Chapter 1

Introduction

1. A. Philosophy of Education

Philosophy of education is a general philosophical study and explanation of every aspect of education. The phrase 'Philosophy of Education' is not only a part of philosophy, but also a part of education. It is a branch of axiology as it studies about educational value. Again it is accepted as a branch of education as it is the study of the purpose, process, nature and ideals of education. William K Frankena, the analytic philosopher of education considers it a part of axiology because the philosophy of education questions the aims, methods and all the elements of education related to the moral and social conditions. It is a part of education also when it consists of normative and analytical aspects of education.

The problems of philosophy of education are not limited. It does not take a partial view of education. Instead, it comprehends every aspect of educational process. It interprets various areas such as curriculum, context, method, learning, teaching, motivation and
others. When the philosophy of education is considered as a part of education, it discusses only an aspect of education, such as educational psychology, environmental education, educational statistics, etc., which are related to different areas and share a very limited ground of education. As a branch of education, philosophy of education is more experimental and practical. But as a part of philosophy, it is a major subject matter of philosophy. It helps in the understanding of not only an aspect of education but of education as a whole. It is concerned with the aims of education and the basic philosophical problems arising in the fields of education. It is a synthesis of educational facts with educational values.

The phrase ‘Philosophy of Education’ has been used to replace the phrase ‘Educational Philosophy’. ‘Educational Philosophy’ stands for comprehensive theories of education. It also refers to the general theories which try to deal with education, like metaphysicians deal with reality. But these historical general theories with great merits also had considerable shortcomings. They were often grounded on assumptions not generally acceptable and often adopted without argument. They were seldom based on systematic research. ‘Philosophy of Education’ on the other hand does not elaborate
general theories. It is based on analysis and criticism. It deals with every educational problem engaged in everyday educational affairs. In its present analytical mode philosophy of education owes its origin to the analytical work of the British philosophers. The philosophical method is in essence analytical, clear and critical. It is concerned with such tasks as elucidation of concepts, logical appraisal of different kinds of statements and arguments, validation of theories and justification of grounds of belief and knowledge. Philosophy of education is such an activity performed on education, its concepts, theories, beliefs and arguments.

1. B. Definitions of Philosophy of Education

Dr. K.M. Chetty in his paper “Philosophy of Education in the Changing World Order” wrote, “In the philosophy of education, both philosophers and educators who come together should have a common concern and commitment about the nature of education that is required to uphold the dignity of human beings. They should keep in their mind the different values that go into safeguarding the whole humanity. It is with this broader perspective that both philosophers and educators join together to build a philosophy of
Therefore the chief activity of the philosophy of education is to bring out its nature of education and the values which safeguard the whole humanity.

Moore maintained that the philosophy of education consists largely of a critical comment on educational theory and that educational theory itself consists of a number of theories of varying scopes and complexities, ranging from simple theories about teaching to large scale theories allied to, or associated with some social political or religious position.²

In his paper "Towards an analytic philosophy of education", Scheffler recommends construing philosophy of education as the rigorous logical analysis of key concepts related to the practice of education. Peter recommends that the philosophy of education first of all analyses the concepts specific to education – such as "education", "teaching", "training", "university" and "school", and secondarily it analyses the "thinking", "responsibility", "belief" etc. According to Gert Biesta "philosophy of education is not there to provide ultimate answers, let alone to lay the foundations for education. It exists to raise questions and to institute doubt."³ These definitions show that
philosophy of education is the philosophical analysis of educational activities in terms of practical requirement.

"When we speak of the philosophy of education", Frankena defined, "we do not mean simply philosophy, we mean doing the thinking that philosophers do, but doing it about education." Frankena believes that the philosophy of education does not just discuss philosophical problems in general, perhaps in the presence of educators and teachers; it discusses philosophical problems involving a particular topic, namely education.

In the 20th century, Western philosophers have gone to the extent of raising question whether a philosophy of education is even necessary or not. The philosopher Kingsley Price arrived at the conclusion that a clear-cut analysis of education is necessary to provide clear terms for the description of the facts of education. For Steven M Cahn, "if philosophy of education is to be considered a valid field of enquiry for analytic philosophy, the term "education" in this context must refer to some major field of enquiry and not merely to activity of educating individuals."
D J O'Connor defines the philosophy of education as "those problems of philosophy that are of direct relevance to educational theory." He points out that every educational theory contains moral judgments and that some educational theories rest upon religious claims. This leads him to inquire 1) in what ways, if any, an educational theory is similar to a scientific theory, 2) how ethical judgments can be justified, and 3) whether religious claims are meaningful.

Cahn believes that educational value judgements should be different from other value judgements; otherwise the philosophy of education becomes only a sub-branch of ethics. In his words, "It may be true that every educational philosophy contains certain moral judgement, but unless this value judgement differs in some significant way from other value judgements (as, for example, aesthetic judgements differ from moral judgement). The Philosophy of education becomes merely a sub-branch of ethics and is not a distinctive field of enquiry deserving of separate philosophical study." It becomes much like "philosophy of physics" or "philosophy of music" or "philosophy of European history" which are not treated as separate fields and are dealt with under the more inclusive areas of "philosophy of science",
"philosophy of art" and "philosophy of history". When O'Connor justified philosophy of education as a sub-branch of ethics, Scheffler seems to view philosophy of education as a sub-branch of epistemology. But Scheffler's approach and analysis does not turn philosophy of education as a sub-branch of epistemology.

Philosophy is generally regarded as a great synthesizing and speculative discipline. The philosophy of education is, thus, also philosophising of educational experience rather than a body of conclusion. It is a philosophical process of solving educational problems through the philosophical method, from a philosophical attitude to arrive at philosophical conclusions and results. It is the criticism of the general theory of education. It is a synthesis of educational facts with educational values. John Dewey believes all philosophy as the philosophy of education. Dewey emphasized all philosophy as philosophy of education because when philosophy deals with the sceptical problems it cannot come to a definite conclusion. Therefore philosophy should be involved only with social problems which are also educational problems. But Dewey's view is criticized by most of the philosophers as it is a very narrow assumption to say that philosophy is nothing but 'philosophy of
education'. The philosophy of education is a branch of social philosophy. On the other hand philosophy is an autonomous discipline. The former is a part of the latter, which is the whole. According to Bertrand Russell, philosophy of education is a new branch or a new subject which discusses educational problems from a philosophical point of view. It is a branch of applied philosophy. Of the three divisions of philosophy viz., epistemology, metaphysics and axiology, philosophy of education comes under the division of axiology. Therefore it is generally concerned with the value of education. O'Connor defines the philosophy of education as "those problems of philosophy that are of direct relevance to the educational theory."  

1. C. Aims of Philosophy of Education

The aims of the philosophy of education are synthesized in the multifaceted development of personality. Most of modern and contemporary philosophers of education in both the East and the West accepted the aim of philosophy of education as to be the all-round development of personality. All round development consists of all the aspects — physical, mental, moral, social, emotional and
spiritual. Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi has admitted it as 'harmonious
development' and for Herbert Spencer, it is the 'whole life' or
'complete living'. Spencer has ignored the spiritual aspect as the aim
of education. Plato aimed in producing a citizen of the right type who
is socially, economically, intellectually and politically useful and fit.
Both Plato and Aristotle laid stress on physical health and mental
strength. As such, both prescribed certain patterns of education for
the gymnastics of the body and music for the soul. Therefore it
should be remembered that in determining the aims of education no
thinker is exclusively an idealist or a pragmatist. Corresponding to
different aspects of life, different philosophies and ideologies are
provided and all these ideologies are complimentary rather than
contradictory. To emphasize one at the cost of the other "is to see
the part and identify with the whole."¹⁰ The aim of the philosophy of
education will be discussed broadly in the following chapters.

However, we may say that, education consists in the development of
all the capacities in the individual. The capacities are those which
will enable him to control his environment and fulfil his possibilities.
On the other hand, philosophy is an attempt to find an explanation of
the whole universe. No practice is good and scientific unless rooted
in philosophical thought. Philosophical thought gives logic, rational sequence and system to education. Education as the art of preparing for life can not be divorced from the philosophy of life. What is man? What is his origin? What is man's goal or destiny? These are some pertinent questions of philosophical enquiry. Many philosophers have held that philosophy can establish the truth of certain answers to such fundamental questions. The philosophy of education is regarded as the systematic discussion of educational problems at a philosophical level. It is a philosophical process of solving educational problems through a philosophical method and philosophical attitude.

So the philosophical attitude is nothing but philosophy applied to education. It is applied in two senses. Firstly, in as much as education, philosophy aims at something called the good life; it is in ethics, metaphysics and epistemology that we should find the formula for it. Secondly, another way of applying the philosophy of education is by using the tools of technical philosophy to discuss educational theories critically. Sydney Hook maintains that the philosophy of education develops only when philosophers and educators as well as other intelligent citizens concern themselves
with questions of education, explore their barrel of conflicting value commitments and seek some comprehensive theory of human values to guide us as the resolution of conflicts. Therefore philosophy of education is not only the application of philosophers views to educational problems, but also that both philosophers and educators who come together should have a common concern and commitment about the nature of education that is required to uphold the dignity of human beings.

1. D. Scope of Philosophy of Education

The philosophy of education as an independent study has its own scope and function. The scope of the philosophy of education includes the critical evaluation of aims, ideas and education, analysis of human nature, educational values, the theory of knowledge and the relationship of education and social progress. It seems to perform three functions: 1) speculative, 2) normative, and 3) critical. The speculative function of philosophy of education consists in pursuing and enquiry, forming theory about education, its causes and nature. While doing so it tries to make a survey of the whole field. Normative functions are related to the formation of goals,
norms and standards. The Critical function consists in scrutinizing rigorously the terms and propositions involved in educational thought and practice.

Now the question arises, what are the problems 'philosophy of education' deals with? In his "Preface to Indian Philosophy of Education" R.S. Pandey mentioned some problems, which are analyzed by the 'philosophy of education'. These are –

1. What is the nature of education?
2. Why should education be imparted?
3. What is the need of education?
4. For what objectives should education be imparted?
5. What is the relationship between Education and Philosophy?
6. What is the impact of philosophical thoughts on education?
7. How to theorize or philosophize the educational practices?
8. How can the excellence of education be brought about?
9. What are educational values?
10. To what extent can the values be taught?

Though these questions are regarded as the primary questions for the philosophical analysis of education, however, for every
philosopher of education the aim is not the same. They are contradictory in their views regarding acquisition of knowledge, character development, individual development and social development. The philosophers who support knowledge as the aim of education recognize knowledge as power, virtue and happiness. For others either the materialistic development or the social adjustment is the only aim of the philosophy of education. Few of them emphasize on the metaphysical upliftment as the aim of education. But if we show interest only in one side of the development as the aim of philosophy of education, it will be the same as the old story of the six blind men and the elephant.

1. E. Indian Concept of Philosophy of Education

The Indian system of the philosophy of education is specially speculative and normative in nature. The Indian philosophy of education was initially laid down by the Vedas. According to the Vedic view the world is pervaded by divinity and the aim of every living being is to achieve the liberation. This is possible by following one's dharma. The same normative value is followed by Buddhist's philosophy of education in a refined manner, which presented a
developed system of education, well known not only in India but throughout the Asia. In modern India Swami Vivekananda, Annie Besant, Sri Aurobindo and different thinkers laid it out emphasizing upon education as a means of character development. By education Gandhi meant ‘an all round drawing out of the best in child and man—body, mind and spirit’. Gandhi inculcated the philosophy of education which is character-building through development of values. Gandhi wanted to change society with the help of basic education by developing social value through social control. Rabindra Nath Tagore also emphasizes upon synthesis of individual and social aspects. Otherwise education is bound to be crippled. Synthesis of the two will prepare the individual to sacrifice for the service of the country. Vivekananda believes that control of the mind should be taught first. He uttered an eternal truth, which not only the youth, but people of all age-groups and of all kinds have to absorb. Dr. Ambedkar asserts that education is for the development of the mind and the human personality. As a humanist he had a preference for humanist education which indicates the effort of man to rediscover himself as a free being, rather than as a child of the church or of the state. If the mind is controlled, individual and social life can be peaceful and harmonious.
1. F. The Present Study Area

The purpose of the present work is a critical study of philosophy of education with special reference to Bertrand Russell and Sri Aurobindo. A comparison of both the philosophers will also be done to make the observations more distinctive. Bertrand Russell is a British philosopher and his philosophy is realistic in nature. He has given importance on the pragmatic value of human life. Though the basic and universal aim of education, for him, is character formation, Russell has touched all the aspects of human life correspondent with education and thoughtfully evaluated it. He has maintained the individual development correlated with the social development. How different aspects of society—politics, religion and other systems influence education, has also been discussed in his philosophy of education. In his book ‘On Education’ Russell considered the individual factor for his study. He divided educational ideas into two types, namely, education of character and intellectual education. In the part of the education of character, he has described the development of the very common factors of the child. From the beginning of a life it should be careful about the education of courage, truthfulness, affection, sympathy, etc. Intellectual education
includes the curriculum, the last school years and also the universal education. Another book, 'Education and the Social Order' deals with the social problems, the problems of patriotism, religion, class-feeling, competition, communism, economics and others relevant to the social reconciliation.

Sri Aurobindo is an Indian idealistic philosopher who was brought up in England and completed his education under the British system of education. The elaborate idea of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of education is related to the whole idea of the life and its existence. The purpose of life is identical with the purpose of education. The philosophy of education is a philosophical activity in the field of education. It shows new pathways of life and knowledge, fixes the aim of individual in his personal as well as social life, and also defines the purpose of life.

The philosophy of education, adopted by Sri Aurobindo, is generally normative in nature. Like other Indian philosophers of education, Sri Aurobindo also does not try to analyze what philosophy of education is. But his comprehensive study on education and its significance in
human life is the basis, which interprets the entire concept of the philosophy of education.

In his philosophy, Sri Aurobindo developed the objective reality to the highest conception of Reality. The Western objective reality or existential standpoint of reality is theoretical. It is not interested in the problems of attaining content or value. But the Indian axiological standpoint of reality converts the theoretical into the practical, because it does not accept the reality in a thing, which it possesses without a value. Reason is also related to value. For Sri Aurobindo, the value must be spiritual value, which is indicated by bliss and this is revealed by intuition. From the point of view of the nature of consciousness through which these values are obtained, we have here a hierarchical gradation from reason to intuition. Therefore education leads to the spiritual development of the individual. Sri Aurobindo's system of education does not aim only at the adjustment and the normal development of the human personality but also its total growth and transformation. In his philosophy of education, education leads to the evolution of man. This is more important at the present juncture when most of the educationists are realizing the need for an educational system aiming at man-making.
Both the philosophers Bertrand Russell and Sri Aurobindo are contemporary. Sri Aurobindo was brought up in England in the same society and culture as Bertrand Russell and learned British culture and thought first hand. Therefore, both the philosophers have some similarities in their philosophical views, including the philosophy of education. To understand their views distinctly and how they affect each other, it is very important to compare them carefully. This study will try to analyze their views on the philosophy of education with the respect to each others'. They will also be criticized so that we can get a refined educational view to serve the society. As both the philosophers lived in the 19th century there might have been some changes with time in the society. Their views regarding education and other aspects of philosophy are somehow related to that period. But it is also true that in this post-modern period also, we cannot ignore the philosophy of the previous periods, because both the philosophers are not limited to only their time. Their views are universally accepted and useful.

Both Bertrand Russell and Sri Aurobindo took interest in all affairs of man—philosophical, cultural, social, and scientific. The creative thinking of these two contemporary philosophers became evident
from their emphasis on the freedom of the society along with the freedom of the individual. They are both in favour of uplifting humanity as a whole. For them the freedom of the individual depends on the freedom of the society as a whole. Man cannot enjoy the highest destiny unless the human society as a whole is free.

In this critical study of the philosophy of education, different aspects of philosophy of education will be discussed. Both Russell and Sri Aurobindo are concerned about the nature, aims, methods, curricula and the religious and moral values of the philosophy of education. They are also concerned about the role of the teacher in the educational system. There are both similarities and differences between the two philosophers. Both have pursued the experimental ideal for the universal use of education. The beginning of individual development leads to the development of the society. Bertrand Russell's education of character formation and Sri Aurobindo's integral education are the main factors in their interpretations of the philosophy of education. A comparison of both the philosophers for the productive study of education will also be attempted here. It is
hoped that this close examination and comparison will facilitate a wider study of the philosophy of education.

References

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