said that food offered by a pious man could liberate one while the food offered by an unmeritorious person destroyed one's merits. He was never overawed by any powerful king to partake of unholy and unclean food just because it was offered by a king.

There is no fixed curriculum formulated or proposed by Sankaradeva. But he propagated the principles of social equality, love and brotherhood using various things like songs, drama, stories, etc. He authored many songs, plays, prayers and philosophical writings. These contained a major portion of the course material prevalent in the then residential schools. The teachers of these schools taught mostly the religious scriptures like *Vedas, Puranas, Srimad Bhagavat Gita*, the two epics etc. The essence of this curriculum was very much present in the writings of Srimanta Sankaradeva. So when his plays were enacted, when his songs were sung, when his hymns were chanted, people received the very knowledge which one received in the then residential schools and which made one educated by the standard of those days. But there were more in the teachings of Srimanta Sankaradeva than what the residential schools used to teach. For instance, the value education imparted by him remains a crucial ingredient in modern education also. He was also concerned about the health of the people. He incorporated healthy food items in *prasad* like grams, moong, ginger and fruits. So, health and hygiene may also be considered under the curriculum of his educational system.

15.6.3 Methods of Teaching

Srimanta Sankaradeva had the total understanding of the people of the society of that time. People were already frustrated with the religious preachings and rituals. So, it was necessary to revive the trust of the people on the religious knowledge and philosophy. Also, he wanted to disseminate knowledge to every section of the society and to remote places. So, he used various

media to teach people. His methods of teaching were based on multi-media and psychological principles.

Sankaradeva had a good understanding of the psychology of the people of then Assamese society. So, he tried to grab and sustain their attention towards his teaching by using some interesting activities like craft, music, dance, drama, stories, etc.

- **Music:** He used music as a medium to teach. He wrote many songs which were known as Bargeets. Sankaradeva's Borgeets are some of the most sublime devotional songs of India. They were composed in different places and periods and enshrine his most cherished emotions. They were written in praise of the God (the Supreme). The beautiful lyrics, language and its raga-based music have made a good amount of influence on the world. Their place in standard of music and expressing the devotion to Lord is undoubtedly the greatest. His songs were the ways to realize the self and the God, which in turn were the aim of education.
- **Drama:** Sankaradeva produced dramas which are known as Ankiya Nata. Ankiya Nata is a form of religious theatre created by Sankaradeva. *Ankiya* means 'act' or 'episode' and *Nata* means 'drama'. Thus, *Ankiya Nata* means a 'one-act drama' composed in a particular form. Sankaradeva created Ankiya Nata and wrote many popular plays as a means of spreading and maintaining the tenets of Vaisnavism among his people. The first play composed by him entitled 'Cihna Yātrā' at the tender age of 19 was in fact the beginning of modern theatre in East India. Culturologist Ratna Ojah is of the opinion that Sankardeva was the first personality to use a stage for performing the play. Significantly, performance of the play was responsible for breaking the age-old caste barriers as persons from various backgrounds– from 'high' caste *brahmins* to 'low' caste *koibartas* participated together. So, along with other values, it was a strong medium to teach equality to the people.

- **Language:** Use of 'Brajawali' language in his writings was another experiment of Srimanta Sankardeva. It was really wonderful that he not only created literature, art and music, but also created a language. This experiment was also successful because it was easily understandable to all the people of North-East and North India and because no scholar denied this language. 'Brajawali' language is unique contribution of Srimanta Sankardeva.

The saint also taught people by embodying his teachings in himself, not merely by uttering those. He was not only a preacher, but also a practitioner.

15.7 RELEVANCE OF SANKARADEVA'S EDUCATIONAL THOUGHTS AND PRACTICES

Though Sankaradeva lived in the 15th century, his philosophy was so pragmatic that his wide and strong influence over the present Assamese society is well reflected. The *Satras* and *Namghars* are still used as meeting places for value education, moral and religious discussions, propagation of fellow-feeling, cooperation, etc. His system of education was so strong that he could bring peace and calm to the then chaotic situation. This is an obvious indication of the relevance of his system of education. The lacking of values in the present education system can be fulfilled by following his system of education. Though he emphasized on moral values, they were practically applicable. He also emphasized on vocational efficiency of the people. Another modern principle which prevailed in his system was the regard for individual difference. He identified the talented people from the society and assigned them duties and responsibilities according to their abilities. Thus his system of education is more relevant than anything else in the modern period. His thoughts and practices, if implemented in true spirit will be able to bring stability to the present society.

15.8 CONCLUSION

Sankaradeva was like the glorious sun under whose warmth of mind Assam blossomed like a lotus of thousand petals (*sahasradala kamala*). It

is difficult to imagine how deep and widespread was the influence of Sankaradeva on the cultural renaissance that burst forth in medieval Assam. Sankaradeva rebuilt the poetry of the Assamese language in its classical perfection. He himself wrote in several styles. He was the master of music, drama and musical instruments, and had a wonderful genius for creating musical performances which go by the name of Ankiya Nata.

Sankardeva, as a social reformer, was responsible for creating a casteless and classless Asomiya society. He was single-handedly responsible for eradication of a social evil like untouchability which still exists in other parts of India. He emphasized upon child care, respect for the dignity of women, forging of unity among the various tribes, castes and communities and called for maintenance of ecological balance, apart from promoting health and sports. The clarion call for universal brotherhood was accepted by the contemporary society in the making. In conclusion, it can be said that his system of education catered to the aim of all round development of the individual as well as the society.



15.9 LET US SUM UP

- Srimanta Sankaradeva was born in the year 1449 in Bordowa, Assam. He was contemporary to an atmosphere of Vaishnavite movements in other parts of India.
- He undertook an extensive tour which included places like Gaya, Puri, Vrindavana, Mathura, Dwaraka, Varahakunda, Ayodhya and Badarikasrama.
- Sankaradeva's philosophy of life was influenced by many factors like his grandmother's upbringing, the socio-political situations, and his travels to different parts of India among others.
- He was a prolific writer and had deep knowledge of the *Vedas*, the *Vedanta*, the *Gita* and the *Bhagavata-purana*. He created a vast religious literature in vernacular language.

- He propagated practical philosophy which inspired people to have a direct, immediate and intuitive vision of the highest truth which is also the Supreme Reality.
- According to him, the supreme realty is Brahman. He is *Parmatman*.
- He claims that valid knowledge is direct and immediate. It is the intuitive knowledge. Immediate knowledge arises in the mind of a devotee through his earnest devotion to God. Attainment of true knowledge vanishes the ignorance or wrong knowledge of man.
- Sankaradeva built his ethical system upon the socio-ethical thoughts of the *Gita* and the *Bhagavata Purana*.
- He helped the people acquire knowledge of the scriptures as well as of behavioural science.
- There is no system of education developed by Sankaradeva as such. But his philosophical principles and practices have profound implications on the education system.
- He used education to liberate people from the darkness of ignorance, free people from the superstitious beliefs, bring unity among various sections of Assamese people through Vaishnavite movement, bring about spiritual consciousness among the people and bring about a cultural revolution in Assam.
- Sankaradeva's education system was based on the institutions of Naamghars and Satras. He took religion as a medium of education.
- Sankaradeva surveyed the social needs. He found out extraordinary talents from general people and the responsibilities of arts, music, literature, social works etc. were bestowed on them according to their qualities and talents.
- His system of education was a perfect example of inclusive education. Srimanta Sankaradeva was the first person in Assam to introduce mass-education. No one should be excluded from the education system.
- Though the activities or programmes he took up for reforms had religious basis, they were not restricted to religious aspect only and had immense educative value.

- There is no fixed curriculum formulated by Sankaradeva. But he propagated the principles of social equality, love and brotherhood using various things like songs, drama, stories, etc. He authored many songs, plays, prayers and philosophical writings.
- His methods of teaching were based on multi-media and psychological principles. He used music, drama, language, art and craft as the methods of teaching.
- Sankaradeva had a deep and widespread influence on the lives of Assamese people. His education system was so extensive that it is difficult to identify it as an education system.



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15.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans. to Q. No. 1: Sankaradeva's upbringing by his grandmother, his extensive tours to places of Vaishnavite movement, his contemporary society and his multi faceted personality shaped his philosophy.

Ans. to Q. No. 2: According to Sankaradeva, intuitive knowledge is valid knowledge.

Ans. to Q. No. 3: *Dashama'*, '*Kirtana'*, '*Uttarakanda Ramayana'*, '*Bhakti Pradip', 'Bhakti Ratnakar', 'Nimi Nama Sidha Sambad', 'Hari Chandra Upakhyan', 'Rukmini Haran'* are some of the literatures created by Srimanta Sankaradeva.

Ans. to Q. No. 4: He took religion as a medium of education probably because it was easier for him to bring more people into the education system through religious activities. Therefore, *Namghars* and *Satras* were used as educational institutions.

Ans. to Q. No. 5: To organize the society he found out extraordinary talents from general people and the responsibilities of arts, music, literature, social works etc. were bestowed on them according to their qualities and talents.

Ans. to Q. No. 6: Sankaradeva used Assamese and Brajawali languages in his creations to make them better understandable for the common people.



15.12 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

A) Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q.1: Write a short note on metaphysical philosophy of Srimanta Sankaradeva.

Q.2: What were the aims of Sankaradeva's education?

Q.3: State the implications of using vernacular language in Sankaradeva's creations.

Q.4: Why Sankaradeva's education system is called as inclusive in nature?

B) Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q.1: How did Sankaradeva's philosophy shape his system of education?

Q.2: Critically analyze the programmes and activities included in the curriculum of Sankaradeva's educational system.

Q.3: How did Sankaradeva use drama as a medium of education?

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