

Inclusive Education in the Context of Physical Education

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I. Introduction

Different educationists, scholars and philosophers put forward different aims of education in view of various ideals and needs. Knowledge of these various aims is very essential to a teacher educator or a teacher.

A. Knowledge Aim

Many philosophers like Socrates, Aristotle, Dante, Bacon propounded knowledge as an important aim of education. As per these idealistic thinkers, the individual develops his individuality and attains fair amount of happiness in his life. Hence, knowledge aim has a prominent place in the field of education.

In narrower sense, 'knowledge aim' means 'knowledge for the sake of knowledge'. As per the protagonists, education is that knowledge which only the scholars know. Experiences gained in day to day activities of life are not taken as knowledge. Therefore, bookish knowledge is eagerly sought for and granted a very high in society. In its wider sense, knowledge aim means 'mental development' — which means thinking, reasoning, discrimination, judgment and memory, should come under a discipline. Such knowledge gives insight to judge between what is proper and what is improper. So many educationists stress upon knowledge for 'mental development' instead of only 'knowledge for the sake of knowledge'.

Arguments Against the Aim Some scholars have advanced the arguments against knowledge aim on the basis that knowledge aim on the basis that knowledge alone cannot lead to the complete development of an individual. They rather say that physical development is also essential because a healthy mind lives in healthy body. Knowledge can only be a means to some ends. To make it an end in itself will lead to artificiality, knowledge aim emphasizes merely book learning. Rather, education should develop intelligence, understanding and insight. According to Lee — knowledge without understanding is foolishness, useless without planning, madness without kindness and death without religion.

B. Cultural Development Aim

A few scholars hold that the aim of education should be culturising an individual. But the fact of the matter is that the word culture has been interpreted differently in different countries at different times. In some countries, it means only a high degree of efficiency in a few languages. Somewhere it is interpreted in terms of ways of living and varieties of entertainment and also standard of fine arts in society. But cultural development aim of education includes the inculcation of noble ideas, attitudes and pattern of behaviour.

Arguments against the Aim As said above, culture is a very broad concept and means various things to various people. Thus, either culture means so many things or very limited items according to one perspective. Nothing is universally accepted whereas education should develop the total personality of the child.

C. Character Development Aim

Many educationists emphasize character development aim of education. Herbart is the most prominent figure who speaks of the character building as the main aim of all education. He says that a child's innate tendencies have to be purified and moulded into desirable channels of moral conduct and health attitudes.

Arguments against the Aim The main drawback of this aim is that the definition of character is not certain. Contradictions and confusion plague the clear decision about this moral concept. It has been experienced that persons passing good character despise others as low and mean, generally. Thus, character development cannot be the only aim of education. Livelihood is also as essential as character formation.

D. Vocational Aim

A few educationists opine that the aim of education should be vocational. Such education is useless if it makes the individual a parasite on others even for his fulfilling the basic needs in life. So the vocational aim of education stresses upon the problem of livelihood — aim is called as Bread and Butter Aim, Blue Jacket Aim or White Collar Aim also.

Arguments against the Aim It is true that vocational aim fulfils the physical needs of the individual, but it is also true that it ignores his mental and spiritual development. Vocational education often leads conflicts, jealousies and competitions which harm society. Real education should enable the individual to make the best use of his leisure hour and mere vocational pursuit kill the real joy of life which comes from pursuing fine arts.

E. Harmonious Development Aim

The main aim of this approach to education is based on the psychological foundation. It says that to develop one's individuality in a balanced way needs developing one's innate potentialities harmoniously. Rousseau and Pestilozzi are the chief supporters of this theory.

Argument against the Aim The meaning of harmonious development aim is not very clear. Harmonious development of all individuals is impossible. This is because each child has his own distinct innate tendencies, and more often it is found that in spite of best efforts, an individual progresses in the area of his interest only. This aim is not practical, because no country can provide all sorts of education to all children in all fields.

F. Physical Development Aim

The main theme of this paper is devoted to place emphasize on the physical development of children. According to this aim education should be so organized as it develops sound and handsome physique of all children. The state of Sparta in ancient Greece kept his aim in the forefront of its educational system. The popular educationist Plato also kept this aim in his scheme of education. The great naturalist philosopher Rousseau also prescribed a scheme according to natural surroundings which make the body and its organs healthy, robust and efficient. Emphasizing this aim Rabelais emphatically speaks — "without health life is not life, it

is only a state of languor and suffering, an image of death.”

Argument for the Aim Physical robustness keeps an individual fit, active and joyful physically strong citizens make their country strong. Dr. Johnson is of the opinion that — “To preserve health is a moral and religious duty, for health is the basis of all social virtues.”

Arguments Against the Aim In arguments against this approach of physical development we can say that it leads to the neglect of mental development. A life which is devoted only to physical development is narrow and limited. The aim of life is much higher than mere physical development. After the attainment of physical power an individual becomes proud and tyrannical. Such power intoxication creates conflicts and moral degradation. Religious activities are neglected by overzealous devotion to physical progress. Only one-sided development does not meet the needs of total life.

Besides, there are other aims like Leisure Utilization Aim, the complete Living Aim, Adjustment Aim, Self-expression as Aim and Self-realization Aim of education.

It has been observed that different philosophies and ideologies were prevalent at different times and in different countries. In other words as was the need and situation, so was the education organized to meet those needs.

II. What Modern Educationists Say

The aims of education keep changing and this change is natural, or else the process of education will stagnate and decay modern educationists believe that all inclusive aim is an essential need of modern times. From the above discussion is abundantly clear that each and every aim has its own merits and demerits. Each aim develops only one aspect of individuality. Under these circumstances, for full and complete development of personality, we need an all embracing and all inclusive aim of education.

But the author of his paper would like to emphasize, among other aspects and aims of the comparative worth and value of physical education as far as the middle part of an English proverb says ‘if health is lost, something is lost’, therefore, health aspect of students cannot be compromised amid the different schools of thought of different educationists. Three cheers for health.