

Philosophy of Education

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PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION AS A KNOWLEDGE FIELD

Considering the difficult times that liberal studies in higher education are passing through under the increasing influence of market forces, one finds it necessary to take a look at the state of philosophy of education as a *knowledge field* before a review of the *researches* in the field is attempted. At one time philosophy of education enjoyed the status of a subject of study in its own right in teacher preparatory programmes at the under-graduate level in Colleges of Education and in Post-graduate Departments of Education in universities. The subject was taught as one of the foundation courses either independently or in combination with sociology/history of education. When the educational theory package in teacher education programmes came under review from the point of view of relevance it was thought that an interdisciplinary course which combined functional segments from the foundational disciplines would meet the needs of the students better. The result of this approach to de-emphasise educational theory *per se* was that philosophy of education as an intellectual discipline lost its place at the under-graduate level and its status and centrality at the post-graduate level.

The subject also had not attracted the attention of general philosophers in the past—hardly any university department of philosophy had offered it as a programme/course of study—and there appears to be no substantial change in this situation. Unlike in the English speaking West, philosophy of education in India did not develop as a sub-discipline of general philosophy. The author scanned the contents

of the *Journal of Indian Council of Philosophical Research* for the past 9 years from Vol X to Vol XVIII looking for papers centred on educational themes, only in vain. Nor is there an independent journal or an appropriate platform for promoting discussions and dialogues on philosophy of education. A happy exception is the excellent *Journal of the Krishnamurti Schools* devoted to discussion of educational concepts and issues, both practical and theoretical, from the standpoint of the philosophy of J.Krishnamurti. A brief introduction to the *Journal* is presented in the later part of the paper. In the meanwhile, the fate that has befallen most of the liberal studies—absence of demand from capable students in view of their 'low market value'—seems to have affected philosophy too. The net result has been that philosophy of education (and general philosophy) has to fight for its survival in the universities. The neglect that the field has suffered is reflected both in the quantity and quality of research output. Under the circumstances, the foregoing review of the state of research in the field has to be considered against the backdrop of the more basic questions confronting the field. It may also be noted that the review is confined to scholarly and technical research in the field.

LOOKING BACK - A REVIEW OF EARLIER OBSERVATIONS

Even when conditions were not so unfavourable, research in philosophy of education left much to be desired especially with reference to qualitative parameters. Buch (1991) in *Fourth Survey of Research in Education*, p.15 had observed that "The obvious reason for this is

that research in this area demands a deeper level of thinking and clarity in articulation of one's ideas—which is not that easy—than in other areas that depend more on empirical data and their interpretation". Going further back, Manuel (1974, 1979) and Premnath (1968) had drawn attention to the lack of methodological rigour and the generally poor quality of research in philosophy of education. The present author had reviewed researches in the field on two earlier occasions for the Fourth and Fifth surveys, which contained 85 studies in all, 47 in the Fourth and 38 in the Fifth. In the course of the reviews, apart from the research trends with respect to choice of themes and approach, the author had presented an analysis of what appeared to him as the major weaknesses of research work in the field. He had observed that, as against the rich opportunities that the field provided, the output was dismally poor both in terms of quantity and quality. To illustrate the point the author had also presented a broad description of the nature and method(s) of philosophical inquiry in education and the kind of contemporary educational issues that needed to be subjected to philosophical scrutiny (Seshadri, 1991, 1997).

REVIEW OF CURRENT STUDIES

Doctoral Studies

Since the last survey, less than a dozen studies have been added to the field and these do not, generally, differ much from their predecessors. The foregoing review of these studies is based on their abstracts made available to the reviewer via *Indian Educational Abstracts*. It may be noted that the objectives, methodology and findings of the studies in the foregoing review are for the most part as stated in the abstracts.

Alam, Zafar (1992). **A Study of the Islamic concept of education in the light of the concept of man and society in Islam**. Ph. D., Edu. Aligarh Muslim University.

The study is an attempt to present, analyse and evaluate the Islamic concept of education against the ideological background (of Islam). Its objectives are to find out the aims and objectives of education, the role of the teacher,

the nature of the curriculum and method of teaching according to Islam. The methodology involved library research. Authentic sources in Arabic, English and Urdu languages were consulted.

The findings were: The beginning and end of all knowledge is *Allah. Wahy* (revelation) is the most reliable source of knowledge. Education aims at developing and harmonising the physical, mental, emotional, moral and spiritual aspects of life for enabling men and women to shoulder the responsibility of *Khalifah*. Teacher is not merely a seller or dispenser of knowledge but the prophet's heir. Curriculum is not confined to only religious information, but covers the whole gamut of life, mundane as well as supramundane, material and spiritual, individual and social. The method of teaching is not confined to self-education only but covers gradation and continuity in teaching, explanation, drawing conclusion and home assignment.

The objectives of this research work are too broad. It is not clear as to what precise operations were carried out in analysis and evaluation. The analytical and evaluative 'findings' are either too general or too particular to merit philosophical comment.

Aruna, G. (1992). **Psychological and educational implications of J. Krishnamurti's observations of life and relationship**. Ph.D., Edu. Nagarjuna University.

The study attempts to analyse and organise human nature in terms of psychological structure and function out of J. Krishnamurti's observations of human life with a view to ascertain as to what these imply in educating human beings. The objectives are: to analyse the content of Krishnamurti's observations; to find out the place of these explorations both in technical and psychological fields; to find out the authenticity of these observations in relation to other psychologists' findings and to discuss the place of Krishnamurti's contribution in terms of values and relevance in the field of education. The methodology consists of content analysis of 48 source books of the author.

The major outcomes of the study are: J. Krishnamurti's revolutionary approach to the complexity of human psychological structure

gives a new perspective by which one can find pointers to develop an integrated personality. Teachers and students can sit in silence, observe their chattering minds with various forms of thought and the resultant feelings to be free of all conditioning. To make the child feel secure, parents, teachers and students have to talk and enquire in an atmosphere of freedom. To live as integrated beings—human, beings – besides acquiring knowledge in their field of interests, can be self knowing without condemning, justifying, evaluating to be psychologically free and to be having right relationship. They are to be in silence or in meditation to enrich their energies.

What sense can one make of the philosophy of a great thinker like J. Krishnamurti, if the findings are presented in this fashion?

Rema, M. (1993). **A Comparative Study of the Educational Thoughts of Swamy Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi**. Ph.D., Edu. University of Calicut.

The study was an attempt to analyse and compare the educational thoughts of Vivekananda and Gandhi with reference to educational aims, curriculum, methods and role of the teacher. It followed the historical-cum-comparative method based on library research. The findings are stated as usual in terms of what the two thinkers had to say on the different aspects of education. One hundred and seven references are cited.

There have been several earlier studies done on these two thinkers, individually and in a comparative frame. One wonders why to have one more study on the same theme. If this study aimed at shedding new light on the subject (the objectives do not give any such indication) one would wish to know what new insights the researcher was looking for that had evaded the previous researchers. As it is, the study is simply repetitive.

Shah, Sushma (1993). **Samkaleen Bharatiya Shaikshik Chintan Aur Sangit Shikshan** (Contemporary Indian Educational Thought and Music Education). Ph.D., Edu. Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya.

The objectives of the study are to assess contemporary Indian educational thought,

thoughts on music, music education and school and national integration and music, by Tagore, Gandhi and Gijubhai. The study followed the philosophical approach—analysis and synthesis of information collected from library sources.

The major findings of the study are: The educational thoughts of the trio, despite similarities, reflected the artist's, politician's and the psychologist's points of view. Music, according to all of them, was important for the development of humanistic, moral, artistic and spiritual qualities. Music helped in national integration and music education has to be an integral part of the school curriculum, emphasising both the theoretical and practical aspects. All of them believed in the therapeutic value of music.

The findings are too general and do not reflect the rigor of the philosophical analysis and synthesis.

Deshpande, V.N. (1994). **Contributions of Radhakrishnan to Educational Thought**. Ph.D., Edu. Karnataka University.

The study probes into Radhakrishnan's speculative thesis and educational philosophy. Its objectives are: To make an analytical study of Radhakrishnan's speculative thesis and educational philosophy, to compare his views on education with those of Western thinkers including Plato, John Dewey, Sartre and also the Indian thinkers including Tagore, Gandhi, Krishnamurti, to assess his contributions to theory and practice of education, to make a critical study of the implications of his educational philosophy for the modern system of Indian education. The researcher has used a combination of philosophical, historical and comparative methods including documentary survey and content analysis of primary and secondary sources

The array of objectives stated by the researcher will make half a dozen theses, not just one! One wonders if the researcher has left out anything at all. With such a formidable range of objectives the study, naturally, would be too superficial to merit critical comments. The long list of 'major findings' does not reveal any new philosophical or educational insights. They are just summarised statements of Radhakrishnan's

philosophical and educational ideas which are already well known.

Jamkar, S.B. (1994). **A critical appraisal of the educational ideas of Saint Tukdoji Maharaj with reference to present social condition.** Ph.D., Edu. Nagpur University.

The objectives of the study are: To critically evaluate Tukdoji's educational thoughts from his literature and to evaluate them in the present social context. As to methodology, data has been collected from a sample of 500 respondents with the help of questionnaire, interview and *matpradarshika*. The collected data were treated with percentages.

The major outcomes are stated in the form of 'According to Tukdoji.....' and include the following: The character of a teacher is the most important factor in the present social condition. The parents are fully responsible for the development of their children. Human life and education are related in curriculum. Women education is most important in the present social condition. Nationality is developed through education.

Attention is drawn to the general comments made in the next section of this review on how studies like the above are to be executed with particular reference to methodology, analysis, interpretation and reporting of findings.

Siddiqui, Mohd. Mahmood (1995). **Jamat-e-Islami Hind and its contribution to education: A critical study.** Ph.D., Edu. Marathawada University.

The stated objectives of the study are: to study the philosophy of *Jamat-e-Islami Hind* and its contribution to the field of education; to compare *Jamat* philosophy and practice of education with that of our present national educational set up; to assess the *Jamat's* educational system in the light of democratic and secular values; to find out the need of values in the field of education as advocated by the *Jamat* and to ascertain if the values taught by the *Jamat* could be incorporated in our educational system.

The researcher has stated five hypotheses (*Jamat* is not basically an educational organisation but it is taking interest in education and has developed a system of its own; *Jamat* has a particular philosophy of education;

Jamat's educational institutions are value-based; The educational system of the *Jamat* is value-based; It could be used to improve our national system of education). He has followed the historical method using library resources.

The findings include: *Jamat's* philosophy of education has certain commonalities with the national philosophy and it is not anti-national; *Jamat's* institutions have a combination of modern and religious education; *Jamat* system is value-based and aims at producing the righteous servants of *Allah* and true well wishers of humanity; Since the *Jamat's* system is based on values, it can be used to improve the national system of education.

The study claims to be based on the historical method. Hypotheses also have been stated, perhaps over stated. It is not clear what philosophical methods were applied in the research. The findings are too broad to merit philosophical comment

Rajhans, Shamshankar Sadashiv (1996). **A study of educational thoughts and work of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.** Ph.D., Edu. Shivaji University.

The objectives of the study are: to put forth systematically the educational thoughts of Ambedkar; to study the educational contribution of Ambedkar; to put forth the social conditions during pre-Independence period so that it may edify the coming generations to know how the unfavourable social patterns had necessitated Ambedkar to revolt against these adverse conditions and to justify the importance of education; to put forth suggestions that will serve as directives to the present ideology and system of education. As to methodology, the work of Ambedkar had been collected through his writings, speeches, letters and essays written by him in the journals, his interviews with important persons and the debates and speeches he delivered in the Constituent Assembly and Parliament.

The major outcomes are stated in the form of 'According to Ambedkar.....', followed by twenty statements on education. A few of them are sampled here: 'Life without education is a great loss'. 'Progress follows at the wake of education'. 'Modernisation in education is a must'. 'Social milieu is necessary for educational

development'. 'Women should be educated'. 'Formal education helps to transmit all the resources and achievement of a complex society'. 'Educated person should have a character'. 'Old literature should be preserved'. 'Scheduled castes should concentrate on education'. 'Technical education is necessary. It makes man efficient'.

Attention is drawn to the general comments made in the following section of this review on how studies like the above are to be executed with particular reference to methodology, analysis, interpretation and reporting of findings.

Devi, Prativa (1996). **Humanistic Education during Upanishadic Period**. Ph.D., Edu. Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.

The objectives of the study are to find out how far the *Upanishads* reflect a humanistic ideology of educational theory building from the renaissance onwards, to examine the text and formulate concepts that build up a philosophical base of education, and to bring together in one coherent view the ideas reflected by the humanistic psychologists of America in the field of education in 1960. The connotations, classification, numbers, authorship and authenticity of the eleven principal *Upanishads* were analysed in a historical context. Further analysis focused on the *Upanishadic* system of education, teacher-taught relation, curriculum, academic institutions, methods of teaching and women's education. The genesis and the growth of humanism from Hellenic age till the present time was also evaluated and present time education and *Upanishadic* ideology were compared. The findings are stated as: *Upanishadic* ideology emphasises 'Being' and self realisation as ultimate pursuits and education underscores the same. Similar objectives are reflected in Maslow's proposals. The study cites 396 references.

Although there have been earlier studies on the *Upanishadic* philosophy of education, the study adds a new dimension by placing it, in a comparative framework along with the work of the humanistic psychologists. The objectives of the study are clear and focused and the methodology philosophically sound. Such studies add to the understanding of our

philosophical heritage in the light of contemporary educational concerns.

Bharathy, D.Vijaya (1999). **A Comparative study of the educational philosophies of Swamy Vivekananda and John Dewey**. Ph.D., Edu. Nagarjuna University.

The study compares the educational philosophies of Vivekananda and Dewey and seeks to find out how far their educational ideals have found place in the National Policy on Education, 1986. The objectives of the study are: to analyse and compare the educational philosophies of Vivekananda and Dewey with reference to philosophy of life, concept and aims of education, methods of teaching and learning, role of the teacher, concepts of curriculum, discipline and values and to evaluate the two philosophies with reference to the NPE. The methodology adopted is qualitative analysis of primary and secondary sources.

The major outcomes of the study are: the two philosophies are most relevant to present day requirements. Vivekananda's vision of life is a blend of oriental and western culture, spiritual and material values, science and *Vedanta*, whereas Dewey's pragmatic philosophy based on experimentalism, science and democracy are the most suitable components of our education.

There is no philosophical rigour either in the statement of the objectives or in methodology or findings.

A CRITIQUE OF RESEARCHES IN PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

It is lamentable that there has been no improvement in the overall situation since the last survey. Up till 1988, a total of 130 doctoral studies relating to philosophy of education were reported in the surveys which amounts to 2.7% of the total researches in education. To this tally a paltry 10 more researches (doctoral studies) are added in the VI survey. What is disturbing is not just the decline in the number of studies over the years but the quality of the output. There is virtually no change in the 'trend' in the new researches reviewed for the present survey. Why, one could club together all the studies in philosophy of education reported in the IV, V

and VI surveys for the purpose of analysis as they, more or less, exhibit the same 'trends', defects and weaknesses. Accordingly the author wishes to reiterate some of his earlier observations on the state of philosophy of education research (1983, 1991 Fourth and Fifth Surveys of Educational Research).

Broadly speaking, researches produced so far fall into the following three types. This typology is fairly exhaustive to accommodate future researches in the field as well. It would therefore be worthwhile to examine the research features of these types from the point of view of how they have been addressed and the lessons that can be drawn from them.

Type I. The study of the educational philosophy/thoughts/ideas/practices of individual thinkers/systems

The "Study of the educational philosophy/ideas of..." type of researches have so far dominated the field, presenting a highly restricted paradigm of research in philosophy of education. The domination has been so debilitating that the field has remained largely uncharted considering the comprehensive range of problems that philosophy of education poses and its territorial vastness it inhabits. Moreover the themes chosen have been repetitive. *Gandhi, Tagore, Vivekananda* and *Upanishads* alone account for more than 70% of the studies in both the IV and V surveys. What is even more disturbing is the uniformly poor execution of the studies.

"To study the educational philosophy of..." does not mean mere collection, compilation of ideas or information. It is to organise them in terms of philosophical principles, to examine their philosophical pre-suppositions, to synthesise them into a coherent system, to present a consistent, cogent account of ideas. It is also to probe into basic assumptions and carry out evaluation and appraisal of ideas with reference to a set of norms, values and a frame of reference. One would expect from such a disciplined inquiry a consistent and coherent theory of education to emerge. The value of such studies would be enhanced if they are approached from the standpoint of a philosophical theory—a worldview, an epistemology, an ethical theory or an educational theory. The studies should not stop at the level

of mere descriptions but analyse, interpret and evaluate concepts, theories with reference to chosen criteria or framework. It is also inappropriate to hypothesise an educational philosophy where none exists and that too on the basis of a few scattered thoughts/ideas on education. Everyone who has said something or other on education does not qualify to be an educational philosopher. Another trend noticed is the obsession with the past, shutting out the inquiries related to ongoing happenings.

Type II. Thematic Studies

The "Study of the educational philosophy of..." type of researches, as already noted, does not exhaust the domain of philosophical inquiry and its characteristic concerns. In the last survey a refreshing development was reported, that of researchers turning their attention to the critical study of issues, themes, ideas and concepts shifting their focus away from *personalities and systems*. These included: *creativity, freedom, human nature, explanation, ideology*. The research done on these aspects cannot, again, compromise on methodological rigour and exacting standards of philosophical inquiry. The task involved is undoubtedly exciting and challenging and to carry it out effectively one should be well armed with the tools and techniques of philosophical inquiry. Also, the themes selected for study must both be philosophically significant and educationally relevant. Such research should contribute to deepening our understanding of educational theory and practice, for example, explanation of the epistemological rationale behind different pedagogical processes.

For one who is equipped with the necessary research tools—methodological and others – this type of research holds immense possibilities. A host of areas in current educational thinking and practice is crying out for philosophical enlightenment as illustrated in the last survey. To this list one may add: *Conceptual analysis of joyful learning, Education as a human right, Education as empowerment, Education and schooling, The knowledge aim in education and the knowledge society, Child as constructor of knowledge, Work as the medium of education, Justification of the common school, Religious education and education about religions*.

Type III. Comparative Studies

Comparative studies should specify the point of comparison and not use vague, omnibus expressions that lack specificity like 'ideas', 'thoughts', 'educational philosophy'. Comparative studies prove to be of value when the focus of comparison is a specific aspect of the educational philosophy of the thinkers that is of concern to the theory and practice of education. This could be an educational or philosophical concept like education, teaching, creativity, discipline, learning or a theme such as women's education, educational equality, nationalism in education. The focusing of comparison on some such specific aspect would also give the research a depth which would be lacking if the comparison is kept at a general and superficial level. For example, Singh, S. (1984, Ph.D., Edu. GNDU) has titled his research as *Comparative study of the concept of human nature propounded by educational theorists and revealed by psychological studies*. The object of comparison is stated as building up an integrated view of human nature on the basis of the meeting ground between educationists and psychologists provided by their findings. His identification of criteria for the selection of educational theorists and specific aspects of comparison indicate the conscious, systematic application of the philosophical and comparative method to his research.

Reporting of Philosophical Research

Philosophical research should exhibit semantic clarity, meaningfulness, consistency and rigour of thought, consciousness of assumptions and methodological awareness. However, studies reviewed so far generally exhibit a deplorable lack of rigour in the statement of topic, problem, objectives, scope and method. Objectives in most cases are diffused and not focused on the theme. As examples of elegantly stated topics, one may mention: *Approaches to educational theory - a philosophical probe*; *Art as a medium of education in Tagore*; *A critical study of the nature and development of human personality in ancient Indian thought*; *Humanism in the educational philosophy of Aurobindo*.

Reporting of research findings in philosophy must employ the proper philosophical idiom and

be at a level of generality and abstraction as befits philosophical research. Philosophical wisdom gained out of research activity may comprise increased and deepened understanding of, fresh insights into or new points of view on educational issues and problems. It may also include normative judgments and prescriptions for educational action. It is unfortunate that philosophical findings are presented as a set of factual statements and empirical generalisations which cannot be accepted as the end of philosophical inquiry. Even worse, many of the 'findings' are so commonplace and trivial as to evoke cynicism on the entire research endeavour.

Other Studies

Happily, there have been positive and encouraging developments in the field in the form of quality journal articles and reports of seminar deliberations. These are reviewed below:

I. Jackson, M.G. (2001). **Effective Environmental Education Needs 'New' Science**. *Indian Educational Review*, 37(2), 22-38.

The author's point is that environmental education as introduced in school textbooks reveals many contradictions and these contradictions cannot be removed without questioning the assumptions about current science and technology that school textbooks project. What is needed is a fundamental change in our current worldview. The author presents an alternative coherent worldview with a more effective set of working principles in the shape of 'new' science, systems science or ecological science.

The new paradigm claims that no system of knowledge is the absolute truth and that one must question all structures and evaluate them in terms of their practical consequences. In place of the mechanistic, deterministic view of the natural world the new science sees the system as real and not the parts. The parts are defined in terms of the role they play in the structure and functioning of the system in which they participate. The author offers a plausible scientific rationale and postulates the view that systems are living organisms to arrive at a coherent view of reality. He does not question

the epistemological basis of science but only proposes a new metaphysic of science. He also discusses the implications of the new science to teaching of basic sciences, applied sciences, economics, ethical considerations.

This is a very original and thought provoking piece of research in the philosophy of science with a special significance for education as it relates to curriculum and methodology of environmental education.

II. Kala, L. and Ramadas, Jayashree (2001). **History and Philosophy of Science, Cognitive Science and Science Education: Issues at the Interface.** *Indian Educational Review*, 37(2), 3-21.

The authors review some research relating philosophy of science and cognitive science with science education. The research trends are discussed under two categories: domain-specific issues related to the conceptual content of science (conceptual structure, conceptual change, constraints to learning, cross-cultural studies, language) and domain general related to conceptualisation of science-epistemological studies (nature of science, studies in reasoning and scientific thinking, coordination of theory and evidence).

The authors point out that since the 1960s, science education research and curriculum development have been subtly or explicitly influenced by theories of learning. Piaget's influence led to a shift from behaviourism to constructivism. When, by the 1970s, Piagetian stage theory was found inadequate, philosophy of science, specially the work of Popper, Kuhn, Lakatos and Toulmin gained currency in science education. Ideas such as theory-laden observations, paradigm shift and fruitfulness of theories seemed applicable to concept learning as also to domain-independent issues related with conceptions of science and of learning. Developments in cognitive science too contributed research paradigms and methods, including expert-novice studies, problem-solving and linguistic analysis. The authors argue that an awareness of these trends might help avoid scientism in science education, that the philosophy of perception and representation might guide research while work in the tradition of situated cognition might hold promise for a philosophy of action praxis.

This is a brilliant review and summing up of developments in the philosophy of science and the research responses it has triggered in curriculum and teaching methodologies of science.

III. Seminar on Value Education

A significant event for philosophy of education was the seminar on value education organised by the Indian Council of Philosophical Research in July, 1992. Its importance lay in that general philosophers addressed themselves to the issue of value education even while hitherto had been debated only within and by the "educational" community. Both the concept of value education and issues related to policy and practice were begging for rigorous logical and philosophical scrutiny and it was heartening that serious philosophical thought was bestowed on the topic in the seminar. The seminar debated conceptual and methodological issues as well as normative dimensions of the problem. The list of papers presented at the seminar is provided under References.

IV. Chatrath, K. J. S. Ed. (1998). **Education for Human Rights and Democracy.** Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla.

The volume contains papers presented at the workshop organised by the UNESCO in collaboration with the IAS, Shimla in 1995. Of particular interest in the present context are the *Welcome Address* by Mrinal Miri and *Education for Democracy in India* by Sundara Rajan.

V. *Journal of the Krishnamurti Schools.* An In-House Journal published by the Krishnamurti Foundation India (KFI), Chennai. Editor Ahalya Chari.

Krishnamurti, a great thinker of modern times, was a radical educator too in that his profound insights challenged conventional knowledge and wisdom on education. While Krishnamurti has been a favourite 'topic' among educational researchers it is sad that the quality of research so far on the philosopher and his educational thoughts has been disappointing. Future research would stand to benefit immensely from the publications and other activities of the KFI.

The Journal of the Krishnamurti Schools is a treasure house of quality readings on a host of educational issues – theoretical and concerning school practice – from the Krishnamurti perspective. A selection from the contents of Vol.1 (July, 1997) and Vol.2 (July, 1998) gives an idea of the range and variety of issues discussed in the Journal: *The Three Great Arts in Education, Krishnamurti and the Scientific Temper, Observation, Leisure and Learning, A True Art of Learning: Dialogue in Education, An Experiential Approach to Language Learning* (all from Vol. 1) and *Comparison and Education, The Insight Curriculum, Knowing and Being–The Two Aspects of Education, Media and Young Minds, Creativity in Grammar Classes, And I thought I was teaching Chemistry!* (all from Vol. 2)

VI. *Concerning Education*, Report of the Krishnamurti Birth Centenary Educational Conference held in 1995 published by the KFI.

The conference was intended to generate an enquiry and initiate a dialogue among progressive educators on fundamentals in education in the context of the crises facing human societies. The booklet reflects the concerns and perspectives shared by the participants on different themes – *Education for an Integrated Life, What is Learning?, The Child, School and Society: Educating for Responsibility, Education and the Religious Mind, Breaking New Ground, Creating an Atmosphere of Learning, The Challenge of Our Times*. The Publication stands out as a significant contribution to educational philosophy.

NEEDED RESEARCH IN PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

With most of the terrain largely remaining unexplored from the research point of view, it may look odd to devote a separate paragraph to elaborate on *needed* research in the field. This is being done in order to draw attention to two of the highly topical issues that future education has to seriously contend with: the knowledge aim in education and the 'value orientation' of education. Central to the two themes are the fundamental philosophical categories of 'knowledge' and 'value'. A broad contour of the

research terrain relating to these issues may be outlined as follows:

Knowledge

Knowledge has reigned supreme as an aim of education since historic times. Whatever may be its status as an aim, ultimate or instrumental, it has dominated the ends and processes of education even to the extent of education being considered as synonymous with knowledge. No wonder, it has prompted generations to ponder over, from time to time, on such questions as: How important is knowledge as an educational good? What kind of knowledge should education transmit and What teaching learning processes are involved in such a task? These are topical questions today in the context of the new 'knowledge society' and information order that everyone is excited about.

With specific reference to the emerging context, some of the questions that may be raised are: What does the knowledge society and the new information order *mean* for school and teacher education? How important is knowledge as an aim of education in the new context? What is knowledge and how is it related to 'education', 'information', 'understanding'? To what extent shall educational goals and objectives subject themselves to demands of technology? How shall one deal with value conflicts arising from the ethos of the IT society – efficiency, utility, economy – and pursuit of knowledge as an intrinsic end? What shall 'liberal education' mean in the new information order?

Philosophical discussion of knowledge in the present context could cover the conceptual, logical and normative issues outlined above and pave the way for the articulation of a new philosophy of education as would appropriately respond to the demands and challenges of the knowledge society.

Value

The relationship between education and values is the most talked about issue in Indian education today. Successive Commissions and Committees on education, national policies and curricular frameworks have pleaded for 'value orientation' of education through appropriate interventions.

Although there is general acceptance that education has to have a thrust on the development of values, clarity eludes a host of related issues. What exactly does value education mean? What are its objectives? What values are to be inculcated in education and in what manner? What role has the teacher to play in the process?—have become contentious issues. Diverse and divergent views circulated on the subject and the situation is a matter of confusions. There is a polarity in the views because either too much or too little is read into the claim of 'value education'. The discussion is muddled on several counts. There is much, too much of an expectation from education which as such is not an autonomous system. Many of the solutions offered to meet the value crisis appear too pat and simplistic and are not based on what it means to 'value educate' and the complex social context in which the educational sub-system has to function. Some of the proposals are feared to carry hidden agendas, for what constitutes the content of value education remains contentious. More than all, the discourse is basically flawed as it overlooks the fact that values are integral to the educational process where as it treats them as an 'add on'.

The point of this criticism is to draw attention to the need for a philosophical examination of an entire range of issues having bearing on the theme, its proper conceptualisation and articulation of a rationale. The phrase 'value education' has a very wide connotation and any attempt to map its meaning would involve critical consideration of several issues, conceptual and logical (the relationship of 'education' and 'value') and empirical and contingent (the substance and content of value education). One of the tasks of philosophy of education is to isolate these different elements, analyse and clarify the different conceptual and logical issues underlying the debate and clear the way for the articulation of a rationale for policies and programmes in this crucial national concern.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Philosophy of education is a vibrant field of academic activity in the English speaking world.

Even a casual web search will point to the dynamism of the field and the variety of activities with which it is abuzz. There are philosophy of education societies with their periodic conferences and seminars. The societies through their yearbooks and journals provide an effective forum for dialogue, discussion and dissemination of new ideas—*Journal of Philosophy of Education*, Blackwell Publishers Ltd., Oxford, UK and Boston, <http://www.bids.ac.uk/journals/browse/bpl/jope> *Journal of the Encyclopedia of Philosophy of Education*, Online publication in English and Portuguese. (<http://www.educacao.pro.br/journal.htm>), *Journal of Phenomenology and Education* <http://www.unibo.it/encyclopaideia> *Educational Theory*, University of Illinois, quarterly journal of philosophy of education, <http://www.ed.uiuc.edu> and a good number of web sites and pages and on-line articles.

Although philosophy of education continues to be under the grip of the analytical paradigm the trend of looking at educational problems from other perspectives like phenomenology and hermeneutics is also in evidence. For example, J.D.Clarkson, in *Phenomenological foundations for Education: Essences of a language for research and practice* criticises research practice based on the empirical and conceptual paradigms and argues for the adoption of a phenomenological standpoint (<http://www.educacao.pro.br/journal.htm>). As to where philosophy of education stands and where it might be going (with respect to its concerns) at the millennium Randall Curren (*Philosophy of Education at the Millennium*, Philosophy of Education Yearbook, 1999, <http://www.ed.uiuc.edu>) points to the expanding common ground shared by philosophy of education as it is practiced in schools of education and philosophy of education as it is practiced in philosophy departments. Current growth in philosophy of education is concentrated in ethics, moral psychology and political philosophy. The future of philosophy of education depends on its engagement with the ongoing debates about the curriculum, pedagogy, educational testing and measurement, school safety and the moral climate of schools, educational priorities, access, equity, choice and the like. The following list of

article titles picked from journals and the PES Yearbook may give one an idea of the kind of problems that have engaged philosophers of education in the West.

- Caring as a Democratic Virtue – Maughn Gregory
- Social Constructivism and Mathematics Education: Some Comments–Michael R. Matthews
- Test Reliability: A Practical Exemplification of Ordinary Language Philosophy–Robert H. Ennis
- Universal Values and Particular Identities in Anti-Racist Education–Lawrence Blum
- Self-Esteem and the Confidence to Fail–Cigman
- Four Philosophical Perspectives on School Inspection: An Introduction– Mclaughlin T.H.
- The Language of Indigenous Others: The Case of Maori in New Zealand–James D. Marshall
- Integrating Philosophies of Mind and of Education–Kenneth R. Westphalls
- Habermas, Arendt, and the Tension between Authority and Democracy in Educational

Standards: The Case of Teaching Reform–Aaron Schutz and Pamela A. Moss

- Is Teaching a Skill?–David Carr

CONCLUSION

Research in philosophy of education both in terms of quantity and quality, presents a sorry spectacle today. In all aspects – as a subject of academic study, as a foundational input in teacher education programmes, as an area of scholarly research and as a perspective for intellectual dialogue and debate – philosophy of education has suffered neglect. That this should be so in a country known for its hoary philosophical traditions is indeed ironic. The problem with philosophy of education, however, is not something unique to it. It is the general problem of low quality inputs – students, teachers, curricula faced mostly by liberal and humanistic studies especially in institutions of higher learning. This does not mean rationalising the status quo. It is only a reminder to the academian to rethink ways and means of checking this downward slide and restore to philosophy of education its rightful place in teacher education and educational studies.

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- In search of a moral epistemological stance** by Rakesh Chandra,
- Towards a philosophy of value education** by Madhuri Sondhi
- What does it mean to 'value educate'?** by C. Seshadri.