CHAPTER-7

NATURE AND FUTURE OF EDUCATION AS A DISCIPLINE

7.1.0 Introduction

In the last chapter, characteristics of education as a discipline were analysed on different criteria of a discipline and it was found that education fulfills most of the criteria and therefore it should be recognised as a discipline. However, it was also found that in spite of being a discipline its nature is different from most of the other well-known disciplines. In its disciplinary qualities, education cannot be compared with other well-established disciplines like psychology, physics, philosophy, and history etc. As a result, disputes on its disciplinary nature arise and it becomes difficult to decide the academic status suitable for education. On the one hand, education comprises qualities to be recognised as a discipline; on the other hand, it has many qualities, which set it apart from other disciplines or sometimes beyond a usual disciplinary frame. These unique and unusual qualities of education result in many controversies related to its academic status. Therefore, it is necessary to explore its uniqueness as a discipline which in spite of its disciplinary identity sets it aside from other disciplines. In this chapter, different controversies related to its disciplinary status and the reasons of these controversies will be discussed. An effort will be done to find out the hurdles to establish education as a respectable academic study in spite of its eligibility to be recognized as a distinct academic field. The chapter will also explore the nature and uniqueness of education as a discipline. In addition, the future of education as a discipline will also be discussed.

7.2.0 Controversies related with disciplinary status of education

As discussed above due to different controversies discipline of education finds it difficult to have a satisfactory status in the academic world. Nature of this discipline is so distinct that different scholars give different academic status to it. Even after accepting it a discipline academicians find it difficult to place it in an appropriate
disciplinary category. Some of the main controversies related to academic status of education are mentioned below:

1. Discipline- non discipline
2. Established discipline- emerging discipline
3. Professional study -academic study
4. Theoretical discipline –practical discipline
5. Pure discipline- applied discipline
6. Art - science
7. Education - teacher education
8. Interdisciplinary/ Multidisciplinary/Transdisciplinary
9. A colony/ an empire/ discipline of disciplines

In the last two chapters, the discipline-non discipline debate was discussed in detail and it was found that education should be considered as a discipline. However, there are many reasons due to which this and other disputes regarding its disciplinary status arise. Generally, academicians deny accepting it a discipline and if they accept then controversies related to its disciplinary nature arise. In the coming section possible reasons responsible for such disagreements will be discussed.

7.3.0 Reasons for disputes on disciplinary status of education

Several reasons for non-considering education as a discipline may be given. J. Walton (1963)\(^1\) identified some of such reasons due to which education is not considered as a respectable academic discipline: 1. we know very little about it. 2. It lacks a system of organization and methods of inquiry, or 3. It is adequately studied in other disciplines. These arguments might be justified during beginning of sixties when institutional study of education just began spreading its branches. However, now we have a systemic body of educational knowledge and we have realized that methods of inquiry are equally shared by all the disciplines. It has also been established that although educationally important knowledge is widely scattered among other disciplines but no discipline can be alternative of study of education. These all arguments were discussed in detail in the previous chapter. In spite of such defending arguments there are some serious ambiguities associated with the study of education which directly or indirectly question its disciplinary identity. The probable causes of such controversies are discussed below:
7.3.1 Emergence of study of education from teacher education

Emergence of education as a discipline took place as a necessity of theoretical base for teacher education. This is the main reason of considering education as only a practical activity like teaching having no theoretical inputs. Generally, education is considered as an extension of teacher education only having no other scope beyond it. However, the two areas are different in objectives and scope. Teacher education is directly concerned with inculcating and improving teaching skills, while education, although developed from teacher education, now developed as a wide field of study encompassing not only teacher education but also other fields of study in which there is need to increase awareness and disciplined study like woman education, environmental education, special education etc. The domain of education includes studying and researching the whole process of education for diverse groups and systems.

7.3.2 Confusion between education as a process and as a subject of academic study

A fundamental characteristic that differentiates education from other disciplines is that, the term education has multifaceted meaning. The term, on the one hand, denotes the process or system of educating and learning or imparting knowledge, on the other hand, it refers to the study of this process or system. In short, studying education refers to the study of ‘how to practice education’. The main problem faced in studying education is the general consideration of study of education and process of education as the similar concepts. This confusion has a negative impact on the growth of the study of education. Generally, process of education dominates the study of education in all its aspects. Whenever aims, objectives and principles are formulated for the study of education these get confused with aims, objectives and process of education. However, it is true that process and system of education determine the study of education at a particular time but their aims, objectives and principles can never be similar but interrelated. For e.g., all round development of personality is an objective of process of education. On the other hand, ‘how and through whom this development can be accomplished’ is the matter of concern of study of education.
Research in education, in general, also focuses on improving the process of education. Hardly, researches are done to enrich study of education. Government policies, educational seminars, conferences and community of scholars generally emphasize improvement of the educational process at different levels and not its study. There is an urgent need to understand that the first step to improve the process of education at different levels, is improving and enriching the ‘study of this process’ i.e., the discipline of education. Other disciplines (excepting few as medicine, engineering, journalism and other similar ones) do not face such a situation where their practice dominates their study. A major purpose of the study of education is to understand and improve the various systems of education. Therefore, if improvement in the study of education is emphasized it would automatically improve the process of education.

7.3.3 Lack of systematization and organization in the study of education

Institutional study of a discipline provides scope for the advancement and growth of the discipline. However, there is serious disorganization in the academic study of education. In India, the academic study of education starts at 10+2 level in some of the state boards. At graduate and postgraduate levels, two types of courses are popular in education- separately for professional and academic study. There are serious disputes among educationists in the categorization of education as a subject of study. The major controversies related to academic study of education are discussed below:

7.3.3.1 Education as a subject of liberal study and professional study

Study of education in general intends to develop professionals for different systems of education. The main professional courses prevalent in education are B.Ed. and M.Ed. (both of 1 or 2 years duration in most of the institutions). The products of these courses are employed as teachers, teacher educators, officers, researchers, policy makers, and curriculum developers by the schools, Boards of School Education, Directorates and Inspectorates of Education, national and state level institutions like NCERT, SCERTs, NCTE, and RIE, teacher training colleges and institutes. However, two more graduate and postgraduate level programmes i.e., B.A. (3 years) and M.A. (2 years) in Education are also recognised as programmes of liberal and academic study in education. Due to its practice oriented nature and course duration B.Ed. may
be regarded as different form B.A. in Education in its objectives and scope. On the other hand, there are nominal differences in the postgraduate degrees of M.Ed. and M.A. in Education. Except course duration (M.Ed. is generally one or two years in duration while M.A. education is strictly of two years), there is not any major difference in the objectives and curriculum of the two programmes. Both the degrees are generally considered equivalent for most of the job positions. National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE), 2010\(^2\) also points out the similarity of the two programmes in these words, ‘M.Ed. is indistinguishable from the 2-year M.A. in Education (considered a programme of liberal, academic study of education) because in actual course design and content, the two do not differ on any sound academic rationale. The existence of two parallel post-graduate programmes in education has created an anomalous and confusing situation and has raised questions of equivalence.’ As points out by NCFTE 2010, there are serious confusion of existence of two similar programmes in nature, aims and scope. This ambiguity generally defended by regarding M.Ed. as a programme of professional nature and M.A. in education as liberal or academic study of education. However, the M.Ed. programme seriously lacks inputs of professional nature when compared to other professional programmes like medicine and engineering. Further provision of both professional and liberal study raises questions on the nature of study of education. It is generally asked, whether study of education is a professional study or a liberal study and if it is both why not there is any difference in two types of programmes.

7.3.3.2 Place of education in different faculties of universities

There is also disagreement in placing education in different faculties of universities. In our country, some universities have separate faculties and schools of education (for e.g. University of Lucknow, Banaras Hindu University, and Delhi University etc.), while some place education in arts faculty (for e.g., Allahabad University). M.S. University of Baroda has a common faculty of education and psychology. In most of the universities, study of education started in departments of philosophy or psychology. After realizing the distinct nature of subject, most of the universities established separate faculties of education. This is not a matter of much concern in which faculty study of education should be placed, as it is the matter of administrative convenience.\(^3\) However, at least there should be agreement in different universities in
placing education in the same faculty. This ambiguity again poses questions on the nature of education as a subject of study.

7.3.3.3 Nature of education: Art or Science?

C.P. Snow, 1959\(^4\) identified two cultures in the academic world, ‘the literary intellectuals’ (as he called them) and of the natural scientist. In his view, the mutual suspicion and incomprehension between these two cultures in turn had damaging consequence for solving the world’s problems. He believed that the curricula of schools and universities should be arranged to give people an adequate education in both branches of knowledge. Education is such a subject where Snow’s two cultures cross the boundaries of each other and have an alliance between them to grow together. However, vested interests of some scholars still raise the issue of the nature of education as an art or science. It is assumed by them that developing a discipline of educational sciences would positively influence their professional growth. However, by nature education is both a science and an art. Nature of education as a science or art has been discussed in the following paragraphs:

Science is a systematic and precise body of knowledge in a particular field of the world. It seeks to discover the general laws regulating the phenomena in that field through observation and experiments.\(^5\) As per this definition, education must be taken as a science since it is a systematic body of knowledge accumulated through ages by observation and experiments. It has theories and laws for arrangement and organization of educational activities. The latest trend "educational technology" consists of all media, methods and materials being utilized for optimum development of education. That is, results of different sciences are being utilized in education for the growth and development of the individual as well as the society.

Similarly, art is used in two senses (i) one for producing something beautiful, e.g., singing, dancing, painting and (ii) another for applying knowledge in realizing some useful ends, e.g. surgery, engineering.\(^6\) As per this meaning, education should be regarded as an art since it attempts to make human activities beautiful and meaningful. It utilizes the knowledge and techniques of its own and other disciplines like psychology, economics, philosophy and so on.
In the view of Stefan Collini (1993), this is not easy to classify recently emerged disciplines as humanities or sciences as they have qualities of both. She states that, ‘there are now a very substantial no. of academics who are engaged in various social, applied, professional and vocational disciplines which cannot be classed as either ‘humanities’ or ‘science’, and for whom the notion of ‘the two cultures’ is, at best, irrelevant and obsolete’. This statement is very relevant for them who attempt to classify education as an art or science.

7.3.3.4 Consideration of education as an extension of teacher education only

As, it is discussed earlier, study of education came in existence from teacher education and later developed as a separate field. In spite of this fact, it is still difficult to draw a line between teacher education and education. Still the study of education is generally regarded as study of schooling. Programmes of studying education are generally considered extension of teacher education programmes. However, study of education is much more than the study of schooling or teaching learning process. According to Kneller, the first task of general study of education is to produce an understanding of education rather than a practical competence in teaching or administration”.

7.3.4 Comparison with other well established disciplines and professions

Education has always been a victim of its comparison with other well-established disciplines. To prove it a discipline, many scholars compare it with other old disciplines and well established professions like psychology, medicine, management and engineering. However, nature of education is entirely different from other disciplines and professions. Due to its interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary nature, it cannot be compared on equal criteria with other well-established disciplines. On the other hand, every person has an exposure of education and educational system since the childhood. Therefore, with own school experiences everyone can put his feet in this field. Discussing education does not need any specialized knowledge of the field like other professions. Therefore, being a matter of public concern, it cannot develop itself as a rigorous and specialized profession like others. In spite of such differences,
when compared with other disciplines or profession, education finds it hard to prove itself a discipline or a profession.

### 7.3.5 More emphasis on practical and urgent problems

Since long, the main purpose of education is considered as developing professionals in teaching and other practice oriented fields. As a result, scholars who work for theory development in the field are few. The main purpose of studying education is still considered as study of schooling and process of teaching learning. Most of the researches in education are also conducted in this field. Theory of education has always been a thorny field in education. In the name of theory, generally principles and concepts of other discipline are discussed in education. Since the start of its institutional study, the four foundational disciplines occupy a large part of any programme of study of education. Other important fields like woman education, adult education, educational technology, environmental and population education, educational administration and management, and curriculum development are still taught as optional papers. Due to the dominance of the foundational disciplines and negligence of these sub disciplines, content of education is still considered borrowed. Due to not working on its theoretical part and emphasizing practice teaching and other daily affairs, development of its content and theory is neglected. This continuous negligence is adversely affecting the growth of the discipline in its own right.

### 7.3.6 War between professionals and academicians

Another major problem education faces is the claim of the two communities of scholars one who considers education as an academic discipline or other who regards it a profession. These contradictory views have negative impact on the growth of education as a discipline and/or as a profession. It is developing neither as an academic discipline nor as a profession. However, by nature it is both a discipline and a profession. Therefore, efforts should be done to enrich both its academic study as well as professional study.

The idea of professional study implies a partnership between a body of theoretical knowledge and the practical skills that are needed for achieving competence in a particular profession. Professional study is not limited to the development of technical
competence for a particular craft or occupation. Partnership between theoretical and practical knowledge is central to the idea of preparing students for a profession. This is the idea that differentiates a profession from a trade or an occupation. Therefore, a balance between theory and practice needs to be maintained in professional study. Further, as much of the theoretical knowledge is acquired through academic study, there also needs to be a close relationship between academic and professional studies.

7.3.7 Lack of proper rigour and specialization like other professions

Education in spite of being a professional discipline lacks adequate inputs for preparing better professionals. It is considered as a troubled field, characterized by curricular confusion, a faculty disconnected from practice, wide disparities in institutional quality, and weak quality control enforcement. Preparation of school teachers is viewed by many as a low-level academic enterprise, counter to the preparation of doctors, engineers and other professionals. It is comparatively easier to enter into a teacher education program without proper aptitude and enthusiasm for teaching. Any person within one - two years or without any professional training can acquire license to teach and without proper field experience can directly enter into a classroom. Education departments have not developed adequate programmes for development of skills and knowledge synthesis. We do not have a coherent theory for the utilization of academic disciplines in preparing teachers and teacher educators.

7.3.8 Education as a matter of public concern

Unlike other disciplines or professions, education has always been a matter of common concern. The study of education takes inputs from many other disciplines and it influences almost all the aspects of human life. This is the reason both the learned and the layman express their views about the process and policies of education. Their views also affect the study of education as the aims, scope, and curriculum of educational studies are influenced by the process and policies of education. It is an unusual condition faced by the discipline of education generally not faced by other professional studies like education. Nobody ever interferes in the doctor’s or engineer’s work but everyone always tell teachers how to do their job effectively. The People have high expectations from professionals in education. In
such conditions, education finds itself in dilemma to maintain its professional specialization and rigour and also to welcome everyone’s suggestions. Therefore, as a discipline, education is considered much less specialized than other disciplines.

7.3.9 Consideration of study of education as a guarantee of employment

At present, the education sector is highly growing sector offering employment to a large number of populations. Educational personnel are employed as teachers, teacher educators, researchers, policy makers, evaluators, educational officers, and curriculum planners etc. The entrance and persuasion is considered comparatively easy, economical in time, money and energy, less technical in educational studies than other professional studies. From elementary to higher level, at private and government institutions a number of jobs are offered to a person holding a professional education degree. Due to these factors a large number of aimless, interest less, unenthusiastic, and aptitude less persons who find it difficult to enter into other professions try to enter into it. Unfortunately, many of them become successful due to improper entry tests. These scholars of education just get a degree of education and employed as teachers and other academic and administrative professionals. Due to lack of teachers, Government also encourages opening a large numbers of institutions for education of teachers and teacher educators. These persons are developing a community of scholars, whose members are in this field just for commercial purpose and not enriching its study in any way. As a result, academic study, research and publication in education, although quantitatively superior, are considered of low quality in academic world. These all factors have a negative impact on the academic identity and status of study of education.

7.3.10 Seems easy but hard to specialize or achieve mastery over the subject

Growth of any subject depends on its scholars who have achieved mastery over its knowledge and further play a major role in the advancement of the discipline by teaching, research and publication. Such mastery on overall content of education is not easy to achieve due to the complex nature of the subject. It is not possible to achieve mastery over a subject having widely scattered content and unlimited scope.
Dearden (1970) comments in this concern, “I do not know quite what an “educationist” is, or what sort of expert or authority he is supposed to be. I know what a philosopher of education is, or an educational psychologist or an educational sociologist, but I am not at all sure what a plain “educationist” would be”. R. woods justifies Dearden by saying that it is hard to find a person can be called ‘an educationist’, as an educationist is, or ought to be, a person well versed in the four supporting disciplines who brings them to bear appropriately on questions relating to education, whether there could ever be such a person is debatable issue. According to him, “such an educationist would necessary employ a number of distinct skills and procedures, for there is certainly no discipline of education for him to practice.”

Such comments force us to think that is it justifiable to expect a person well versed in all the foundational disciplines of education. Moreover, if it seems unpractical, then is it reasonable to question the disciplinary identity of education on this basis? No scholar of any discipline can claim to have complete mastery of the entire subject matter. Although, an internal unity is found among all the branches of a discipline, generally, its scholars specialize in one or two fields of a particular discipline. Besides such specialization, it is also expected from the scholars to possess at least general knowledge of a particular discipline, which makes them able to understand the internal coherence among different fields of a discipline. To develop such understanding is somewhat difficult in education, as here the task is to wove together different recommendations given in different social, cultural, moral, emotional, and political situations by different scholars. Fields of interest and modes of thinking of philosopher of education, educational psychologist, historian and sociologist of education may differ. It seems it is more necessary to maintain such an internal unity in education than in the other disciplines. As, education cannot avoid or over emphasize any aspect of an individual’s life, it has to nurture all the aspects: social, moral, emotional, intellectual, spiritual and so on. It is very true that no scholar of education can claim to specialize in all the fields of educational studies, but as an educationist he or she should follow a wholistic approach and besides his/her field of specialization, he/she should understand coherence among other branches. He should try to promote this internal unity and instead of becoming master of a particular branch should try to be a real educationist. It does not matter that he does not possess knowledge of the complete field but he must have wisdom to use, share and
implement this knowledge as a unit. Such educationists would be real pursuers of this field who would be able to give a distinct identity to educational studies.

7.3.11 Self-interest of scholars of education

As we have already discussed, many people consider existence of an educationist doubtful. Scholars of education themselves prefer to be called as philosopher of education, educational psychologist, and historian of education instead of educationists. Probably, they accept, like Woods and Dearden, that such species do not exist or they have some vested interest with the tag of other disciplines. The growth of a discipline is in the hands of its scholars. Fragmented efforts of some outsiders cannot contribute much for it. Lack of such devoted pursuers in this field supports the existence of the field as a meeting point of several disciplines instead of a single discipline. J. Deese, 1963\textsuperscript{11} exposes this tendency of educationists in these words, “The educational psychologist frequently publishes the results of his studies in journals devoted to larger areas of psychology. When he publishes in the more general educational journals, \textit{The Harvard Educational Review} or \textit{The Teachers College Record}, he is more likely to write as a psychologist talking to educators than as an educator among educators.”

In addition to tendency of self-promotion, the entire educational community is divided into many groups having different views on different educational issues. The academic-profession debate is also the result of disagreement on identity of education among educationist. As evident by remark of Walton, “The educationists never made it perfectly clear that they were exclusively professional. At the same time that they were using medicine and other professions as the model of their own discipline, they were seeking status as academicians.”\textsuperscript{12} Katz B. Michel (1966)\textsuperscript{13} also comments, “University educationist’s lack of clarity cost them membership in both the academic and professional corps.” One may argue here that such disagreements exist in almost all disciplines and such disputes may prove beneficial for the growth of a discipline. However, the case is different in education due to two reasons: First, the field is still not well established and under the constant scrutiny of academic world. In such conditions, internal unity on major issues is necessary. Second, the debate on different educational issues may be beneficial but disagreement on its academic identity is not
good. Academic identity of any field of study decides the direction in which the study should be developed.

Such and various other reasons have negative impact on the academic identity of education. These issues should be of immediate concern for all persons want to give education a respectable academic status. Due to these reasons, a field of study full of possibilities to be recognized as a respectable discipline is surrounded by many controversies related to its academic status.

7.4.0 Nature of education as a field of study

It is now well established that education should also have distinct identity as a discipline. Now the task is to explore which kind of discipline it is. Not all the disciplines are similar in nature. Disciplines may vary in their nature on the basis of their origin, focus of their concern, objectives they seek, methods they use, and the scope and nature of their investigation. On these basis disciplines may be old or new, pure or applied, theoretical, practical or productive, liberal or professional. In addition, different disciplines follow different approaches for generation and validation of knowledge, for example, on this basis disciplines may be interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary or trans-disciplinary in nature. Education as a discipline possesses some of the very unique features that it becomes difficult to identify the nature of this discipline. In the coming section, an effort will be done to explore nature of education as a discipline in two steps, first, to find a suitable place for it in the disciplinary classification system, and second, to explore its unique features which set it apart from other disciplines.

7.4.1 Place of education in the classification of disciplines

Different scholars categorize disciplines differently. We have discussed some of these classifications in the chapter- 4. However, due to different controversies associated with the nature of education as a subject of study it is not easy to find a place for education in any of these classifications. Since, education encompasses characteristics of many disciplines at the same time; its categorization in any one of the given categories raises many questions. Perhaps, it would be more justifiable to keep it apart
from ordinary disciplinary frame. Due to different interpretations given by different scholars education is called by different names:

a. An established discipline

b. An emerging discipline

c. Applied or professional study

d. Pseudo-science

e. A family of related discipline

f. A field of study

g. A practical activity communicates content of other disciplines

h. Interdisciplinary/ Multidisciplinary/Trans disciplinary

i. Discipline of disciplines

Due to these different identities, it is not easy to place education in any one of the category of classification of disciplines. Some of the main classification systems and probable palace of education in these systems is discussed below:

7.4.1.1 The Approximate Classification of Academic Disciplines

The approximate classification of discipline is a convenient method to classify faculties and departments in universities and colleges and also in organizing different sections of a library. In this classification, different disciplines are classified in one of the following types:

i. Fine arts

ii. Humanities

iii. Social sciences

iv. Natural Sciences,

v. Mathematics

vi. Professional and Applied Sciences

Education seems close to two of these categories:
Education as Social Science

Social sciences include such disciplines as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, linguistics, political science, psychology. Their task is to explore the aspects of human society, its development and all the processes that influence it. Merriam-Webster Dictionary gives three definitions of social sciences: 15

1. Any discipline or branch of science that deals with the sociocultural aspects of human behaviour.
2. A branch of science that deals with the institutions and functioning of human society and with the interpersonal relationships of individuals as members of society.
3. A science (as anthropology or social psychology) dealing with a particular phase or aspect of human society.

An analysis of education on these definitions shows that education is also a social science as it deals with investigating the sociocultural aspect of humans because sociocultural aspect of any society gives shape to the education pattern of that society. School is also a miniature society in itself. Therefore, Interpersonal relations play an important role in the process of education. In addition, education is not only influenced by particular phase or aspects of our society but each aspect of society is also influenced by education.

Education as Professional or Applied Science

Professional sciences deal with a certain profession. They are Agriculture, Architecture and design, Business Management, Medicine, Engineering, Journalism, Information Technology and others. These take inputs from several disciplines and apply accumulated knowledge in serving the society. Wikipedia defines professional studies as,

"Professional studies" is a term used to classify academic programs which are applied or interdisciplinary in focus. The term can also be used for non-academic training for a specific profession. Professional studies usually combine theory and practice-based professional learning, focusing on a body of knowledge that is more strictly delineated and canonical than non-professional studies. Students are trained to ensure expected standards and adequate service delivery in the best practice of a profession.16
As a professional study, education deals with teaching and other related professions. Education takes inputs from many disciplines to understand and improve the system and process of education and accordingly develops desired skills and behaviour in the future teachers. In addition to teaching, several other professionals like educational researchers, curriculum developers, policy makers, administrators, educational supervisors and counselors are also prepared by study of education.

Education has characteristics of both social sciences and professional studies so it can be concluded that education appears closure to social sciences having huge professional importance too.

### 7.4.1.2 Aristotle’s classification

Aristotle divides disciplines into three: Theoretical, Practical, and Productive. Theoretical disciplines, such as mathematics and the natural sciences deal with abstractions, build comprehensive theories; and their objects of study must possess at least relative permanence and uniformity. In contrast to the theoretical discipline, the practical disciplines are concerned with subject matter, for example, as human character and social institutions, capable of change or alternation. The aim of practical is to do. The aim of productive disciplines, such as engineering, fine arts, and applied arts is to make or create something.

The chief practical disciplines for Aristotle were ethics, politics, and education. The practitioner obviously needs certain skills and abilities that differ from, or go beyond those needed by one undertaking theoretical investigations.

As designated by Aristotle, education is broadly a practical discipline since its main function is to guide practice of education. Its subject matter is studying the total system and process of human beings with an intention to bring desirable change or alternation in their personality. In addition to its own concepts, it also utilizes theories, concepts, and principles of other disciplines to develop certain skills and abilities to prepare its practitioners.

### 7.4.1.3 Hirst’s Classification

Hirst divides all available knowledge into three:
i. Forms of Knowledge

ii. Fields of Knowledge

iii. Practical Theories

He places education into third category i.e., practical theory. According to him, practical theories collect knowledge from different forms of knowledge because of a particular interest. Their interest is a particular range of practical activities, for example, in engineering, medicine or education. Knowledge collected in practical theories used in the formulation of principles for practice. Education as a practical theory draws on all the knowledge within the various forms that is relevant to educational pursuits and determine what should be done in educational practice. Educational theory, like all other practical theories has a logical unity that any field of knowledge centred on education would not have.

7.4.1.4 Biglan’s Classification

Biglan’s taxonomy identified three dimensions to academic disciplines: (1) the degree to which a paradigm exists (paradigmatic or pre-paradigmatic, alternatively referred to hard versus soft disciplines); (2) the extent to which the subject matter is practically applied (pure versus applied); and (3) involvement with living or organic matter (life versus nonlife systems). Those areas having less-developed paradigms and low consensus on knowledge bases and modes of inquiry (e.g., the social sciences and humanities) are considered "soft." Applied fields tend to be concerned with application of knowledge, such as law, education, and engineering. A graphical representation of his classification system is given below:
In his classification system, Biglan placed education in **Soft Life Applied Category** as it has less developed paradigms, low consensus on knowledge bases and modes of inquiry, applies knowledge of its own and other disciplines to bring desirable changes in human beings.

In the above discussion, it is evident that as a field of study education is placed in different categories in different classification systems. On this basis, it can be interpreted that by nature discipline of education has characteristics of the following branches of knowledge:

i. social science  
ii. professional or applied science  
iii. practical discipline  
iv. practical theory  
v. soft life applied discipline

It is not easy to place education strictly in any one of the above-mentioned categories. Education has qualities of all the categories mentioned above. However, in common usage the approximate classification of disciplines is more popular. Therefore, it can be said that as a discipline education appears closure to other social sciences. This academic study has great professional significance too. Therefore, its recognition as a professional study seems justifiable.

### 7.4.2 Distinct characteristics of education as a field of study

Despite the many controversies, the discipline of education has many unique features which set it apart from other disciplines. Vashishtha (2011)\(^{20}\) points out some of its unique features in these words, “In comparison to other disciplines like physics, chemistry, history and economics, the discipline of education is more humane, dynamic, contextual, cultural specific, promotes human welfare and growth, flexible and liberal.” Some more unique features of discipline of education are discussed below:

#### 7.4.2.1 Unlimited scope of study and field of investigation

Study of education is concerned with the most important process of human life that is making a child a perfect human being by nurturing and educating him. Education,
whether formal or informal, influences the whole life of the child. Therefore, education, as the study of this process, investigates all the aspects of human life that can be shaped through educating. In addition to study of schooling, it also deals with studying education of special groups and for special issues like teacher education, woman education, adult education, environmental education and population education. Scope of education not only deals with studying different factors affecting educating in the formal settings that is schools but also through various informal agencies like family, society, and peer group. Various political, societal, demographical, economic, cultural, and moral aspects of a society also affect process of education. Simultaneously scientific and technological advances are also the matters of concern for this field of study. Study of these various factors that directly or indirectly influence the education system expands the scope of investigation of education unlimited. This is a unique feature of education to effectively investigate almost all the fields of human life and draw out educationally significant inputs to make education system much better. Probably no other discipline has such an unlimited scope of study and wide field of investigation.

7.4.2.2 **Theory and practice are closely interrelated**

In education, both theory and practice are closely interrelated and are complementary to each other. Education is not purely a theoretical discipline and not only a practical discipline. However, due to close link with teaching and other practice oriented activities it is mainly considered a practical discipline.

7.4.2.3 **By nature both an art and a science**

In the view of Walton (1963),21 “In the discipline of education, C. P. Snow’s two cultures will stand side by side: it will be both a scientific and a humanistic discipline.” Education may be regarded both as a science and an art since it consists of theoretical as well as practical knowledge and skills derived through various artistic and scientific methods and aims at achieving desired objectives by applying them in human behaviour and practices. These two aspects in this discipline are in close association and complementary to each other. In the words of Aaron Eden (2012), 22 “I do believe there is a good deal of artist in every teacher, and a good deal of the scientist too. Every teacher in the world likely falls at a different place on that
spectrum; however, the very best, I believe, share a healthy mix of both approaches, and no matter where they fall on the continuum, sharing of information between teachers on their craft is beneficial for continued improvement individually and as a learning organization.”

7.4.2.4 Professional as well as liberal study

Academic study is an integral part of professional study in education. Its scholars are Academician, practitioners as well as researchers. Educational Studies engages students in the investigation of educational theory, policy, research and practice from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. It encourages think critically and creatively about the processes of teaching and learning and about the place of education in society. It also prepares students to enter the teaching profession for and to work in the areas of educational research, administration, curriculum, or policy.

7.4.2.5 Catering needs of diverse groups

To meet the needs of all learners in an era of rapidly increasing racial, ethnic and linguistic diversity and technological change education does every possible effort. Education prepares educators, researchers and other professionals, who develop the policies, curriculum, learning materials and methods to fulfil the needs of learners of different groups like, children, adults, women, teachers, and differently abled. Its different branches like early childhood education, elementary education, secondary education, higher education, teacher education, adult education, special education, woman education are dedicated to different groups of learners.

7.4.2.6 Study of studies or Learning about learning

Study of education is the study of many disciplines at the same time. This is probably the most unique feature of this discipline. In other disciplines, area of study and investigation are delimited. However, such delimitations cannot be drawn in academic study and research in education. Study of education involves study of many other disciplines not just for enriching its content with educationally significant inputs of other disciplines but also to study nature of different subjects. By studying nature and objectives of different subjects educationists develop content, knowledge transaction methods and teaching-learning materials for different levels and kinds of learners. In this way, learning education taught us how to learn or make others learn different
subjects. This is the reason, education also designated as study of studies. Due to study of a great variety of subjects, its scholars have broader vision, greater awareness and better skills to sense and solve different issues and problems of man.

7.4.2.7 A discipline of great social value

There is no need to describe the significance of discipline of education in development of a society. Role of teachers in the upliftment of individuals and society is well known. Study of education prepares teachers with desirable skills and attitude to understand the needs of individual and society. The teachers not only shape the future of any society by educating our children but also act as a leader to motivate and guide the people to bring desirable changes in the society. In addition, disciplines of education also prepares educators, curriculum and methods to educate different people for example adults, women, people with special needs and for different issues such as population, environmental, and peace. Study of education also provides guarantee for employment, in this way, discipline of education also playing an important role in tackling the problem of unemployment.

7.4.2.8 Meeting point of specialist of different discipline and different backgrounds

In education, different individuals come from different disciplinary backgrounds and bring together the methods and traditions of their own fields. While dealing with any educational issue they also use expertise of their parent disciplines resulting in treatment of the problem with all the possible angles.

7.4.2.9 Positivistic as well as existentialistic

In education, on the one hand we deal with quantitative measurements, predictability, probability, experimentation and the whole domain of positivism. On the other hand, we have to deal with values, emotions, qualities, individual differences and with the existential aspects of education. Discipline of education maintains a balance between two different approaches while using them together or separately.
7.4.2.10 Balance between individualistic and societal needs

Study of education make us learn to maintain a balance between individualistic and societal needs at each and every step of educational process for example while planning policies or curriculum, selecting teaching methods, organizing class rooms and co-curricular activities, selecting research projects and deducing implications of researches, educationists try to consider needs of both the individual and the society.

7.4.2.11 In spite of many dispute and ambiguities studied, researched and practiced successfully

Perhaps this is one of the most controversial disciplines in academic world. Still, we have faculties, departments, colleges and institutions of education. Large number of students and teachers are engaged in studying and researching education. Various degree, diploma and certificate courses are popular in education. A great number of national and international journals are published every year. We have communities of learned scholars in education. Every year various local, national and international seminars, conferences and workshops are organized to discuss the problems and issues of education. Educational practitioners are contributing in developing a nation by efficiently working as teachers, teacher educators, educational officers and administrators, policy makers, curriculum planners, educational and career counselors, special educators and motivators in different public and private enterprises. It can be interpreted that, at least in quantitative terms, discipline of education is studied, researched and practiced successfully. Therefore, it should enjoy a respectable academic status.

Above discussion exposes just some of the unique features of this discipline. The distinctness of education can be felt only by being an integral part of it. The feeling is just like a mother who nurture and shape the future of her child. Perhaps, you would never feel so emotionally attracted with your work in any other field. Probably, this is the reason that people who come in education from different disciplinary backgrounds, finally leave their original fields and choose a career in education. Professor Richard Edwards, head of School of Education, University of Sterling, in these words, have expressed value of studying such a unique discipline,
"If you think making a difference in people’s lives is important, then becoming an educator is for you. Whether you are teaching children, young people or adults, you can witness directly the impact you have on them as they learn to develop their knowledge, skills and values. Education is a proven engine of social mobility, of enabling people to expand their horizons and to achieve things they might not have thought possible. If you have the dedication to make a difference, degrees in education are for you.” (Quoted in Steve Anderson, 2011)23

7.5.0 Future of academic study of education

According to Torril strand (2007), 24 ‘The discipline of education is undergoing a period of change. Due to more general structural and epistemic shifts, the ivory tower is collapsing, the discipline is being fragmented, its boarders are becoming blurred and new research interests are constantly being approved. Consequently, current expansion and change may influence the discipline’s quality standards and required scientific competency.’ Nature and needs of society always influence and restructure the process and study of education. Advanced societies are in a process of transformation from industrial to knowledge societies, i.e. social realities are being shaped by knowledge-based processes and reflective enlightenment. Alongside new fields of learning (e.g. lifelong learning, learning in the digital age, and learning in multicultural classrooms etc.) and new social issues (globalization, environment, employment, demographics, migration, democracy, gender mainstreaming, secularism), application-oriented research within existing societal structures would remain an essential focus in the study of education.

7.5.1 Influencing factors to the future study of education

Discipline of education mainly studies the process of educating and systems of education. The process and system of education are shaped by societal, political and cultural needs. Any change in these needs demand change in process and system of educating. As a result, discipline of education will have to change its focus of study according to changing needs of society. Therefore, all the factors which affect the future education system would decide future of study of education. It can be well predicted that globalisation and market demands would act as controlling power in deciding framework of education. In education, democratisation will aim at
integrating and promoting higher social participation of groups that are still disadvantaged – strata which are remote from education, adults, migrant and disabled persons. Gender mainstreaming would have to be enforced as a social policy concern in national and international higher education policies, as the expansion of education of recent decades was borne to a disproportionately high extent by women, whilst the allocation of opportunities based on education lagged behind. Education would open up to new target groups. Primarily, this has to do with greater flexibility and differentiation of access to higher education, study programme structures, degrees and certifications. To widen participation in higher education, non-traditional students need to be integrated more strongly than in the past, not least by creating better opportunities for reconciling family life with university studies, or employment and higher education.

Becher and Trowler (2001) have identified six structural changes which they consider to have great influence on academic tribes and their territories. Academic tribe is another name for academic cultures and the territories designate their disciplinary knowledge. In a comprehensive sociological study from 1989, which included all of 220 informants within 12 different fields of study affiliated to 18 different universities both in USA and UK. In their follow-up study published in 2001, Becher and Trowler became able to identify six structural changes with great implication for the production of knowledge. The changes are identified as globalization, massification, regulation, market-orientation, efficiency, and fragmentation. As technology plays a larger role in education, any predictions concerning the future of education must include an analysis of technological trends too. As a result of the ability to communicate globally and the information explosion, education must change.

The first change, globalization, manifests itself as the construction of networks transcending national borders and thus challenging the national discourse, while creating new impulses, interests and possibilities. Massification is characterized by the fact that the groups of university staff and students more so than ever reflect societies’ sociocultural variety, as they are recruited from a larger part of the population. This, in turn, has changed the university’s structures of power and what is now considered to be the universities’ role and mission. The increased regulation creates focus on quality in higher education. The new market-orientation contributes
to lessening of the monopolistic position of the universities and enlarged competitiveness. **Efficiency** gives a greater focus on the utility of the university, a stronger university administration, and contributes to the fact that changes now mostly are initiated from above. The final structural change, **fragmentation**, is manifested in an explosive growth in the production of knowledge. The growth is registered in a marked boost in the number and types of departments, institutes and studies.

In addition, Becher and Trowler (1981)\(^{27}\) registered a great increase in research groups, scientific journals, and a multiplication of acknowledged objects of studies and fields of research. Fragmentation results in expansion of older disciplines resulting in creation of new sub-disciplines, which again become independent and establish new and autonomous fields of research.

On the whole, Becher and Trowler have observed the growth of a new type of discipline structure in which the production of knowledge increasingly is directed towards areas of application where the cross-disciplinary is the norm, in which epistemic differences and varieties are the most usual, wherein the production of knowledge is connected to a socio-political mission, and in which the quality control takes place on a broader and a more general basis than before. In conclusion, the university cultures come across as less elitist since the academic world has become a more integrated part of both the national and international society.

### 7.5.2 Effect on discipline of education

The increasingly blurred boundaries of education and other disciplines point to the fact that conventional basis and legitimacy as a university discipline is being fundamentally challenged. The discipline of education would have to face many challenges, which may be met in the these ways: (i) credibility, (ii) responsibility and (iii) self-reflexivity.\(^{28}\) The call for credibility values the epistemic varieties together with the explicit requirements for trustworthiness. The reason is that structural changes and epistemic shifts not only threaten the autonomy of the discipline, but also the authority of educational research. As a result, when the discipline expands, boundaries are dissolved, and the research interests fragmented. For the wider the boundaries and the greater fragmentation, the higher the demands for methodological
stringency, rigorous analyses and skilled validation. In other words, matter-of-fact innovations require a kind of professionalism that explicitly acknowledges an epistemic variety and take a stand against ignorance, ambiguity, and lack of integrity. The possible effect on education may be outlined as:

1. Instead of delimiting itself within disciplinary boundaries, education would have to develop itself as field of study comprising correlated but independent study of different related disciplines.
2. Different sub disciplines of education like special education, distance education, school administration and organization, curriculum development and many others would also claim for their distinct status due to knowledge explosion and specialization in these fields.
3. New branches of studies may emerge from discipline of education like social media and education, education for parenting, education in digital age, and secular education etc.
4. Scientific and technological advances would be more emphasized than foundational disciplines of education.

However, it should also be remembered that Education does not blindly follow the developments around it, but questions them critically. Therefore, in such conditions of conflict and ambiguity a vision to evaluate and apply innovative strategies for the future study of education is necessary. In the following section, an effort has been done to present a vision to develop education a distinct and respectable field of study.

**7.6.0 Vision to develop education as a field of respectable academic study**

Keeping in view the present conflicts and controversies, following vision is proposed to develop education as a distinct field of study:

**7.6.1 Organization and systematization of institutional study of education**
Institutional manifestation of a discipline as a subject provides opportunity for the growth of the discipline by encouraging transmission, preservation and production of knowledge of the discipline. Teaching, publication and research are the main activities through which transmission, preservation and production of knowledge in a discipline accomplished. A systematic and disciplined persuasion of these activities is necessary for the growth of a discipline. Disorganized system of study of education interferes the smooth running of these activities by producing a state of chaos. As discussed above, many organizational fallacies are associated with institutional study of education; regarding them some suggestions are given hereunder:

7.6.1.1 **Clear demarcation between objectives, content and scope of liberal and professional studies**

As discussed above two types of academic programmes are popular in education without much difference in their objectives, content and scope. If both the programmes are needed then it is necessary to clearly define their objectives, content and scope of study. There should be proper demarcation between two types of courses, as such condition generally does not exist in any other field of study. Generally, programmes in other disciplines are either liberal or professional in nature. If we claim to provide both types of studies then it is reasonable to justify the existence of both types of programmes.

7.6.1.2 **Establishment of separate faculty of education in all the universities**

The placing of education in different faculties of different universities cannot be said as a good practice. Concerned administrators should urgently try to maintain uniformity in this concern. However, persuasion of educational programmes in separate faculty of a university would be more beneficial for the growth of this unique discipline.

7.6.1.3 **Proper control at entry level**

It is well known, that only dedicated and disciplined scholars who have aptitude to pursue a particular study can contribute positively to that study. There is an interactive relationship between any study and its pursuers i.e. both affect each other’s
development. Education already faces blame of lacking rigour and specialization like other disciplines and professions; in spite of this, entry in educational studies is considered easiest. Due to lack of qualified teachers, a number of institutions are opening every year, which further make this entry easier. Recently, in Uttar Pradesh, self-finance colleges have been affiliated to run M.Ed. It can be assumed that how well these institutions will maintain the quality of such a specialized and professional programme. It must always be kept in mind that the purpose of M.Ed. programme is not only to produce teaching professionals but also policy makers, administrators, curriculum planners and researchers. Such aptitude less scholars, who came here after rejection in other professional programmes, cannot contribute much for the enrichment of this study. Moreover, nobody can take the guarantee that the newly opened private institutions have enough resources and vision to produce skilled professionals in education.

7.6.1.4 Monitoring of research quality
Innovative researches are the rich source of knowledge generation in a discipline. Continuous screening, revival, updating and production of knowledge are necessary requirements for the development of any field of knowledge. Being an area of huge social importance quality research are mandatory in education. However, research in education is at the lowest level of intellectual hierarchy. Most of them are repetitive and deals with problems of immediate importance. Therefore, efforts should be done to encourage quality research in education.

7.6.1.5 Regulation of commercialization of academic activities in education
In addition to low quality research, a business of publication and worthless seminars and conferences are also trending in education. Instead of enriching the discipline, such activities adversely affect the dignity of education. The aim of such activities should be a sincere effort to inspect the overall system of education and accordingly suggest strategies for better development. Such activities should also focus on enriching content and methods of education. Unfortunately, commercialization and thrust for better academic grades without much effort promoting such activities day by day. Every year many seminars and conferences of education are organized with
repetitive and worthless issues. These seminars can be compared with the great Indian wedding festival, in which most of the well-dressed scholars come with their papers, have lunch and dinners, attend useless lectures of invited guests, enjoy cultural activities and with or without presentation or any serious discussion on the concerned issue take certificates of their participation after depositing prescribed fee. All such seminars end with greetings, vote of thanks, and discussions on mismanagement. Only the organizers know the result or conclusion, if any, of the issues discussed. Similarly, many national and international journals are mushrooming every year, who guarantee publication of any paper in lieu of some money without any quality concern.

Fortunately, some serious scholars and organizations are still doing their best to improve the study, process and system of education. However, they need honest and sincere support of each individual engaged in studying, practicing or researching education in any way.

### 7.6.2 Solution of controversial issue

As we have already discussed that in spite of many unique features, education faces identity crisis due to many controversies associated with it. Therefore, such controversial issues should be discussed with utmost priority and a balanced and justified solution of all such issues should be found out. A similar effort has been done in the following points:

#### 7.6.2.1 Discipline- non discipline

We have talked enough on this issue and concluded that any field of study whether large or small, pure or applied, old or new can be called a discipline. The term is used only to designate a branch of knowledge that can be studied, researched and taught. The old rigorous criteria cannot be justifiably applied to today’s hybrid, applied, and professional studies. As also remarked by Pierre Bourdieu,

> “An academic discipline is nothing more than a historical extraordinary reality.”

In a similar way Solitis comments,

> “It is an historical accident that some subjects are called disciplines.”

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In this concern, remarks of Mr. Rumesh Chandra, CIE, University of Delhi are also worth mentioning, “It has not been a matter of much concern that which is a discipline and which is not but it matters what is the nature of a particular discipline or field of study. Therefore, while discussing education as a discipline emphasis should be on ‘its nature as a discipline’ and not on ‘whether it is a discipline or not’.”

Nature of a discipline decides the nature of study, research and teaching in that discipline, therefore it should be given utmost importance. In the previous chapter, an effort was done to justify education as a discipline. The researcher is of the view that such debates are not beneficial for any field of study instead the nature of the study should be given importance. The disputes regarding the nature of education will be discussed in the coming points.

7.6.2.2 Established discipline- emerging or evolving discipline

In academic world some old disciplines as philosophy, physics, history, etc. are termed as established disciplines and disciplines like education, information technology, and journalism are termed as emerging disciplines. However, no discipline can be considered completely established. With the passage of time, each discipline suffers from a state of turmoil and transition due to change of societal need and specialization of knowledge; it becomes compulsory for any discipline to revise and update its existing trends and to explore new dimensions of knowledge.

7.6.2.3 Professional study -Academic study

As both types of courses are prevalent in education, education as a subject claims to be both academic and professional in nature. However, there are different views regarding this matter. A majority of educationists want to maintain its status both as an academic study and as a profession. However, few others compare this practice with the popular phrase- between two stools one comes to the ground; they are of the view that education is more inclined to be developed as a profession than as a discipline. Hughes (1963) finds it strange that that people who are concerned with education want to be recognized it as among the disciplines. According to him, “…we are in a period in which professions stand high and in which many occupations, old and new, seek professional standing…teachers, the people who administer teaching, and the people who teach teachers and who study schools, have joined the marry
chase to be recognized professionally and academically.” Hughes’s words seem reasonable due to three main points:

i. Most of the time, we compare education and teaching with other more developed professions like medicine, engineering etc. The people concerned in this field suggest developing study of education on the model of these areas, as these areas are much similar to education in nature. All of these professional studies are interdisciplinary in nature, take inputs from different disciplines and apply this knowledge to the service of the human beings. However, in the professional rigour and specialization they are much superior to the education. In addition, these areas of studies generally do not claim to be recognized among disciplines. If we claim that teachers’ work is more important than doctors and engineers, as the teacher is responsible for the whole life of a child, then the efforts to develop education as a profession would be beneficial for its future.

ii. Disciplinary status of education is still a matter of dispute. Generally, it is considered that discipline of education does not qualify the criteria of a discipline because its nature is different from other disciplines. Further, by its nature it is more inclined towards a profession than a discipline. Therefore, in search of a proper academic status, it would be better to develop education as a profession than a discipline.

iii. Majority of the emerging disciplines, branch out from pure disciplines, are applied and professional in nature as it is the need of the society to apply the accumulated knowledge in the service of humanity.

However, on the other hand to develop education as a profession is not easy due to these reasons:

i. As we have discussed earlier, education does not have professional rigour like other professional studies. Teaching as formal and informal process was prevalent in our society since there was no provision of any formal training to teach. Still, there are good teachers without having any formal training.
ii. Another characteristic of professions, which differentiates them from other kinds of service occupations, is the relative privacy and uniqueness of the knowledge and skills of the professional. This means that, in general, members of the public must accept on faith the ability of the professional to perform the service required. Such privacy and uniqueness of skills are not possible in case of education as it is a matter of public concern and there are examples of teachers, who are borne and not made.

iii. Developing education as a profession may result in reducing it as an occupation. As points out by Albee (1966), “Any profession, to be dignified by this designation, must have an intellectual or theoretical content, which sets it apart from occupations whose principal special requirement is a motor skill or technique.” However, for its theoretical content education largely depends on other disciplines. In such condition, there is an urgent need to develop specialization and rigour, like other professional studies, not accessible to outsiders.

On the basis of above discussion, it can be interpreted that the future development of education can be directed to any of the following four routes:

i. As a profession

ii. As a discipline

iii. Both as an academic discipline and profession: A discipline that guides teaching and related professions.

iv. Not as a discipline or a profession but a unique study of its own kind does not find it necessary to be categorized as other field of studies.

Moving on which route would be beneficial for education should be seriously discussed and decided. While accepting education either a discipline or a profession can limit the scope of a field of study with unlimited possibilities. On the other hand, claiming the status of both a discipline and a profession needs special efforts in strengthening each area of educational studies to make its claim justifiable.

7.6.2.4 Theoretical discipline – practical discipline

As it was discussed above, in different classification systems, education is classified as a practical discipline rather than theoretical. The primary purpose of a discipline is
the pursuit and development of knowledge. This knowledge base is enhanced and developed through research and provides direction for practice. As a subject, education mainly deals with the process of educating at different levels, systems and sections of schooling and society. It takes educationally significant theoretical inputs from other disciplines to guide the process of education. Its main purpose is not to generate theories or to deal with abstractions, which is the main characteristics of theoretical disciplines. However, efforts are being done to produce own theories in education from real classroom experiences but it may be suspicious to assume the mass application of these theories. At present, consideration of education as a practical discipline seems more justifiable. However, continuous specialization and generation of a large body of knowledge generates the possibility to develop it both as a theoretical and a practical discipline. Discipline of medicine is the classical example of the distinction between theoretical and practical uses. Medical theory and theorizing involves trying to understand the causes and nature of health and sickness, while the practical side of medicine is trying to make people healthy. These two things are related but can be independent, because it is possible to research health and sickness without curing specific patients, and it is possible to cure a patient without knowing how the cure worked.

### 7.6.2.5 Pure discipline- applied discipline

Education can never be considered as a pure discipline nor should it be. However, some educationists do not favour designating it as an applied discipline. As for example, in the view of Belth (1963),³⁵ “The conception of education as an applied discipline is an inadequate defense of its distinctness from other disciplines.” He further adds, “Where education is seen as an applied science, clearly any activity of application becomes primary and crucial in a program. It is often held that almost everything now being offered in education programs could be eliminated except practice teaching, where the principles of the parent disciplines can be applied. Such a conclusion is indeed consistent with the concept of applied science.” The arguments of Belth are strong enough to say that education should not be considered an applied discipline only, because it comprises much more than practice teaching. We cannot prepare good teachers only by trial and error during practice teaching. A strong theoretical foundation to support the practice is also necessary. He further adds, “In their concern to establish uniqueness of education as an area of study, those who
defend education as an applied science have confused the application of principles as a discipline with the application of principles to a discipline.” In this concern, Belth also argues that in such situation physics is also applied mathematics, rather than a discipline in which mathematics can be applied fruitfully.

It can be concluded, that since the start of formal training of teachers, theories of different disciplines were applied in practice teaching. However, at present, as a discipline education has not remain just an application of theoretical recommendations of these disciplines but an area which includes many sub disciplines in addition to teacher education. Therefore, it seems not justifiable to designate it as an applied area only. As an area of study, it has many possibilities to be developed as a distinct field of study.

### 7.6.2.6 Interdisciplinary/ Multidisciplinary/Transdisciplinary

Most of the social sciences are either interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary and sometimes transdisciplinary in nature. The three terms refer to the involvement of multiple disciplines to varying degrees on the same continuum. These terms are used interchangeably for education. However, these terms should not be used interchangeably due to difference in their meanings as discussed below:

1. **Interdisciplinary approach**

Interdisciplinary approach involves the combining of two or more academic disciplines into one activity (e.g. a research project). It is about creating something new by crossing boundaries, and thinking across them. It is related to an **interdiscipline** or an **interdisciplinary field**, which is an organizational unit that crosses traditional boundaries between academic disciplines or schools of thought, as new needs and professions have emerged.

Originally, the term interdisciplinary is applied within education and training pedagogies to describe studies that use methods and insights of several established disciplines or traditional fields of study. Interdisciplinarity involves researchers, students, and teachers in the goals of connecting and integrating several academic
schools of thought, professions, or technologies - along with their specific perspectives - in the pursuit of a common task.

2. **Multidisciplinary Approach** \(^{38}\)

A multidisciplinary approach involves drawing knowledge from multiple disciplines to redefine problems outside of normal boundaries and reach solutions based on a new understanding of complex situations. Multidisciplinary working is often seen as revolutionary by skill-centered specialists but it is simply a fundamental expression of being guided by holism rather than reductionism. One of the major barriers to the multidisciplinary approach is the long established tradition of highly focused professional practitioners cultivating a protective (and thus restrictive) boundary around their area of expertise. Multidisciplinarity is a non-integrative mixture of disciplines in that each discipline retains its methodologies and assumptions without change or development from other disciplines within the multidisciplinary relationship.

3. **Transdisciplinary Approach** \(^{39}\)

It connotes a research strategy that crosses many disciplinary boundaries to create a holistic approach. It applies to research efforts focused on problems that cross the boundaries of two or more disciplines, and can refer to concepts or methods that were originally developed by one discipline, but are now used by several others, such as ethnography, a field research method originally developed in anthropology but now widely used by other disciplines. Jean Piaget introduced this usage of the term in 1970, and in 1987, the International Center for Transdisciplinary Research (CIRET) adopted the Charter of Transdisciplinarity at the first World Congress of Transdisciplinarity, Convento da Arrabida, Portugal, November 1994.

It is not easy to differentiate among these terms. Rogers *et al*\(^ {40}\) points out the difference between interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches as, ‘Interdisciplinary approaches are assumed to derive *novel concepts, methods and theoretical frameworks* through the *melding* of concepts, methods and theoretical frameworks coming from different disciplines. Multidisciplinary approaches are assumed to evolve *new understanding* through *adapting and modifying* existing
concepts, methods and theoretical frameworks within a discipline and occasionally borrowing ideas from others.'

In dictionaries and academic journals, no consensus has been observed in the meaning and usage of these terms. The terms multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary are increasingly used in the literature, but are ambiguously defined and interchangeably used. In an attempt to differentiate the meanings of these terms, R.J. Alex (2012) in his article, ‘Disciplinarities: Intra, Cross, Multi, Inter, Trans’\(^{41}\) summarizes Marilyn Stember’s (1990)\(^{42}\) views in the following points:

- **Intradisciplinary**: working within a single discipline.
- **Crossdisciplinary**: viewing one discipline from the perspective of another.
- **Multidisciplinary**: people from different disciplines working together, each drawing on their disciplinary knowledge.
- **Interdisciplinary**: integrating knowledge and methods from different disciplines, using a real synthesis of approaches.
- **Transdisciplinary**: creating a unity of intellectual frameworks beyond the disciplinary perspectives.

It is again a matter of debate that which approach is followed by education in its study and research. Research in education is generally considered interdisciplinary in nature like other social sciences. However, the terms interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary are used interchangeably for education on different occasions. Education due to its unique nature can also be placed beyond ordinary limits of a discipline; therefore, it can be designated as a transdiscipline too. Actually, as the concept of discipline is interpreted in different ways by different people, similarly different terms like interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, transdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary etc. are also explained by different scholars in different terms. While some use all of these terms interchangeably, some others draw lines between the meanings of these terms. However, it is well accepted that education as a discipline uses concepts, methods and theories of different disciplines for studying and researching educationally significant issues. To grasp any educationally significant issue it expands its branches across many disciplines. Until, there is no clear demarcation between the meanings and use of all these terms, it would be better to say that education shows varying degree of inclination to follow these different
approaches in its study and research. As also opined by Palaiologou, (2010),
“Education Studies courses integrate a number of disciplines to investigate the
learning process in context. There is a trend for Education Studies degrees to shift
between terms of disciplinarity such as multidisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity.
Education Studies by its nature and complexity cannot seek identity with any one of
these approaches. It will suggest that, given the complexity of the context it serves to
match, that instead Education Studies is embedded within transdisciplinarity.”
However, designating education as a transdiscipline is a novel idea and it still needs
time and discussions for its common acceptance.

7.6.2.7 Education as discipline of disciplines
Education as a field of study can be designated as ‘study of studies’. Education
studies the nature of other disciplines and accordingly suggests the suitable methods
to teach and learn them, strategies to develop their curriculum, and evaluation
methods to judge the outcome. In addition, it guides the policy making for the whole
system of education and prepares effective teachers for teaching different subjects.
With the general system of schooling its study also encompasses studying education
of/about different sections/problems of the society, for example, woman education,
adult education, special education, population education and environmental education.
Therefore, its study directly influences the knowledge transmission in different
subject, for different people and for the different issues/problems of the society. While
other disciplines limit their investigation to their field only it investigates almost all
the branches of knowledge, takes educationally significant concepts and principles
from them and in return helps in transacting their knowledge effectively. It
encourages other disciplines to focus on their work and in the meantime, it
investigates methods, tools and techniques to disseminate knowledge of these
disciplines. For examples, while scholars of sciences are busy in generating new
theories, laws, discovering and exploring this world, simultaneously scholars of
education are working on methods, textbooks and curriculum of science subjects to
transact knowledge of different sciences effectively. Due to these reasons, it can be
suggested that in spite of considering it a discipline it should be considered as
discipline of disciplines. The claim can also be supported by the fact that it is not easy
to place education in any of the category of different classifications given for
disciplines. It comprises qualities of sciences, social sciences and the humanities. At
the same time, it is practical, productive applied, academic and professional in nature. So cannot be it concluded that due to its super qualities it is not worthy to place it with other disciplines but as discipline of disciplines.

7.6.3 End of Internal politics and disagreement

One thing also noticeable in the discussion so far is that disputes regarding the disciplinary status of education are not largely contributed to the sharing and borrowing of content and methods from other disciplines; as it is a natural tendency of interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary kinds of studies. Actually, the disorganization in its institutional study and lack of agreement on various issues related to its academic status among its own scholars are the main reasons of its doubtful academic status. The discipline of education is full of many possibilities to be developed as a unique field of study; however, there is a great need to overcome the disorganization and internal politics in its study. In other words, there is an urgent need of disciplined study and management of discipline of education.

7.6.4 Enrichment of content, theories and methods

In spite of many defending arguments regarding education as a unique discipline, it should be accepted unhesitatingly that there is an urgent need to enrich its content and methods. Molebash (1990) remarks in this concern, “It is no secret that our educational system is slow to adopting innovations. The old adage, ‘the only constant in life is change,’ has rarely been applied to education.” Proposed changes for a better future of discipline of education are discussed below:

7.6.4.1 Aims and Objectives of Studying Education

The aims and objectives of discipline of education should be:
1. To prepare excellent scholars, researchers, and professionals with a vision to fulfill the loopholes of education system and with the ability to contribute in enriching the study and research of education.
2. To develop not only understanding of philosophical, psychological, sociological and historical underpinnings of education but also proficiency in use of ICT, ability for administration and management, and efficiency in planning policies and developing curriculum.
3. To develop a balanced attitude for implementing existentialistic, positivistic, pragmatic and humanistic paradigms.

4. To develop dedicated and committed scholars who has ability to integrate knowledge of various disciplines to solve not only educational issues but also other significant problems of human beings.

### 7.6.4.2 Subject matter of Education

The foundational disciplines approach in education would not work in long run. In the era of science and technology, we cannot limit educational studies to the study of theories and principles of philosophy, psychology, history, sociology and few more disciplines. Although, these disciplines have their place in the study of education but we cannot deny the emerging needs of our education system. Study of education should focus on the ground needs, for example, quantitative and qualitative expansion, optimal use of available infrastructure, material and human resources, emphasizing local needs with global needs in the curriculum, individual centered methods, inclusion of children with different needs in the same educational set up. For catering these practical needs, study and research in education should also take inputs from various other disciplines like engineering, sciences, management, information and communication technology etc.

Educational content should be a proper blend of theory and practice. Domination of foundational disciplines should be minimized by emphasizing other branches of education like educational technology, distance education, administration and management, curriculum development etc. In addition, evolving branches of education like, education for leadership and citizenship in a democratic and secular society, life-long education, education in digital world, and education for woman empowerment etc., should be more focused.

### 7.6.4.3 Research in Education

Most of the so called ‘findings’ of educational research are questionable. Generally, in the name of educational research a great deal of psychological and sociological research has been done. Instead of using common sense and logic most of the researchers blindly follow the theories and researches of some dominant foundational
disciplines. As a result, most of the researches are badly done and prove invalid or of no use to the practicing teacher in the classroom. In addition, hardly any research is done to enrich content, theory and method of education as a subject of study. Research problems of some immediate concern carried out by the popular survey method are dominating the educational research.

Research in education should focus on rebuilding teacher morale and developing lifelong learning opportunities for teachers that encourage creativity, accompanying quality improvement programs specially for deprived in rural areas, where learner achievement is significantly lower than in urban areas; removing cultural, social, gender, communal and religious biases from curriculum and text books and creating girl friendly learning and legal environments; and moving from theoretical to practical realities. Since long, logical- positivism, based on assumptions of natural sciences, dominated the educational research. However, in recent years, phenomenological inquiry has been increasingly common in educational research. The balance between implementing these two paradigms should be maintained in the future educational research.

7.6.4.4 Development of live practice based theories

Whether education should develop its own theories or should utilise theories of its foundational disciplines is still a matter of debate. Being, largely a practice area and dealing mainly with human behaviour and emotions, having less certainty, predictability and objectivity, theory formulation for education is not considered much justified. However, it is also argued that theories of foundational disciplines generally prove of no use in real class room situations. In this regard, Klenow (2008)\(^45\) postulates that ‘theory work is a critical enterprise for all academic fields, especially those that are new and emerging. The goal of developing a general theory of emergency management should be a top priority in a discipline, like education, where matters of both theory and practice are of great concern, and the range of perspectives widens even further in an effort to satisfy the demands of both scholars and practitioners.’

Most of the applied and professional disciplines for e.g., Management, human resource development and information science are attempting to make significant
advancements in articulating the theoretical foundation of their fields of study.\textsuperscript{46} Scholars and practitioners in education also should think about, develop, and critique the status of the theory in the discipline with a holistic perspective. In view of Whitehead (2013),\textsuperscript{47} ‘As an alternative to the foundational disciplines approach educational theory should be grounded in the explanations that individual practitioners produce to explain their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations in which we live, work and research.’ Whitehead called these explanations living-educational-theories.

7.6.5 No comparison with other fields of study

One thing that should always be kept in mind is that while working on present and future developmental possibilities of education, we can take inspiration from other more developed disciplines but we should not exactly follow the modal of any other discipline. Education should be developed like education and not on the pattern of medicine, management, philosophy, physics or any other field of study. As, we have discussed earlier, in spite of sharing and borrowing, two disciplines can never be alike. Philosophy is not education and education is not philosophy similarly physics is not mathematics and mathematics is not physics. Any discipline can never be alternative or replacement of any other discipline. Therefore, there should not be any comparison with other more or less developed disciplines in order to praise or question its status as a field of study. Education is a vast field of study, no matter, if it is not recognized like other pure and well-established disciplines but still studied, practiced and researched successfully and has huge social and professional importance.

7.7.0 Conclusion

It is very clear from the above discussion that as a field of study education has many unique features to be recognized as a respectable academic discipline. However, nature of this discipline is very different from some commonly accepted disciplines. As a result, its status as a discipline becomes disputable. Further, many controversies are also associated with the discipline that again pose threat to its disciplinary identity. In disciplinary classification, it seems suitable to place it with other social sciences. Like other social sciences, it uses interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches
in its study and research. Education is also recognized as a professional study intended to prepare educators and other related professionals. For a better growth in future, there is an urgent need to clear the controversies associated with the discipline. Content and method of education should also be continuously revised and enriched for the development of this distinctive field of study.

In this chapter, nature and future of education as a field of academic study were discussed in detail. In the next and last chapter, findings, conclusion, suggestions, and delimitation of this study will be discussed.
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