

Significance of Schools of Philosophy in Teaching Learning Process

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Abstract: The process of teaching learning plays an important role in shaping and modification of behaviour of the learners. The teacher as a guide and facilitator in the teaching learning process also plays a significant role in shaping the behaviour of the students. Moreover, Students come with their own ideology and perception in the classroom. Accommodating various ideologies of the learner and simultaneously maintaining classroom management and effective teaching may seem like a major challenge. In the present context, there is a need to overcome all these classroom challenges for better teaching and learning of the students. If the teacher is unable to understand the ideology and the perception of the students, it directly or indirectly negatively impacts the achievement and behaviour of the students. Without knowing the ideology of the students the teacher cannot teach effectively and will not be able to manage the classroom properly. Therefore, for effective management of class and effective teaching, a teacher must know about the various schools of philosophy. Thus, the paper articulates the relationship between philosophy and education with reference to the need for inclusion of philosophy in teacher training programs. The current paper may be helpful to the teachers, teacher trainees and teacher educators to understand the various types of ideology of the students for effective management of the class and better teaching.

Keywords: learning, process, philosophy, significance, teaching.

1. Introduction

Humans possess a remarkable ideology of diverse ways of living, which is often guided by an unending quest to lead an ideal way of life. Often our actions, thoughts, beliefs systems, the way we socialise and things we give importance to are guided by certain philosophical considerations. There is no aspect of our life that remains untouched from these philosophical underpinnings. The field of education is no exception. Philosophy being the mother of all disciplines provides metaphysics, epistemological and axiological value to the discipline of education.

The deliberation on the aims, curriculum, and methods of teaching, discipline and role of the teacher-learner of education is deeply dependent on these philosophical thoughts.

Above all, the classroom emerges as an important space where we see the convergence of philosophical ideas and actual pedagogical practices. There's an old maxim by John Dewey, "classroom is a miniature of society", it means students in a classroom come from diverse socio-political segments of the society having different perspectives and ideology towards life.

Each student would carry their individual philosophy to the classroom. Here, the role of the teacher as a guide or a facilitator becomes very important. An ideal teacher would be one who tries to understand the individual philosophy of each and every student. In order to do so, empathy is a foremost trait a teacher might require.

Traditionally, the responsibility of the teacher was perceived to be constrained to only delivery of content of their respective pedagogy. This perception has changed over the years, especially with the implementation of progressive and liberal policies. According to the *National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005*, a teacher should work as a facilitator, possess a multidimensional approach towards learning and ensure that the interest/needs of the learner are fulfilled. The task of ensuring that new teachers have all these qualities is on the institutions and colleges offering degree courses in education across the country. One of the major challenges we face today is that even though we are able to produce well qualified teachers, there seems to be a gap between the teacher and the learner. Teachers often perceive the learner as having no prior knowledge or experiences of their own and thus knowingly or unknowingly indoctrinate their own ideas upon the learner. Most importantly, the learner is seen as devoid of any philosophy of their own and thus it is not considered necessary to understand the learner at all.

In order to normalise this practice of knowing the learner, the teachers should be trained early on while they pursue their training to become a teacher. However, this is easier said than done. In a given situation, the teacher is expected to manage a classroom with at least 30 students, which only makes it difficult to understand each and every child in that classroom. This enormous task would appear somewhat simpler if the teacher is already familiar with the general ideas of philosophy. This makes it extremely important for the teacher trainees to immerse oneself in the study of educational philosophy in their B.Ed. course. The clear understanding of the discipline in the context of education would help the teacher to understand the thoughts and needs of the learner and provide a progressive vision of the world.

This gap can only be fixed if more emphasis is laid on 'knowing the learner' who enters the classroom as the primary responsibility of a teacher. Only when this task is fulfilled with

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utmost integrity, can a teacher plan out how and what is to be learned.

2. Need of the Study

Most of the teachers are too concerned with finishing the prescribed syllabus, which leaves very limited space for the students to go beyond the book and indulge in the act of thinking. More importantly, we tend to forget the fact that every child could be a philosopher. To overcome this problem, the New Education Policy 2020 suggests that teaching learning methods should be inquiry based, discovery based, discussion-based and analytical in nature. As well as NCF-2005 also emphasise on learning without burden. This would increase the urge to learn in children and improve their problem solving skills. While it sounds very progressive on paper, this is only possible by creating a conducive environment where the learners are encouraged to 'think and raise questions' within our classrooms. The role and orientation of the teacher plays a vital role in achieving this scenario. Only when the teacher is able to understand the perception and general philosophy of a child, he/she is able to motivate the child to think and engage in inquiry to 'know their world'. In order to build that understanding, the teacher should be exposed to various philosophical thoughts and deliberate on the issues related to knowledge, skills, values, methods of teaching and their role as a teacher etc. Philosophy at its core can be described as an act of 'thinking about thinking'. So that the schools of thoughts help in developing the rapport between students and teachers. On the basis of it the teacher may achieve the predetermined objective of the education and success to making the teaching learning process enjoyable and interesting.

3. Education and Schools of Philosophy

In the most general sense, there are certain established schools of philosophy. These are Idealism, Naturalism, Pragmatism, Realism and Existentialism. Let's have a quick glimpse of these schools of philosophy in the context of education. Idealism is the oldest philosophy born out of Plato's "*Theory of ideas*", which is predominantly associated with the world of ideas. It emphasizes on the reality of idea instead of matter. It seeks truth in ideas i.e. idea is the only reality, nothing exists beyond the idea. As per this philosophy, ultimate truth is spiritualism. It reflects idea as a soul/power/reality. It can rightly be said that it believes in *Satyam Shivam Sundaram*. The material world is characterized by change, uncertainty and instability. But ideas are eternal and permanent comprising of the universal truth. The epistemological knowledge is derived from the mind. The knowledge of truth or ultimate reality is not possible through observation, experimentation or reasoning etc. They advocate the use of intuition for knowing the ultimate. However, they use both inductive and deductive logic to understand the physical world.

Idealist axiology believes that perfect goodness cannot be found in the material world. In the educational context idealism philosophy emphasizes the various factors of education, a teacher plays the supreme and glorious role in teaching-

learning. The students adhere to the instructions given by the teacher, making the teaching-learning process as teacher centred. Therefore, the learning involves only the delivery of the content that the teacher knows and it generally involves the lecture method. In this ideology, the curriculum includes various subjects such as ethics, aesthetics, values, maths, sciences and social sciences etc.

On the other hand, *Naturalism* is the opposite of the idealist school of thought. This ideology propounded by *Rousseau*, believes in child centred education and accepts the material world. It believes that ultimate reality is nature, nothing exists beyond nature. Those who advocate naturalism believe that man is born free but society puts "shackles" onto him and takes away the freedom. It believes that the truth can only be derived from nature and not through revelation. In educational context, Naturalism highlights the value of scientific knowledge, through specific observation, experimentation and generalization. It simply means that nature is the best teacher and learner learns best through his/her own experiences. Instincts, drives and impulses need to be expressed rather than repressed. The child/learner occupies the central role and the system of education is moulded according to the nature of the child. Hence, many of the progressive methods of teaching such as experimental method, play method, Heuristic method, Montessori method, learning by doing become a part of the pedagogical practice. The role of a teacher is that of a facilitator, guide and observer. The teacher should not impose anything upon the child. It gives full freedom to students i.e. students need to be self-disciplined. The only way the child will learn is by experiencing the consequences of his/her own actions. In terms of curriculum, it includes physical sciences, social sciences and subjects related to nature.

Finally, Pragmatism derives its origin from a Greek word '*Pragma*' meaning Activity or Practice or Action. Charles Sanders Pierce is given the credit of development of pragmatic philosophy, along with later 20th century contributors, William James and John Dewey. This philosophy is different from all other philosophies. While other philosophies talk about the past or future, pragmatism stands in the present. Pragmatist axiology believes that there is nothing good or bad. The value of anything is determined solely in terms of its usefulness in achieving some end. Values are not predetermined and human experiences are the main determinants of values. In the context of education, Pragmatic means dealing with matters according to practical significance or immediate importance. It says education should be teaching students the things that are practical for life and encourages them to grow into better people. It does not believe in predetermined goals rather determines the goals according to the needs and interests of the child. It focuses on individual differences, and believes in respecting every individual's capacities and areas of interests.

Thus, these are some of the general schools of thought which are considered important in the context of education. A sound knowledge of these philosophies would help the teacher in establishing the connection with students and make the teaching-learning process more effective. A teacher needs to understand the ideologies/thoughts of each and every student.

For this a teacher must have the knowledge of the general schools of thought in philosophy. This does not imply that one should restrict oneself within these given schools of philosophy.

4. Role of Teachers in Teaching Learning Process

The teacher facilitates guides, motivates, and inspires students to participate in the teaching learning process. The most important role of a teacher is creating relevant educational experiences for students and making them tackle real-world challenges. Teachers have an active role in encouraging students to develop independent and critical thinking. Students look up to their teachers, it is essential the teacher has ideas that excite them. For this it is necessary to have a good connection between the students and the teacher. Without good connection, the teacher is unable to make the teaching learning process effective. Students come in the class with a different ideology, so that teacher does not know how they will react in different classroom situations. Therefore, a teacher must learn about various ideologies of the students for interesting teaching. This is where philosophy comes into play, since it helps them to grasp a diverse set of views. A teacher should be flexible in his/her ideology because he deals with the different students with different ideology in the classroom. If the teacher is not flexible with their ideology then may not teach effectively. When a teacher enters a classroom, his ideology should be a blend of ideologies so that he/she can connect with each student. Moreover, the Kothari commission in 1964 recognized the importance of the teacher's role in the success of the country's education system. It recognised teachers as the backbone of the education system and advocates for giving them enough academic freedom. Furthermore, in the NCF 2005, the role of the teacher needs to be of the facilitator, learner, counsellor and innovator of children's learning in a manner that helps them to construct knowledge. However, such diverse roles necessitate a thorough understanding of curriculum, subject matter, and pedagogy, as well as the community, school structure, and management. As a result, a teacher who has studied educational philosophy and effectively trained will be able to perceive the problem from the student's point of view, as being in their shoes makes a teacher less judgmental and better prepared to deal with challenges. New Education Policy 2020 recognized the necessity for teachers to receive training in both high-quality content and methodology so that teachers may teach using the child-centered approach. Teachers will learn and recognize new innovative teaching methods in their classrooms that will improve the teaching-learning process.

5. Relevance of Schools of Philosophy in Teaching Learning Process

Ross has beautifully explained this point, when he says, "Philosophy and education are two sides of the same coins where the former is the contemplative side while the latter is the active side (Thompson, 2001 p. 45). Where the existence of one is dependent on the other. Every person has his or her own

understanding, carries their own ideology and therefore one must keep in mind that separating it from learner in the classroom would mean denying thoughts and ideologies of the learner and the teacher. Through the study of philosophy, a teacher will be able to develop a well-maintained curriculum, methodology and various aspects of relation between the teacher and the pupil. Philosophy explains and provides a constructive framework for the teacher to act and negotiate with different ideologies within a classroom. A sound knowledge of philosophy encourages the teacher to facilitate students to think from diverse perspectives and simultaneously respect each other's opinion.

The relevance of philosophy and teaching can also be related to the etymology of these words. The word 'philosophy' has been derived from Greek word meaning 'love for wisdom' while 'teaching' has been derived from the old English word 'Tæcan' meaning 'to show the way and to guide. Since the ultimate purpose of knowledge is to generate wisdom, the relation between teaching and philosophy is also visible through the meaning of the two words. Philosophy and teaching thus, can be stated to support each other and help in running the teaching-learning process smoothly. It is impossible to study these two in isolation. Therefore, the best way forward for a better classroom lies in the acceptance of thoughts and looking forward to reaching new heights.

6. Conclusion

Individuals owe different ideologies. Teaching-Learning process is crucial to form the basis and clarification of ideologies for which a teacher must master in understanding diverse ideologies. Since students come from diverse socio-political backgrounds having different perspectives towards life, the teacher should be able to analyze these various ideologies and encourage students to think independently and rationally. Philosophy of education or in education, not only impacts teaching-learning process but also helps in accommodating individual differences and establishing a sense of cooperation amongst students. Therefore, understanding philosophy is important for educators so that they can develop a strong individual philosophy and gain more awareness of the philosophies of their students. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 also emphasises on the same by stating that "a teacher should work as a facilitator and should have the knowledge of various approaches".

With the understanding of the individual philosophies of the students, a teacher can adapt to better teaching-learning strategies, help students improve themselves and ultimately influence the present teaching-learning process in a much more effective manner. When the teacher is able to understand the perception and general philosophy of a child, he/she will be able to motivate the child to think and engage in inquiry to 'know their world' and find their individuality.

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