CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

7.1 SUMMARY

In this investigation, an attempt has been made to study the educational thought of Dev Atma and its implications for the Indian educational system. This chapter contains a summary of the general and educational philosophy of Dev Atma.

7.2 NEED OF THE STUDY

In spite of a large number of philosophies and prescriptions put forward by thinkers and philosophers to solve the problems of the individual and society, the waywardness still persists. Chaos and confusion continue to reign. Discord and prejudice agitate the individual and society. Winds of despair are flowing from every direction and strife among the human race is increasing daily.

We, therefore, are in need to be acquainted with a philosophy which may give us the prescriptions to heal the serious maladies and to awaken and educate people for a brighter future based on truth, beauty and goodness.

The present generation would need poetic imagination to have vivid realisation of the social life of the Hindu society in the last century, which had touched the lowest ebb. It was burdened with the crushing weight of restrictive taboos, superstitious rites and pernicious customs. It was crippled and cabined by stagnant thoughts and cruel practices. Religion had got confined to idol worship. Morality had turned into untouchability in food and fettish conduct. Social life was
cut into many castes, hedged by irksome inhibitions and defended by mutual vanities and hatred.

At such a time Bhagwan Dev Atma came out with his philosophy based on his deep study of man and his relationship with the universe. Dev Atma holds that all knowledge is acquired by the human soul through experience. He defines knowledge as "the direct awareness of the reality of the various kinds of existence in nature, their qualities and forms, the various natural events, their causes and laws." Bhagwan Dev Atma's philosophy is based on his basic synthetic philosophy. A study of his social and moral philosophy has a wide scope and is of immense value. He has a message to give to the young generation of our country to make everybody live a wholesome and socially useful life.

If the philosophy of Bhagwan Dev Atma is introduced in our educational system, it can bring about a great change in our thinking and doing. The researcher hopes the study of the philosophical and educational ideas of Bhagwan Dev Atma will illumine the path and enlarge the scope for full thinking.

7.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Educational Philosophy of Dev Atma and its Implications for The Indian Educational System.

7.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To make an analytical study of the philosophy of Dev Atma.

To discuss the educational philosophy of Dev Atma in respect of (a) The meta physical (b) The Epistemological (c) The Axiological bases of his philosophy.
To study the implications of the educational philosophy of Dev Atma in terms of aims, curriculum, methods, values and their inculcation, teachers-pupil relationship, discipline, women education.

To give an overview of the educational practices based on Dev Atma’s philosophy in the Dev Samaj institutions.

To give suggestions for the adoption of educational philosophy of Dev Atma in the Indian education system.

7.5 METHOD AND TECHNIQUES OF THE STUDY

For the purpose of conducting of this study, philosophical-cum-historical method was used. Philosophical method was used to analyse and synthesize the fundamental principles and thoughts of Dev Atma with a view to draw their relevance to the study of contemporary educational practices. Historical method was employed to study metaphysical, epistemological and axiological dimensions of the philosophy of Dev Atma with the help of primary and secondary sources.

The primary sources consisted of the works written by Dev Atma himself in the form of Auto-biography - Dev Shastras and other literature. The secondary sources were the books, journals and other literature written and published by his disciples, Dev Samaj Society and Dev Samaj Educational Institutions.

In order to discuss the details of the philosophy of Dev Atma and to draw conclusions, both internal and external methods of criticism were employed.
7.6 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study was limited to-

1. The philosophy of Dev Atma with special reference to his educational philosophy investigated through primary and secondary sources.
2. A survey of some educational institutions and interviews with some Dev Samaj workers.
3. The study remained at the level of conceptualisation alone. Interviews were used only for the conceptual clarity of the investigator.

7.7 GENERAL PHILOSOPHY OF DEV ATMA

Dev Atma’s main purpose of discussing the epistemological problems was to emphasise what a human being ought to know for his self-development and liberation. When he says that each of us must know how our body functions, he does not want us to be theoretical experts in physiology. Rather he wants us to follow the natural laws of good health so that we may live a healthy life. This basic practical ethico-religious concern of Dev Atma with the problems of how to live a good human life gives a different orientation to his whole epistemological discussion.

Dev Atma’s epistemology is geared towards giving man the knowledge of the laws of Nature which also include the laws of his own body and soul.

According to Dev Atma (1975), "Philosophy of universe and philosophy of human personality became the chief concern of my study. The scientific methods of investigation which were so imperative for the researchers into these domains, gradually, acquired sovereign sway over my heart. The love of experimental investigation gradually
developed in me to such an extent and it had so entrenched itself in me through my study of logical principles that there was no room left in my mind to entertain a mythical or purely speculative belief."

According to him, true knowledge belongs to the following four spheres:

1) The reality of the various kinds of existences in nature composed of matter and force.
2) The physical form and qualities of various kinds of real existence in nature.
3) The inanimate and animate forces of various kinds of real existences in nature and their attributes.
4) The immutable processes of nature also called its immutable laws under the operation of which various kinds of changes take place in different kinds of real existence in nature and the facts concerning such changes.

But all our knowledge is not restricted to sense experience alone. The power of retention, memory, initiation, power of imagination, thought, reasoning, concentration, etc, constitute the second source of knowledge. It must be noted that these mental powers do not constitute an independent source of knowledge. They are complementary to the powers of sense perception. It is because of these mental powers that we can rise above the sensuous knowledge and know universal laws of Nature. When senses and intellectual powers are blended together in a harmonious whole, what we get is the reality. This is the level of scientific knowledge.

'I' or ego consciousness enables a person to distinguish between himself and other persons, animals, plants and intimate
objects. It is this 'I, - consciousness which is primarily responsible for our knowledge of the external world, our own inner life and our ego.

7.7.1 Metaphysical Basis

According to the philosophy of Dev Atma, Nature and Nature alone is real. Nothing beyond and outside Nature is real. To be, is to be embodied, to be causally related as constituents of this one uncreated, self-existant universe. Dev Atma held that the laws of Nature are immutable, that Nature is changing every moment in its entirety, at all levels physical, organic, animal or human. Another distinct feature of Dev Atma's metaphysics is the acceptance of human soul as part of Nature. Soul has no super-natural origin. Soul is an organised constructive life-power of human beings. Its uniqueness is that it is neither created not uncreated; it is evolved and it is the product of certain conditions in the biological world. So, a life-force or soul has conditional future existence. It is in a state of ceaseless change for better or for worse.

Dev Atma (1975): "It is the highest and noblest privilege of man to have the capacity to acquire greater and greater true knowledge about Nature in general and about his own soul in particular, which is the most essential part of one's being; and to get more and more freedom from all false beliefs, superstitions fiction, and to be able not only to get rid of every kind of falsehood but to accept truth and truth alone."

7.7.2 Axiological Basis :

The good of an organism is health and growth; its badness is its ill-health and stunted growth. In the same way for Dev Atma the good of soul (life force in man) is its health and growth, and the bad of the
soul is its diseased and stunted growth. When we think, feel and act in such a way that our soul gets strength and health, we are being morally right. But when we think, feel and act in a manner that our soul's strength is decreased, we are morally wrong. Moral laws are nothing but the laws of health and growth of soul or the life force in man. Moral laws are connected with the life of soul and express the conditions under which it can maintain or increase the strength, health and growth of soul. These laws can be verified. Their sanction, authority and truth are in the soul, not in any supernatural agency.

Dev Atma gave a new meaning to sin and virtue. Sin is what is injurious to the soul of the doer and other existents, and virtue is what contributes to the soul life of the doer and other existents. It has nothing supernatural about it. Rather the cause of paap or punya is in the soul itself. Dev Atma believed that virtue (punya) or sin (paap) is based on human relationships. So, our relationships should rise from selfish pleasure to altruism. Dev Atma rejected the ethics of other worldiness. One cannot jump out of natural and social relations. It is in these relationships that good or evil arises. The life of paap or punya, good or evil is in relation to nature. The life of punya (virtue) is the life of health, strength and happiness of soul (life force) which is possible when we develop the whole gamut of altruistic feelings. The life of paap (sin) is the life of low-loves and low-hates which weaken and devitalise the soul.

Thus, man’s first duty is to adjust each part of his organism to other parts and his whole being to all existence. It is on this metaphysical truth of relations that man should try to cultivate his relationships with the universe through noble feelings of respect, appreciation, gratitude and service. The lower kind of sensuous feelings are natural. They develop with age. They do not require
special education or training. On the other hand, a higher kind of feelings are required to be developed through education and training. Ryle calls higher feelings as "developed or educated".

Animals are devoid of value consciousness. Only human beings are capable of developing values. Values are developed tastes and are just natural feelings. Dev Atma thought that a person could understand rightness or wrongness of an action to the extent to which the value of a sense of justice was developed in him.

7.7.3 Epistemological Basis

Dev Atma held that in order to acquire knowledge one must have a deep love for truth, for the scientific method and for the method of logical reasoning.

Dev Atma's theory of knowledge makes it clear that knowledge is objective. Knowing things as they are, is the highest knowledge. The true knowledge is in understanding the immutable laws of Nature which reveal true nature of life and existence. Dev Atma emphasised the need for mental development for acquiring true knowledge, which results from the practice of spiritual discipline. He had firm faith in the principles of scientific verification, scientific description and methodology.

7.7.4 Conclusion

✧ The universe is real and eternal.
✧ The universe is composed of matter and force.
✧ There is ceaseless change in the universe due to the interaction of matter and force.
✧ This ceaseless change in the universe proves evolutionary or devolutionary for different existences.
The evolutionary and devolutionary changes in the existences in the universe are due to their higher or lower activities. Every existence in the universe gets degraded by low activities and gets upgraded by higher activities.

The human soul gets degraded by evil activities. If it cannot get freedom from evil activities, it goes on getting degraded and one day it becomes completely extinct.

The presence of evolutionary forces in a human soul alone constitutes religious forces. The life which is manifested by these religious forces is called religious life.

Apart from true religious life and its true teaching, whatever else is prevalent in the name of religion on this earth is pure imagination. Through the acceptance of any fictitious religion or faith or spiritual exercise, one gains nothing but greatly harms oneself and harms others as well.

In the evolution of human species Shri Guru Dev Bhagwan (Dev Atma) alone gained complete soul-organism. There is complete manifestation of religious life in him. Through his influence of higher forces, fit (adhkari) souls get deliverance from low activities and achieve evolution in religious life.

Human soul by itself, on fulfilling certain laws, builds a gross body for itself. On the death of its gross body, it also keeps alive by constructing a subtle body from its gross body similar to its gross body on fulfilling certain laws. However, this subtle body has superior or inferior form, according to the higher or lower character of a soul.
The universe consists of gross regions and subtle regions. Persons in the higher subtle regions show a degree of harmony in all respects to the extent of their superior life.

Extremely degraded souls, i.e. 'adham atmas', after building their subtle bodies, cannot reach any of the subtle regions of Parloka (heaven on other planets). But other souls higher to these extremely degraded souls reach one or another subtle region of Parloka according to their character.

To an extent a soul obtains deliverance from low activities and attains evolution through higher activities, and reaches a higher region of Parloka. To that extent it is the recipient of higher and satisfying influences and rises higher in evolution on being capable of it.

When a soul reaches such a region of Parloka where there is perfect harmony between the different kingdoms of Nature, it gets perfectly good well-wishers as his/her companions and enjoys perfect peace and bliss and becomes capable of higher and higher evolution. Without evolving a complete religious life, a soul cannot become the inhabitant of this region.

7.8 EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF DEV ATMA

Philosophies and cultures, when institutionalised over the centuries, tend to get dried up, leaving the intellectual climate dull and desolate. Nothing short of a big 'shock' is required to awaken a man in society, staying put in smug complacency. In the eternal quest for truth, the philosophy of Dev Atma unquestionably makes us sit up with its startling modernity. The logical vigour, the uncompromising scientific objectivity and the altruistic appeal of Dev Atma’s philosophy,
project a world-view which is a refreshing food for thought, for philosophers and educationists alike. Whether philosophy with its metaphysical assumptions provides the first principles for a theory of education or is a generalised theory reconstructed about education, as held by Dewey, one cannot ignore the intimate, tantalising interaction in which the two hold each other. Viewing from this position, the naturalistic Waltanchauung of Dev Atma opens up some very engaging possibilities for educational thought and practice.

The task of ascertaining the educational implications of a philosophical system inevitably leads one to examine its metaphysical assumptions, the epistemological bases and the concomitant axiological framework. While the metaphysical position provides us with the much-needed ontological frame of reference for the universe in which it operates, the epistemological table of principles provides the guidelines for building up a methodology to suit the content of education. Axiology serves to identify the values and ideals which lend quality and character to this planned human endeavour, i.e. education. Moving along these parameters, one can easily underline some of the distinct features of the educational philosophy of Dev Atma.

**7.8.1 Aims Of Education**

Bhagwan Dev Atma believed that the aim of education should be to realise the optimum progress in all fields of life. Education should help the new generation to acquire the latest scientific knowledge and technological skills. In earlier times, education could satisfy this requirement with ease and effect. When science started its career three hundred years ago, its methods of research were not developed and it did not attract a large number of top intellects as its researchers. That is why progress was slow as the movement of a bullock cart.
Educational methods were inadequate to impart united scientific knowledge.

He strongly advocated that education should be equipped with the latest knowledge and technological skills. It should also develop attitudes to remain open to the ever-advancing knowledge. Only notes of the teacher should not be sufficient. Education should emphasise on developing attitudes in the student which will make his relations with his fellow human beings rich with adjustment and understanding.

The aim of education should be intellectual. Due to the initial development of science and technology, it is not only the face of the earth that had changed. It was the texture of the social relationship that too got changed.

Today agricultural civilisation is on the decline and industrialised civilisation is on the ascendant. Dev Atma laid emphasis on finding the solution of economic conflicts and social alienation.

Dev Atma believed that education must provide emotional security, emotional identity, emotional fulfilment and emotional enrichment. Dev Atma said that there should be a complete sense of belongingness. In such conditions, there was no occasion for a sense of isolation, or feeling of being left out altogether. Dev Atma emphasised that the aim of education should be emotional as well as economic satisfaction.

He suggested the formulation of the aims of education according to the physical, geographical, social and psychological needs of the people. Some have suggested modesty and humility as the aim of education and others have emphasised the creation of a noble mind in a healthy body. Dev Atma emphasised that only right education frees the human mind from all the existing pains and sorrows. The aim of education, according to Dev Atma, is education for other worldliness,
preparation for living, spiritual development, the growth of a perfect personality, character formation, intellectual development and creating democratic awareness.

Education is meant not only to help the child academically but also to free his mind from fear, violence, dogmas and superstitions so that he can flower in love and goodness. When all children will be helped in developing love and goodness and in having a ‘global outlook’ through holistic education’ only then there can be peace and harmony on this earth and the world can be saved from total extinction.

Dev Atma believed that preparation for living, social efficiency, vacation and utilitarian aims should not be explicit but implicit in the system of education.

Dev Atma taught us to remain emancipated from the bondages of all worldly lusts and move towards the highest and supreme universal soul. He believed that there existed a perfect pattern of living for each individual. Human personality being of supreme value and constituting the noblest work of Nature, it must be helped to realise the perfect pattern through education.

According to Dev Atma, character formation is the major aim of education. He believed that the heart of youngsters can be made full of compassion for the suffering humanity. Education is a means of inculcating moral habits such as strict obedience to elders, truthfulness, honesty and temperance. Good conduct should be greatly emphasised. Through good conduct, Dev Atma believed, man could gain spiritual merit, wealth and beauty.

He wanted to create a classless society in which there was no discrimination against men by men on any ground. To him barriers of caste or creed, high or low, rich or poor carried no meaning.
Throughout his life he tried hard to bridge the gulf between various social, ideological, linguistic and cultural groups of India. He wanted students to attain perfection through sadhanas (meditation). His meditations were very different from the ones advocated by the spiritual people of India.

7.8.2 Curriculum

Man is higher than animals. His rationality helps him in moulding the environment to his heart’s desire. It is through his creative power that he has been able to get a culture which is rich in both spiritual and social aspects. Since the aim of education, according to Dev Atma, is to achieve "perfection of body, mind and soul" the curriculum has to be such that it helps in producing persons with these qualities.

He wanted that all studies should be correlated with science, "that a curriculum centered on science would provide a liberal education." To Dev Atma science constitutes a sort of Supreme Court before whose tribunal all other branches of knowledge are obliged to place their right to recognition. Dev Atma wanted literary and knowledge of the aesthetic culture also to be imparted to children.

According to him, subjects should be taught as much as they are helpful in understanding science and nature.

He wanted emphasis to be laid on the experiences. There is no place for teaching about God and religion. Here is the religion of reason. Reasoning power, he said, should be developed to the maximum. That would make mankind happy and help it achieve greater and greater heights in life.

Dev Atma believed in complete unfolding of the personality. He gave great importance to good manners related to different relationships in society. Songs and prayers should be sung by children
which illumine their relationship with society. These songs and prayers help in the cultivation of sweetness and understanding in all relationships.

The medium of instruction should be the mother tongue to start with.

Education should be related to the students' day-to-day life. So, the curriculum should not be divorced from the actual life and religion.

Dev Atma gave great importance to moral and social education. He wanted the children to be taught not only about the world of facts but also about man's duty not only about 'what is' but also about what 'ought to be.'

The Kothari Commission (1966) also stressed: "The Central and state governments should adopt measures to introduce education in moral, social and spiritual values in all educational institutions."

Dev Atma gave importance to the whole humanity. He believed that it is the purpose of all educational institutions to preserve, deserve, develop and transmit culture. It is for education to acquaint the child with our cultural heritage so that he conserves, promotes and transmits it to the coming generation. The school curriculum must reflect culture and civilisation. It must include cultural subjects as history, literature, social sciences, philosophy and the like.

The curriculum should lead to the enrichment of the capacities of mind 'knowing', 'feeling' and 'doing'. The various meditations (sadhanas) should be mentioned.

7.8.3 Methods

The classroom is a place where the mature mind of teacher and immature minds of pupils meet. There is a bond of common purpose between the two. According to Kilpatric, "The teacher who keeps
consciously before himself the aim of education must necessarily realise the wider meaning of method. The method is merely a process of establishing and maintaining contact between the pupil and the subject matter.

At the pre-school stage, children receive informal education either from their parents or their wardens. Informal education is an important factor in shaping their ideas and growth. For that matter, what a household with a healthy tradition of life can do, a modern nursery or kindergarten cannot do. The influence of the parents on their children, when either of the two or both are enlightened and literate, will no doubt be constructive. If the couple is well-informed and has a healthy view of life, it will put the future entrants into formal education on the right lines.

Methods like questioning, discussion and lecture are very important. But more important than these are the various creative projects which are very effective in educating the children. The emphasis should be on the spontaneous activity of the pupils.

Classroom teaching is considered primarily as a meeting of personalities, where 'mature self' speaks to 'immature self'. In this intercourse the later follow the leader. The teacher must help his/her pupils to self-education and self-development by enabling them to see how they do for themselves and thus indirectly influencing them by encouraging them to rely upon themselves and think for themselves. They should be initiated into the essentials of the scientific method of analysis and synthesis. It is through this method that they will be able to solve their problems.

Dev Atma stressed the need for dynamic techniques. His emphasis was not only on the information aspect of learning but also
on the total experience of children which they get directly through contact with nature, things and men and through sensory organs.

Dev Atma believed in the principles of individualisation, play activity, experience, environment and freedom. He did not want to crush the individuality of the child. He wanted the child to be encouraged to discover things for himself. Self-help and independent search are sure ways of learning.

Dev Atma believed in experience and actual confrontation with the situation resulting in sound knowledge. Direct experience with nature, things and men imparts knowledge more scientifically than the chalk and talk method. The child's interest must be properly attended to. The teacher should understand the children. Without having the airs of superiority, the teacher should give the children a sense of esteem. Having a sense of humour helps in motivating children for learning.

Dev Atma believed that by having a psychological insight into the innate tendencies and needs of the child and in his process of education, the teacher should provide appropriate facilities for growth and development. Instead of being a dictator, the teacher should be a guide to the children.

Dev Atma believed that the teacher should have supreme reverence for truth and fact and just assist his pupils to understand the truth and fact. Instead of making discoveries himself, the teacher should assist his pupils to make these themselves. The children have to stand on their own feet and proceed further by themselves.

According to Dev Atma, nature is everything. Nature is the whole reality. It is certain that self-preservation is important, but that is only a means through which man aspires to attain higher values of life. Man does not live merely to exist physically. He has to attain nobler
purposes of life. There are men who don’t care for physical comforts to attain these nobler purposes. Dev Atma laid emphasis on the positive goal of human life.

7.9 CONCEPT OF DISCIPLINE

He strongly believed in strict self discipline in order to achieve the aims of education professed by him.

Dev Atma pointed out (1875) that a person, being a member of an organized society or any constituted body or order founded for some righteous object, proves to be trustworthy or dependable in relation to that organization when he possesses this sense of discipline so strongly that in complying with its proper laws, its right procedure or the legitimate orders of its officers, he does not permit his self-will to interfere in any way, but finds pleasure in fully sacrificing for it any of his comforts, pleasure-giving relations, things, money or any business if and when necessary. Therefore a country, whose people have developed this sense of discipline to a greater extent, has produced proportionately more reliable persons in this respect. And in accordance with the immutable law of Nature, the people possessing these higher senses have become superior to the people of a country who have no sense of discipline or possess it comparatively in a lesser degree.

7.10 WOMEN EDUCATION

Dev Atma launched a vigorous campaign against several social evils and customs such as dowry, child marriage, enforced widowhood, caste system, etc. He expressed great sympathy for Indian women for the injustices done to them in the form of child marriage, enforced, widowhood, denial of opportunities of education
and career. He was pained at the injustices done to the untouchables in the form of social humiliations and denial of opportunities for education and better professions. Dev Atma felt that it was unjust to keep women uneducated, to keep them within four the walls of the house, to make them helpless, to deny them equal rights in career, marriage and professions. He saw that the future of women lay in education and therefore made women's education as the chief component of his society's agenda on social reforms. Dev Samaj opened a chain of women's schools and colleges in the country.

7.11 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. A comparative study can be conducted about the functioning of Bhagwan Dev Atma's schools with other public schools in India.

2. A comparative study of Bhagwan Dev Atma's schools with other government and model schools in India can be taken up.

3. An experimental study can be conducted regarding the impact of Bhagwan Dev Atma's teachings on students' personality development in general and moral development in particular.

4. Detailed investigation comparing the educational thinking of Bhagwan Dev Atma with other Indian and western educational philosophers can be undertaken.