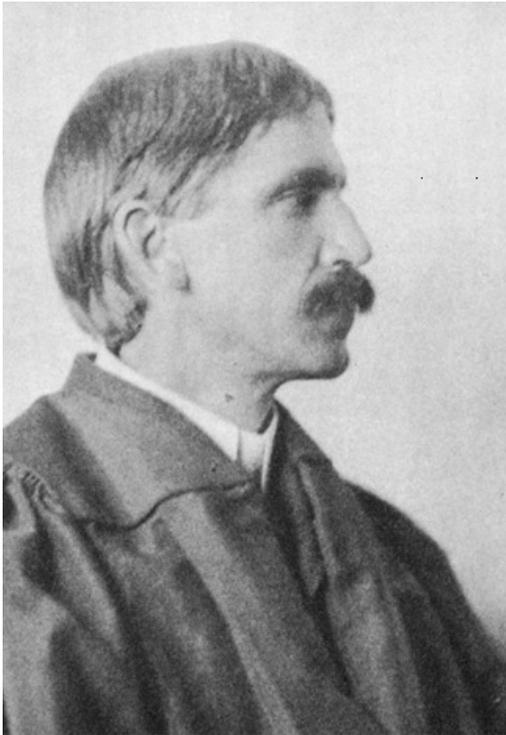


A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON EDUCATION

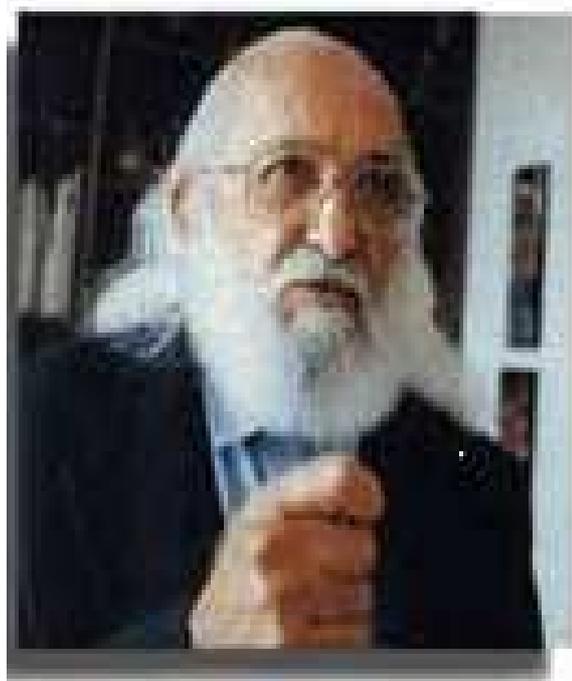
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF JOHN DEWEY AND PAULO FREIRE

By Alphonse Fernandes



JOHN DEWEY
1859-1952

PAULO FREIRE
1921-1997



Though many have lived their lives on this earth, very few are remembered by the people. Persons like John Dewey and Paulo Freire are still remembered for making a difference in the lives of children and adults.

People commonly use the expression, 'respond to the situation and do not react'. I think Dewey and Freire are relevant even today because they responded to the situation of their time. Freire in an interview says "Reading the **world** is important rather than reading the **word**". Dewey realized that the education of his time was not giving opportunity for the students to bring the best out of themselves. Mere accumulating knowledge alone is not sufficient to earn ones living. But along with theory, if practical application takes place the percentage of success in life would be greater.

Freire on the other hand, who had suffered in his childhood, realized a task that was ahead of him. He wanted to make a difference in the lives of the people. He aimed at conscientizing the people. Conscientization would make the people to think critically and create a critical consciousness. This could be brought about not by banking method of education but through problem posing education method. To achieve this task there should be a room for dialogue. Dialogue can occur only if there is love, hope, faith and trust in other person.

My interest in these thinkers started growing last year. Freire's "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" which we study in Liberation Philosophy and Dewey's education system which we studied in Philosophy of Education did provoke me. I kept my interest alive. This year I chose these thinkers so that I could incorporate their insights for my own use and for my future mission if I am in an educational field.

Dewey was a psychologist as well as an educationist. Being a psychologist he gave importance to both the dimensions of nature and nurture in the development of children. While drawing out from a child what is present potentially the educator has a responsibility to pay attention to child's mental ability and the social environment. This task is not easy. Keeping this task in mind if I could help at least one or two children my study of John Dewey would be successful.

This paper runs through five chapters; first chapter deals with the basic understanding about education, philosophy and philosophy of education. In the second chapter I have made an attempt to show how John Dewey is a philosopher. Some of the key concepts like experience, pragmatism, theory of enquiry which are very closely related with his education system are explained.

Third chapter gives a panoramic view of why Dewey could be called an educationist. It throws more light on what he means by education, his methods of education, and the role of education in the society etc. Fourth chapter explains Freire's understanding of education. His problem posing education through dialogue and his concept of Conscientisation can be viewed as a radical approach towards education. Final chapter makes an assessment of these two educationists. I have also made an attempt to see the relevance of these thinkers to our country.

To conclude, education seeks to help an individual live a balanced life. Dewey's system of education focuses on the children who are in the 'centre'. His method is not directly concerned with the people who are marginalized, poor etc. In contrast, Freire's views are centered around the people who are on the 'periphery' and those who are marginalized. If Dewey stresses on the moral dimension of consciousness, Freire stresses on the ethical dimension. A synthesis of critical enquiry into reality which was supported by Dewey and bringing awareness about the reality through conscientization just as Freire did, will enrich our educational system. Such an education is the need of the hour for our country today.

CHAPTER 1

MEANING AND DEFINITIONS OF EDUCATION

1.1 Meaning of Education

Education is the deliberate and systematic influence exerted by the mature person on the immature through instruction and discipline. It means the harmonious development of all the powers of the human being- physical, social, intellectual, aesthetic and spiritual. The essential elements in the education process are a creative mind, a well integrated self, socially useful purpose and experiences related to the interests, needs and abilities of the individual as a participant in social living.¹

Educative process involves a threefold change. (1) **From capacities to abilities:** When a baby is born it can do things like grasp, suck, swallow. These actions are inherited. Apart from the physical maturation process all else has to be learned. Though learning in human gets a slow start, it goes beyond the potentialities of the lower animals. Mature human has no instincts in the strictly scientific meaning of the term, but has a vast number of abilities. At first, these abilities are nothing more than capacities. This implies that there is a change from underdeveloped capacities to developed abilities. (2) **From ignorance to knowledge:** The second group of changes involved in the process of education is the change from ignorance of the social inheritance, characteristic of newly born infant, to knowledge which is a characteristic of the adult. (3) **From impulses to ideals:** Here education is the change from domination by animal impulses to motivation by human ideals. This third change occurs along with the growth in knowledge and development of abilities.²

1.2 Etymology and Definitions of Education

The word 'education' is derived from the Latin word 'educere' which means 'to bring forth.' This means that the person who is growing up has the influence of two sources. They are innate self and the environment. So education primarily brings out the talents and the abilities that one possesses. Thus education primarily means

¹ V.R. Taneja and S.Taneja, *Educational Thought and Practices* (New Delhi: Sterling publishers, 1985), 48.

² W. F. Cunningham, *The Pivotal Problems of Education* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1940), 5-9.

enabling the person to realize and actualize his/her abilities into action. In other words, what a person potentiality owns is made into actuality by education.

Word education has yet another root i.e. 'educare' which means 'to bring up.' This would stress the aspect of "training" in education. This view considers that the child's mind is a *tabula rasa*, an empty slate. Thus according to me, the word 'educere, meaning, 'to bring forth' gives a better explanation for education.

Prof. B. C. Rai in his book *Theories of Education* gives another etymology for education. The word 'education' is derived from Latin word 'educatum.' The alphabet 'E' indicates 'from internal' and 'duco' stands for 'to lead.' This analysis of the word 'educatum' clarifies the fact that a child possesses the internal capacities but these capacities are made external through education. In other words, we may say that education awakens those innate powers which a child possesses. This process of awakening is nothing but education."³

According to Dewey, "Education is the process of remaking experience, giving it a more socialized value through increased individual experience, by giving the individual better control over his own powers."⁴

Pestalozzi defines education as "a natural, progressive, and systematic development of all the powers."⁵

According M.K. Gandhi "by education I mean an all round drawing out of the best in child and man-body, mind and spirit."⁶

Aurobindo Ghosh says, "The chief aim of education should be to help the growing soul to draw out that in itself which is best and make it perfect for a noble use"⁷

1.3 Meaning of Philosophy

Etymologically the word philosophy is derived from the Greek words 'philos' (love) and 'sophia' (wisdom) which means 'love of wisdom.' Wisdom is not the same thing as knowledge. It is more than knowledge. Wisdom includes knowledge and goes beyond it to find relationships and to discover implications. Philosophy means mature

³ B.C.Rai, *Theory of Education*, (Lucknow: Prakashan Kendra, 1973), 2.

⁴ W. F. Cunningham, 18.

⁵ Ibid., 20.

⁶ Taneja, *Educational Thought and Practices*. p. 4.

⁷ Ibid.

reflection about any problem in a comprehensive way. Some people regard it as intellectual luxury, but in fact it is life's necessity. It explores the basic resources and aims of life. It asks and tries to answer the deepest questions of life. Philosophy is a search for a comprehensive view of nature.

The definitions given by various thinkers, emphasize different dimensions of philosophy. Some emphasize on the critical aspects, while the others lay emphasis upon its synthetic aspect.

- (a) Philosophy is a *critical* method of approaching experience. According to Clifford Barrat, "It is not the specific content of these conclusions, but the spirit and method by which they are reached, which entitles them to be described as philosophical."⁸
- (b) Philosophy is comprehensive *synthetic* science. According to Roy Wood Sellers, "Our subject (philosophy) is a collection of sciences such as theory of knowledge, logic cosmology, ethics and aesthetics as well as a unified survey."⁹

1.4 Philosophy of Education

Philosophy of education is essentially a method of approaching educational experiences rather than a body of conclusions. It is the specific method which makes it philosophical. Philosophical method is critical, comprehensive, and synthetic. Therefore, philosophy of education is the criticism of the general theory of education. It consists of critical evaluation and systematic reflection upon general theories. In brief, philosophy of education is a philosophical process of solving educational problems through philosophical methods from a philosophical attitude to arrive at philosophical conclusions and results.

1.5 Philosophy and Philosophy of Education

The chief task of philosophy is to determine what constitutes a life worthy of living and the chief task of education is to make life worth living. So the relation between philosophy and education is very close. Philosophy sets the goal and essentials of a good life. Education shows the means to achieve those goals and learn

⁸ C. Barret, *Philosophy* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1935), p 5.

⁹ R.W. Sellers, *The Principles and Problems of Philosophy* (New York: The Macmillan Co, 1926), 3.

those essentials of good life. We can say, philosophy is the theory, while education is practice. Philosophy is the contemplative side, while education is active side. Philosophy deals with the ends; while education with the means and technique of achieving those ends. If philosophy deals with the abstract, education deals with the concrete. Philosophy, explicit or implicit, is always in the background for shaping things in education. Ex: If a child is to be educated, why is s/he to be educated? For what is s/he to be educated? How has to be educated? By whom? These are the questions which are answered by philosophy.

Since philosophy is an attempt to answer the ultimate questions, it is natural for it to attempt to answer questions with regard to education. Fichte says, "The aim of education will never attain complete clearness without Philosophy."¹⁰ According to Dewey, "Philosophy may be defined as the general theory of education."¹¹ The famous educationist Ross does not distinguish very much between the two when he says, "Philosophy and Education are like the sides of a coin, present different views of the same thing and that the one is implied by the other."¹² The knowledge of philosophy helps us to solve the educational problems effectively in our daily life. There is an inter dependency between the two.

History is a witness to the fact that most of the philosophers were also educationists. If Valmiki was a great thinker, he was a great teacher and educationist as well. Same is true of Plato, Locke and others. Philosophy of education is an "indispensable dimension of competent, responsible practice in education."¹³

¹⁰ B.C.Rai ,100

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Moon Bob, *Routledge International Companion to Education* (London: Routledge, 1979),5.

CHAPTER 2

DEWEY THE PHILOSOPHER

2.1 Life of John Dewey (1859-1952)

John Dewey was born on October 20, 1859, the third of four sons born to Archibald Sprague Dewey and Lucina Artemesia Rich of Burlington, Vermont. The eldest sibling died in infancy, but the three surviving brothers attended the public school and the University of Vermont in Burlington with John. While at the University of Vermont, Dewey was exposed to evolutionary theory through the teaching of G.H. Perkins and *Lessons in Elementary Physiology*, a text by T.H. Huxley, the famous English evolutionist. The theory of natural selection had a life-long impact upon Dewey's thought. The formal teaching in philosophy at the University of Vermont was confined for the most part to the school of Scottish realism, a school of thought that Dewey soon rejected.

After graduation in 1879, Dewey taught for two years, during which the idea of pursuing a career in philosophy took hold. With this ambition in mind, he sent a philosophical essay to W.T. Harris, then editor of the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*. Harris's acceptance of the essay gave Dewey the encouragement needed to pursue his studies in philosophy. With this encouragement he traveled to Baltimore to enroll as a graduate student at Johns Hopkins University.

At Johns Hopkins Dewey came under the tutelage of two powerful and engaging intellects who were to have a lasting influence on him. George Sylvester Morris, a German-trained Hegelian philosopher, exposed Dewey to the organic model of nature characteristic of German idealism. G. Stanley Hall, one of the most prominent American experimental psychologists at that time, provided Dewey with an appreciation of the power of scientific methodology as applied to the human sciences.

Upon obtaining his doctorate in 1884, Dewey accepted a teaching post at the University of Michigan, a post he was to hold for ten years, with the exception of a year at the University of Minnesota in 1888.

By 1904, Dewey's philosophical reputation had gone so high that he was quickly invited to join the Department of Philosophy at Columbia University. Dewey spent rest of his professional life at Columbia.

During his years at Columbia Dewey's reputation grew not only as a leading philosopher and educational theorist, but also in the public mind as an important commentator on contemporary issues, the latter due to his frequent contributions to popular magazines such as *The New Republic* and *Nation* as well as his ongoing political involvement in a variety of causes, such as women's suffrage and the unionization of teachers. One outcome of this fame was numerous invitations to lecture in both academic and popular venues. Many of his most significant writings during these years were the result of such lectures. Dewey continued to work vigorously throughout his retirement until his death on June 2, 1952, at the age of ninety-two.

2.2 Works of Dewey

The range and diversity of Dewey's writings and his influence on 20th-century philosophy, aesthetics, education, legal and political theory, and the social sciences, place him among those philosophers who have had a great influence on contemporary thought.

- While at Michigan Dewey wrote his first two books: *Psychology* (1887), and *Leibniz's New Essays Concerning the Human Understanding* (1888). Both works expressed Dewey's early commitment to Hegelian idealism, while the *Psychology* explored the synthesis between this idealism and experimental science that Dewey was then attempting to effect.
- Dewey also founded and directed a laboratory school at Chicago, where he was afforded an opportunity to apply directly his developing ideas on pedagogical method. This experience provided the material for his first major work on education, *The School and Society* (1899).
- During his first decade at Columbia Dewey wrote a great number of articles in the theory of knowledge and metaphysics, many of which were published in two important books: *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy and Other Essays in Contemporary Thought* (1910) and *Essays in Experimental Logic* (1916).

- His interest in educational theory also continued during these years, fostered by his work at Teachers College at Columbia. This led to the publication of *How We Think* (1910), *Democracy and Education* (1916) perhaps his most important work in the field.
- His other significant works are: *My Pedagogic Creed* (1897), *Child and the Curriculum* (1902), *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (1920), *Human Nature and Conduct* (1922), *Experience and Nature* (1925), *The Public and its Problems* (1927), and *The Quest for Certainty* (1929), *How We Think: A Restatement of the Relation of Reflective Thinking to the Educative Process* (1933), *Art as Experience* (1934), *A Common Faith* (1934), *Experience and Education* (1938) *Freedom and Culture* (1939), *Theory of Valuation* (1939), and *Knowing and the Known* (1949).¹⁴

2.3 The Intellectual Development of Dewey¹⁵

In Dewey's philosophy of education, as well as his wider philosophy, several important and recurring strands are notable. One of them is his deep intellectual debt to German philosopher Hegel. Dewey's philosophy at first matured under the influence of Hegelianism. He sent several articles to W.T. Harris, editor of *The Journal of Speculative philosophy*, who was very much impressed with his understanding of Hegel. As Dewey's own thought matured he rejected Hegel's view that progress occurs on a grand scale and as a result of historical forces that are the work of an Absolute or World Spirit. Dewey argued instead that when progress occurs it tends to be gradual and that it results from the work of individuals and groups who are engaged in a conscious reconstruction of their situations. Dewey thought that the most basic tool available for the reconstruction of a society is the education of its children. In Hegel, Dewey had found a unified basis for knowledge; he was attracted to Hegel's concept of history and to his dialectical method. Later, though he drifted

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ F. Mayer, *A History of Modern Philosophy* (New York: America Book Company, 1966), 536.

away from this German philosopher, he still appreciated the richness of Hegelian idealism.

Dewey's thought was also strongly influenced by the naturalism of Charles Darwin. It was from Darwin's *Origin of Species*, published in 1859, that Dewey got his concept of the human being as a highly complex natural organism that continually accommodates itself to some environmental conditions and alters others to meet its needs. Dewey conceived education as virtually synonymous with this evolutionary process. Education is evolutionary in that it is an ongoing experiment in which the teacher leads students to discover ways in which they can actively adjust to novel circumstances. Consequently, there can be no set rules for education. Dewey did think, however, that there are sound methods for educational experimentation and those methods themselves evolve as they are applied in an intelligent fashion.

It was William James, who influenced Dewey in his method of thinking and the fundamental philosophical viewpoint. Like James, Dewey is interested primarily in clarifying ideas and in providing a correct method for philosophy. But, unlike James, Dewey is more interested in science and less tender minded when it comes to religion. Dewey points out that the major intellectual impact of Darwin is not seen in the conflict of science with religion, but in the question whether the world is a construction of unchanging species or is genuinely changing and dynamic. Dewey builds his philosophy upon the fact of change.

For him, philosophy must not be a thing aloof from everyday life but must be constantly applied to political, social, economic and educational problems. Dewey was greatly influenced by the doctrine of evolution and pragmatism of the 19th century. Pragmatism teaches that what is useful, what works in a practical situation is true and what does not work is false. Truth thus becomes not a fixed, eternal thing. It is subject to change. What is true today may be false tomorrow.

2.4 Dewey the Pragmatist

Pragmatism is closely related to modern education. The slogan of this ideology is "change."¹⁶ The credit of introducing pragmatism into education goes to

¹⁶ K.K.Shrivastava, *Philosophical Foundations of Education* (New Delhi: Kanishka Publishers, 2003), 171.

two social thinkers namely William James and John Dewey. According to Dewey, the real value of a thing lies in its utility for human welfare. Education will also be useful and purposeful if it contributes to human welfare and progress. Education must change according to the changing needs and requirements of the changing society. It must be noted that in a progressive society only those educational processes and institutions can remain alive and active which are flexible enough to satisfy the ever changing needs of society and which provide real life experiences together with adaptable attitudes to make people dynamic, resourceful, efficient and enterprising in the modern changing times.

Pragmatism in American thought not only includes a reaction against ready-made traditional ideas but also indicates the dominant spirit of American culture. Thus, in the United States the pragmatic tradition is significant in art, in education and in science as well as in politics. Fundamentally, it stands for an optimistic, practical viewpoint in life, a rebellion against the formal culture of Europe. Technically, it implies a method which is concerned with functional and experimental approach to knowledge.

The outstanding exponent of pragmatism was William James. He made use of terms like cash-value, profit etc which could be understood by everyone. According to him, "Pragmatist turns away from abstraction and insufficiency, from verbal solutions. From a bad *a priori* reasons, from fixed principles, closed systems, and pretended absolutes and origins. He turns towards concreteness and adequacy, toward facts, towards action, and towards power."¹⁷

2.4.1 Meaning of Pragmatism

Pragmatism is mainly an American Philosophy which came into prominence after 1850. Etymologically the word pragmatism is derived from the Greek word '*pragma*' which means activity or the work done. Some others think that the word Pragmatism has been derived from Greek word 'Pragmatikos' which means practicability or utility. Thus, according to this ideology great importance is laid upon practicability and utility. Pragmatists firmly hold that first the activity or experiment is done and then on the basis of results, principle or ideas are derived.¹⁸

¹⁷ F. Mayer, 530.

¹⁸ K.K.Shrivastava, 159.

Pragmatism is also known as Experimentalism because pragmatists believe experiment as the only criterion of truth. To them truth, reality, goodness or badness are all relative terms. These concepts are not determined and absolute. They are proved by human experiences. Pragmatists also believe that truths are many and they are all in the making. Human beings research these areas only by means of their own experiments and experiences. Therefore only those things which can be verified through experience are considered to be true. It may be noted that the starting point of Pragmatism is “Change”¹⁹ Truth is always changing from time to time, from place to place and from circumstances to circumstances. They also do not uphold any predetermined philosophy of life. To them, only those ideals and values are true which result in some utility to mankind in a certain set of circumstances, place and time.

2.4.2 Definitions of Pragmatism

- (1) Gomes B. Prett: “Pragmatism offers us a theory of meaning, a theory of truth of knowledge, and a theory of reality.”²⁰
- (2) William James: “Pragmatism is a temper of mind, an attitude, it is also a theory of the nature of ideas and truth, and finally it is a theory about reality.”²¹

2.4.3 Various Types of Pragmatism

We shall consider three important types of pragmatism. Among the three Dewey preferred the biological pragmatism.

2.4.3.1 Humanist Pragmatism: According to this ideology, only those things or principles are true which satisfy the needs, requirements, aspirations and objectives of human beings and cater to the welfare of mankind. In other words, that which satisfies the human nature is only true and real. Humanistic Pragmatist believe, “whatever fulfills my purpose, satisfies my desires, develops my life, is true.”²²

¹⁹ Ibid.,160

²⁰ Ibid., 161

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., 166

2.4.3.2 Experimental Pragmatism: According to this ideology, a thing or principle is true which can be verified as true by experiment. Hence, according to Experimental Pragmatists, “whatever can be experimentally verified is true or what works is true.”²³

2.4.3.3 Biological Pragmatism: According to Biological pragmatism, that power or capacity of a human being is valuable and important which enables him to adjust with the environment or which makes him able to change his environment according to his needs and requirements. Dewey was the chief protagonists of this ideology.

Pragmatism regards thought as a means to solve any problematic situation to achieve adjustment and harmony. Hence, it is sometimes named as Instrumentalism.²⁴

2.4.4 Principles of Pragmatism²⁵

2.4.4.1 Problem as a Motive in Finding Truth: According to pragmatism, human life is like a laboratory wherein each individual undertakes various experiments to solve the problems which confront him in course of his growth and development. Hence, problems are the motivating forces for the search of truth.

2.4.4.2 Truth is Formed by its Results: According to pragmatist truth is not a fixed and definite entity. According to them, truth is a relative term which changes according to the stages of development and situations which confront a person in his process of growth and progress.

2.4.4.3 Changing Nature of Truth: Pragmatists do not believe in predetermined truth. According to them truth always changes according to time, place and situation. They also believed that a thing is true to an individual at a specific time, place and situation, need not be true to others or to anyone else at some other place or time.

2.4.4.4 Emphasis on the Principle of Utility: Pragmatism is a utilitarian ideology which holds that the reality of a principle lies in its utility. Any idea or thing which is useful to us, is proper and right. In case it is no use, it is improper, wrong and untrue.

2.4.4.5 Emphasis on Social and Democratic Value: Pragmatism holds that man is a social being. He is born in society and all his development takes place in and through society. Hence, pragmatists uphold social and democratic attitudes and values.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

2.4.4.6 Importance of Activity: Pragmatism lays great emphasis on activity rather than on ideas. Pragmatism holds the view that ideas are born out of activities. Man is an active being. He learns by his activities. Thus, the greatest contribution of pragmatism to education is this principle of learning by doing.

2.5 Theory of Inquiry

Reflective inquiry is as central for education, in Dewey's view, as for any other phases of a life of experience. Indeed for Dewey education is a problem-solving process and we learn by doing, by having an opportunity to react in real life situation. In education, not simply amassing facts but learning to apply intelligence to problem-solving has top priority. Education must be experimental without being simply improvisation. Present experiences must be so guided as to make future experience more meaningful and worthwhile.

The central focus of Dewey's philosophical interest throughout his career was what has been traditionally called "epistemology," or the "theory of knowledge." He rejected the term "epistemology," preferring "theory of inquiry" or "experimental logic" as more representative of his own approach.

According to him analysis of a problem can be done in four steps.²⁶

(1) Problem or difficulty comes before us. (2) An observation of the conditions surrounding the problem. (3) Formulation of hypotheses or plans. (4) Experimental testing which enables us to see whether the hypotheses or plans of action, when acted upon, gives the desired results or not. Applying this process of thinking to education Dewey says (1) the student should be the centre of experience and should be continuously engaged in activities in which it is interested. (2) It must possess or obtain the appropriate information for dealing with the problem. (3) Then hypotheses or suggested solutions must occur to the child and the child should develop them in an orderly manner (4) The child should be given the opportunity to test its ideas by applying them in practice. Thus their meaning would become clear. By this Dewey wanted to prove that educational methods really consists in the method of thinking, made conscious and realized in action. It is through modifying the environment or being modified by the environment that growth and development of human being

²⁶ V.R. Taneja and S. Taneja, *Educational Thinkers* (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2000), 67.

takes place. Thought, therefore, becomes an instrument; whereby the organism adjusts itself to its environment.

Dewey defended this general outline of the process of inquiry throughout his long career, insisting that it was the only proper way to understand the means by which we attain knowledge, whether it be the commonsense knowledge that guides the ordinary affairs of our lives, or the sophisticated knowledge arising from scientific inquiry.

2.6 Theory of Experience

Dewey is lauded as the greatest educational thinker of the 20th century. His theory of experience continues to be much read and discussed not only within the field of education, but also in psychology and philosophy. Dewey proposed that education be designed on the basis of a theory of experience. We must understand the nature of human experience in order to design effective education. Dewey's theory of experience rested on two central tenets namely, continuity and interaction.

Continuity refers to the notion that humans are sensitive to experience. The human brain is the most plastic of all animals, and human infants are the most helpless. But humans have a huge capacity for learning from experience. Since we learn something from every experience, there is continuity of experience. Every experience in some way influences all potential future experiences of an individual. Continuity, then, refers to this idea that each experience is stored and carried on into the future, whether one likes it or not.

Interaction builds upon the notion of continuity and explains how past experience interacts with the present situation, to create one's present experience. Dewey's hypothesis, then, is that your current experience can be understood as a function of all your past experiences, interacting with the present situation.

"One man's meat is another man's poison" meaning, same situation can be experienced in profoundly different ways because of unique individual differences. One student loves school, another hates the same school. This is important for educators to understand. Whilst they can't control students' past experiences, they can try to understand those past experiences so that better educational situations can be presented to the students.

CHAPTER 3

DEWEY THE EDUCATIONIST

Dewey has had more influence on the development of modern American education than any other thinker. When Dewey started his experimental school at the University of Chicago, he was regarded as a heretic determined to upset the traditional ways of education. Today, however, his ideas have become the rule and have been adopted not only in his country but also to some extent in China, Russia, and Turkey.

He realized that corporal punishment and dictatorial control by the teacher prevent real learning and make the student rebellious or in some cases mere tool of the teacher's will. Strict discipline, he believed, is occasioned by lust for power on the part of the adult.

Dewey outlined a system, where education instead of being a drudgery and hardship, would ultimately become as pleasant as play and as delightful as an athletic contest. The student would acquire far less classical knowledge, it is true, but s/he would be well informed about his own society and the contemporary problems of civilization.

3.1 Aims of Education

“The function of education is to help growing of helpless young animal into a happy, moral and efficient human-being.”²⁷

Until the close of nineteenth century the religiously motivated moral aim, the disciplinary aim and informational aim ruled the educational world. Dewey was opposed to all these aims of education. He re-stated the aims of education in the light of the rapid, social and economic changes.

3.1.1 Education is Life: Dewey believed that education is not a preparation for life. The school is a miniature society facing problems similar to those faced in life. Children should, therefore, be made participators in the social and moral struggles of their communities. The basic purpose of the school is to train pupils in ‘co-operative and mutually helpful living’²⁸. The child is to share the resources of a good society and it should giveback the fruits of those resources to that same society; thus helping

²⁷ B.C.Rai, *Theory of Education*, 280.

²⁸ Taneja, *Educational Thinkers*, 74.

the development of other members. By a give and take process the growth of the individual and the group is achieved. This should not be done by giving information but by varied experience.

3.1.2 Education Should Combine Theory and Practice: The aim of education, said Dewey, should, be to secure a balanced interaction of the practical and the theoretical attitudes. Some critics of Dewey have blamed him for putting too much emphasis upon experience, action, and practice. He always insisted that action and thought should go side by side. Practical side of a thing is very important but he said it is a mistake to ignore the theoretical side. Those who have a taste for abstract topics should be provided ample opportunities for the concrete applications of ideas.²⁹

This combination of theory and practice in the school can be achieved through occupations like wood work, cookery, sewing etc. Active self expression takes place through the hands, eyes, continued observation, planning and reflection. In the background there is a whole wide range of intellectual, aesthetic and moral interest. By employing occupations systematically and by giving them a definite place in the school, healthy personal interest in learning is assured. This is the pre-condition of a real education.

3.1.3 Development

“The entire process of growth and development which is caused by learning from experience is called *education*.”³⁰ It is impossible to lay down any definite principle for a particular kind of development, because this development will differ from one child to the next, in conformity with the unique abilities of the individual. The educator should guide the child according to the abilities and powers he/she observes in it. It is better in Dewey’s opinion to leave the question of educational objectives unanswered. If a definite aim is ascribed to education, it may do great harm by compelling the teacher to guide the educand in a particular direction, not in keeping with the innate abilities of the child.³¹

²⁹ Ibid., 75.

³⁰ A.S. Seetharamu, *Philosophies of Education* (New Delhi: Ashish Publishing House, 1989),18.

³¹ G.R. Sharma, *Western Philosophy of Education* (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2002),173.

3.1.4 Creating Democratic Individual and Society³²: Pragmatic education aims at setting up a democratic form of society where each individual is completely independent and willing to cooperate with others. Every individual must be given freedom to develop his own desires and achieve his ambitions. Every individual must be equal to every other members of the society. Hence education must create cooperation and harmony among individuals of a democratic society in which the child undergoes various forms of development, of which moral education is most important.

3.2 Methods of education³³

Let us take a look at some of the methods suggested by Dewey which continue to have a great influence even in the contemporary society.

3.2.1 Learning by Doing: In a method like '*learning by doing*' the child learns best when it performs actions on its own related to particular subjects. The educator is not to stuff the child's mind with information s/he has gathered throughout his/her life, but to guide the child to those activities by which the child can develop its own natural abilities and qualities.

3.2.2 Integration: Dewey is of the opinion that there should be integration between the child's life, its activities and the subjects it studies. All subjects to be taught to the child should be arranged around its activities in such a manner that it acquires knowledge in the process of doing activities to which it is accustomed.

3.2.3 Child Centered: Dewey considered interests and efforts of the child to be of supreme importance in the process of education. The educator must understand the child's interests before organizing the activities which are useful for the child. Given the opportunity to formulate programmes on their own, children will be able to make programmes according to their own interests. It is better, if this effort is free of any fear or compulsion, because only then can the children make a programme independently. Once this is done all school activity takes on the form of self-willed activity.

3.2.4 Project Method: Dewey's idea on educational method later on led to the evolution of the project method in which the child was made to indulge in those

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid., 175-177.

activities which helped in the development of enthusiasm, self-confidence, self-reliance and originality.

3.2.5 Participation in Collective Activities: In democratic educational pattern, the child should be made to participate in collective activity which can help in evolving a cooperative and social spirit.

3.3 Role of School

Dewey believes that “the school must represent present life-life as real and vital to the child as that which he carries on in the home, in the neighborhood, or on the playground.”³⁴ School, as an institution, should simplify existing social life. Existing life is so complex that the child cannot be brought into contact with life without either confusion or distraction.

Present education system has failed because it has not recognized the fundamental principle of the school as a form of community life. It conceives the school as a place where certain information is to be given, where certain lessons are to be learned, or where certain habits are to be formed. As a result education does not become a part of life experience of the child.

The teacher is not in the school to impose certain ideas or to form certain habits in the child, but s/he is there as a member of the community to select the influences which shall affect the child and to assist it in properly responding to these influences.

3.3.1 Stages in Elementary School

Dewey outlined a definite scheme of three stages of the elementary school. (1) The play stage from 4 to 8 years; (2) Stage of spontaneous attention from 8 to 12 and years (3) Stage of reflective attention from 12 years onward.

In the first stage the child begins to come out of the narrow limits of home life. It makes acquaintance with social world. It can not distinguish between means and ends. Its first study is the life and occupations of the home and then starts large social activities on which his/her home is dependent. Finally, the child learns about the development of fundamental inventions and occupations. In the second stage the child is able and willing to acquire different forms of skill. It can analyze the details and can act according to rules for the solution of practical problems. At this stage special

³⁴ John Dewey, *Education Today* (London: George Allen & Urwin Ltd., 1941), 6.

studies have to be introduced. The child has to be shown how human purposes have been achieved under various conditions.

The third stage starts when the child has sufficiently mastered the methods of thought, enquiry and activity. The child at this stage is able to raise problems for oneself and seek solutions for them.³⁵

3.4 Ideal School of Dewey

In Dewey's Laboratory School education was not imparted in the conventional sense of the term. No school subjects were prescribed. It was like a workshop where trades and other manual occupations which a person undertakes in his life were taught. It was an *Active School* on which Dewey has laid stress. His emphasis was on learning by doing.

Considering school as a psychological necessity he wanted an ideal school like the ideal home. In the ideal home the parent is intelligent. He recognizes what is best for his child and provides the needs. In the home the child learns by the daily conversations and by taking part in the household occupations. Child learns the habits of industry, order and regard for the rights and ideas of others. The greatest virtue that is inculcated in the child at home is that he subordinates his interest to the general interest of the household. The school, like the home, should be a genuine community engaged in common pursuits which interest the pupil and make them conscious that they are also contributing partners. The economic, social, political and all other activities and problems of society should constitute the curriculum of the school. Moral education has to be given not by precepts but through activities performed jointly with others. The school must enable the child to attain awareness about the society.³⁶

3.5 The Laboratory school

The school was officially called the University Elementary school. Its main purpose was to carry on research and experiments in new ideas and methods of education. Children between the age of 4 and 14 were admitted. Experienced teachers were appointed. The number of children admitted to each class was small. Not more

³⁵ Taneja, *Educational Thinkers*, 77-78.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 76

than 8 to 10 pupils were given to each teacher. Dewey's aim was to "create the conditions for the discovery of more natural ways of teaching and learning."³⁷

Dewey wished to bring the children in his school into touch with the world around them. The occupations in his school were intended to have liberalizing influence. They were not taught as technical subjects. Teachers were required to find ways of including a richer, more varied subject matter in pupil's studies without adding to the burden of rote learning and symbol interpretation. They were required to make the acquirement of basic skills more interesting. Similarly play, observation, hand work and stories representing real life also constituted an important portion of curriculum.

3.6 Role of the Teacher

The teacher, said Dewey "As a stage manager is more powerful than the teacher as a player strutting and fretting."³⁸

The teacher is a directing force and an organizer of the environment. The teacher, therefore, should not impose *fiats* or try to form rigid habits in child. Society is a best judge to test a teacher. Competence of a teacher should be judged from the quality of the product the teacher gives to the society.

3.7 Curriculum in Dewey's Education Method

Subjects, he said, are but summaries and re-capitulations of human activities. Therefore they should be reached by children summarizing their own experiences. Compartmentalization of the subjects are not necessary for children. Giving too much importance to traditional subjects in the time table will not help the child to find solutions for its problems.

'Mind', he said is essentially social. It was made what it is by society and for its development it depends on social environment. Mind needs continual stimulus from social agencies. Social experience interprets for the child the meaning of physical world such as light, sound, heat etc. It is, therefore, essential that social experience should form the main factors of curriculum. Once the right connection between the child and curriculum is established, then there will be great motivation

³⁷ Ibid., 63.

³⁸ Ibid., 81.

for learning. There is no necessity to make the memory do the work which should be done by reason.

Dewey rejected ready-made curriculum. He wanted it to grow out of pupil's interests, impulses, and experiences and should consist of activities and projects leading to 'reconstruction of experience' for this he said the fund of past human experience should be used. He made industrial activities centre of the curriculum and grouped the rest of the studies around this centre.

3.7.1 Principles of Curriculum Formation³⁹

Dewey has stressed the following four principles in the formation of curriculum.

3.7.1.1 Utility: The curriculum imposed on the child must have some utility, meaning, thereby that the curriculum should be based on child's interests and inclinations during various stages of its development. The curriculum should include four basic impulses of a child namely; impulse for conversation, discovery, creation and for artistic expression.

3.7.1.2 Flexibility: It is better for the curriculum to be flexible and not predetermined and rigid. It must be capable of accommodating the changes in the child's interests and inclinations.

3.7.1.3 Experimental: The curriculum should be related to the child's contemporary experiences and these can be multiplied and reinforced by presenting different kinds of activities in the guise of problems which inspire the child to attempt solution. As far as possible, the teaching of each subject should be related to the content of child's experiences.

3.7.1.4 Closeness to Life: As far as possible, the curriculum should include only those subjects which can be related to the child's pattern of life at that particular stage. Dewey was against the present type of system where knowledge is fragmented and such fragmentation of knowledge is unnatural. As far as possible the various subjects in the curriculum should be harmonized.

³⁹ G.R. Sharma, 174.

3.8 Progressive Education

Progressive education was a revolt against the traditional schools of the United States those existed at the beginning of 19th century. It grew from the belief that schools had failed to keep pace with rapid changes in American life. The traditional school says Dewey,

Stressed specific subjects - reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, history, and grammar. The teacher lectured or dictated a lesson, and the students copied it in their notebooks. The students then learned by heart what was in their note-books and recited what they learned from their textbooks. The teacher en-forced order and quiet except for recitation periods. Students sat at rows of desks fastened to the floor, and they could not move or talk without permission.⁴⁰

The term "progressive education" has been used to describe ideas and practices that aim to make schools more effective agencies of a democratic society. Although there are numerous differences of style and emphasis among progressive educators, they share the conviction that democracy means active participation by all citizens in social, political and economic decisions that will affect their lives.

Progressive educators tried to reform elementary school methods in several ways. They thought teachers should pay more attention to the individual child and not treat all children alike. Progressive educators believed that children learn best when they are genuinely interested in the material, and not when they are forced to memorize facts that seem useless to them. Children should learn by direct contact with things, places, and people, as well as by reading and hearing about them. Thus, elementary schools should include science laboratories, workshops, art studios, kitchens, gymnasiums, and gardens. Progressive educators believed that this would develop the child's physical, social, and emotional nature as well as its mind.

In addition, progressive educators stressed greater freedom, activity, and informality in the classroom. They believed that children learn better when they can move about and work at their own pace. They thought children should gather materials from many sources rather than from just one textbook, and should work in groups with other students. Discussion, dramatics, music, and art activities became a larger part of classroom procedures.

⁴⁰ Heleni Lewis, *Types of Education*, <<http://www.sfu.ca/~hlewis/education.htm>>(accessed Dec.12, 2004)

3.9 Education in Society

“What nutrition and reproduction are to physiological life, education is to social life.”⁴¹ Dewey thought that school should reflect the community so that when children graduate from school they will be well adjusted to assume their place in society. He believed that a truly democratic society could be more perfectly attained through education. No philosophy is ever fixed or absolute and thus all ideas should be tested in the educational laboratory where students can challenge them and evaluate the consequences and reconstructing their ideas when necessary. Dewey did not believe that school should be isolated or cut off from the family. School should be like an enlarged family in which the child should continue to perfect and improve what he has learnt at home with, of course, better equipments and more scientific guidance.

Speaking about the general principles of school Dewey says, (1) the primary object of the school is to train children in co-operative and mutually helpful living, (2) educative activity lies in the instructive and impulsive attitudes and activities of the child, and not in the preparation of subject matter and (3) the individual tendencies and activities are organized and directed through co-operative living.⁴²

3.10 Democracy and Education

The philosophy of Dewey is grounded in the democratic conception. He believes that his preference for the democratic way of life is not arbitrary and not merely due to the fact that he happens to be a member of a society which calls itself, democratic, and which taught him in his early years “that democracy is the best of all social institutions.”⁴³

Following are the implications of democratic ideals in education.⁴⁴ First, Democracy, according to Dewey is an attempt to embody in our social relationships the principle which regards each individual as possessing intrinsic worth or dignity. He has urged that this principle be interpreted to include children as well as adults.

⁴¹ P.A.Schilpp, ed. *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, (n.p: The Library of Living Philpsophers, 1971), 438.

⁴² Taneja, *Educational Thinkers*, 64

⁴³ P.A.Schilpp, ed., 440.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 441-43.

For the child, he contends, is a developing person and not merely a potential ideal self. The implication for education is that the child's present experience, uniqueness, and felt needs and interests are to play their part in the determination of the educational programme. To meet this requirement of the democratic ideal, the school must be equipped to deal with each child as an individual.

Secondly, the democratic conception implies a society in which individuals enjoy the status of ends, and institutions the status of means. Society has no good other than the good of its members. The concrete individual is the only center of experience, and hence the ultimate locus of all value. Dewey believes that the growth of individual is the supreme test of social arrangements, and the final end of all educational activity.

Thirdly, a democratic society, which has respect for the individual will also prize individual differences and uniqueness. It will aim to provide maximum opportunity for individuals to initiate voluntary interest groups and associations. Since "diversity of stimulation means novelty, and novelty means challenge to thought"⁴⁵ a democratic society will seek to encourage a healthy diversity.

Fourthly, Dewey's interest in democracy also emphasized the importance of method in education. A society composed of many diverse interest groups, and one in which power is distributed among all its members, is a society in which conflicts of interests and value are bound to arise. These conflicts will appear not only between groups, but also within the same group whenever new possibilities compete with older routines. Democracy, therefore, has great need for a method for the resolution of conflict. It can not make adjustments by external authority, or by the application of fixed standards, and remain a democratic society. It seeks to make its adjustments by inquiry, discussion, conference and the principle of majority rule.

Our supreme task is to bring about social transformation. It is Dewey's faith that this transformation can be achieved by cooperative, peaceful economic and political means, provided education can be kept free to carry on its functions of criticism and construction.

⁴⁵ John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1916), 98.

CHAPTER 4

EDUCATION ACCORDING TO PAULO FREIRE

4.1 Life of Paulo Freire (1921 - 1997)

Paulo Freire was born on September 19, 1921 in Recife, a port city of northern Brazil. His parents were from a middle class and suffered financially. In 1929, when US underwent an economic crisis Paulo Freire learned what it is to go hungry. In his childhood he decided to dedicate his life to fight against hunger.

In 1960s Freire emerged as a national figure. An active participant in the national debate on development Freire worked in association with the radicals within the Catholic Church and the Basic Education Movement. His involvement with the adult literacy programme at the University of Recife gave him valuable experience and he was appointed as the coordinator of the National Literacy programme. Freire was imprisoned for 75 days for his 'politically subversive' activity. He went into exile and worked for about 5 years in Chile.

His major works are *Educacao como Pratica da Liberdade* (1967). The English editions were, *Education as the Practice of Freedom*, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968), *Cultural Action for Freedom* (1970), *Education for Critical Consciousness* (1974), *Pedagogy in Process* (1978), *The Politics of Education* (comprising of articles published between 1965 and 1975).

In spite of poverty, imprisonment, and exile that he suffered he is very optimistic about life. He is a world leader in the struggle for the liberation of the poorest of the poor: the marginalized classes who live in the "cultures of silence." On a planet where more than half the people go hungry every day because nations are incapable of feeding all their citizens, where we cannot yet agree that every human being has a right to eat and to be housed, Paulo Freire toils to help men and women overcome their sense of powerlessness to act on their own behalf.

4.2 People Who Influenced Paulo Freire

Although Christianity is seldom mentioned directly in his writings, it is highly important part of his philosophy. For him, Christian faith is essentially a commitment to social action against exploitation and oppression. His Christianity is one which has entered into a creative dialogue with Marxism.

Existential phenomenological ideas of Freire have been derived from Buber, Sartre and Jaspers. It is from their influence the stress on inter-personal relationships and dialogue have been incorporated in his thought. His concern with consciousness and the way people interpret the world is influenced by existential-phenomenological views. "Reality is never just simply the objective datum, the concrete fact, but it is also man's perception of it."⁴⁶

Freirean humanism has been deeply influenced by Marxist view. Freire emphasizes on praxis and the need for an utopian vision to negate the existing capitalist society. Concepts such as praxis, alienation and dialectics have been contributed by Marxists like Petrovic, Kalakowski. The core of Freirean humanism is the belief that liberation is possible if people realize their ability to change and become active subjects of history, rather than as passive objects.

4.3 Goal of Education

Freire asserts that there is no neutral education. Education either domesticates or liberates. The present education is for domestication. It is an instrument for the maintenance of status quo. It facilitates the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system. Education has also the possibility of becoming the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of the world.

4.3.1 Conscientization: In simple terms conscientization may be defined as the critical awareness of reality and the capacity to transform it. The oppressed become aware of the reality which is exploitation and of their ability to change the situation. So, Conscientization should lead to action.⁴⁷ Bordenave states that it was the young catholic university students of Brazil who coined the word 'Conscientization' in 1961-62 and defined it as "the discovery of the self and the dignity of human person together with the realization that the person in cooperative association with other persons can humanize the world."⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Denis Coelho, *Changing Perspectives in Education* (New Delhi: Indian Social Institute, 1995), 71.

⁴⁷ Paulo Freire, *Education for Liberation* (Bangalore: Ecumenical Christian Center, 1983), 15.

⁴⁸ Coelho, 72.

The literal meaning of the word Conscientization is ‘to make aware’ or ‘awakening of consciousnesses’ or ‘critical consciousness.’ But for Freire, conscientization is a political-educational process which enables the masses to overcome ‘false consciousness’, to realize their real situation in society and to take part in changing society.

Conscientization is a critical phase, where reality becomes a knowable object, where person takes an epistemological stance and tries to know. According to Freire the more a person conscientises oneself the more s/he unveils reality. Conscientization implies that men and women take the role of agents, makers and remakers of the world. In this process, the first step is to discover oneself as oppressed. In discovering oneself as oppressed, one should also know that liberation is in knowing that something can be done and in trying to transform the oppressing situation in which one is. Conscientization thus implies a critical insertion in the praxis and the process of historical change.

For Freire, conscientization is an invitation to take a “utopian” attitude to the world. “Utopia is the dialectical process of denouncing and announcing—denouncing the oppressing structure and announcing the humanizing structure. It is, therefore, a historical commitment and engagement. Utopia is an act of knowing critically.”⁴⁹

4.3.2 Critical Consciousness: Freire suggests three stages in the progression by which critical consciousness is attained. The first stage is semi-intransitive consciousness. Verbs which do not act upon an object are intransitive. Consciousness which does not challenge the world is therefore uncritical and intransitive, for it does not act upon the world as an object. Total intransitivity is not a form of consciousness at all. Therefore, Freire calls the first stage as semi-intransitive. It is the state of those whose sphere of perception is limited, whose interests centre almost totally around matters of survival.

The second stage of consciousness is naïve transitivity. This stage is characterized by forceful arguments rather than dialogue. Naïve transitivity is never totally surpassed because for all who enter the learning process, this remains a lifelong task.

Final stage is critical transitivity. This stage is characterized by depth in the interpretation of problems by testing one’s own findings and openness to revision and

⁴⁹ Ibid., 73.

reconstruction. Person tries to overcome preconceived notions when analyzing the findings. There is receptivity to the new without rejecting the old because it is old. In striving towards critical consciousness, the individual rejects passivity, practicing dialogue rather than forceful arguments.

4.3.3 Education as a Revolutionary Force: Education should necessarily lead to praxis and thus become an instrument of humanization. Educational processes are a fight against social atrophy, ‘the culture of silence’⁵⁰. Ultimately education should lead to the liberation of both the oppressor and the oppressed resulting in a humanized world and universe.

4.3.4 Political Nature of Education: According to Freire, “no educational system and especially no system of adult education can be neutral. All education has a political intent inherent in it.”⁵¹ For him, the literacy teacher is a political educator, who teaches the adults to read and write their own reality by encouraging them to think critically about the world and to take their place in it with an increasing awareness of their own changing reality.

4.4 Banking and Problem Posing Education

The banking type of education is designed to prevent critical thinking and perpetuate the status quo. Here the educator is the guardian of a secret. Teacher teaches and the students are taught.

Problem-posing education, on the other hand, is an act of learning together, where the teacher and the learners enter into a “dialogue” through which they investigate the problems together. The basic assumptions are that “no one can teach any one else”, “no one can learn alone” and that “people learn together, acting in and on their world.”⁵²

4.4.1 Phases in Problem Posing Education: The contents of problem-posing education are developed in a collaborative effort, involving the inhabitants of the particular areas where the programme is to be implemented. The various phases of it are the following:

⁵⁰ Ibid., 77.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., 74.

4.4.1.1 Phase 1. Investigation by the educational team and volunteers from the area into the ‘present, existential, concrete situation’ to discover the people’s thematic universe; in other words, the main issues of their situation. This phase also involves linguistic research to find significant word, typical sayings, and expressing linked to the existential situation of the people.

4.4.1.2 Phase 2. Certain key words and themes are selected for discussion and analysis. The words are chosen based on the richness of the phonemes, degree of phonetic difficulty and degree of practical content. Words which have a concrete reference to economic, social and political problems of the area are chosen. E.g. Domination, underdevelopment and so on.

4.4.1.3 Phase 3. This phase is a codification stage. Codifications are made of the generative themes or words. Codification could be drawings, posters, and slides, i.e. visual representations of the existential situation. These would pose the issues for discussion. Discussions will lead to a more critical consciousness and simultaneously the learners learn to read and write. Though the codifications represent local situations, they are sufficient to open perspectives for the analysis of regional and national problems.

4.4.1.4 Phase 4. In this phase agendas are developed as guidelines for the co-coordinators. The coordinators are guided through a training programme in which new attitudes are created, especially with regard to a dialogical approach.

4.4.1.5 Phase 5. Here, various kinds of educational materials are produced. For literacy, this includes cards for each generative word with the breakdown of its phonemic families. One important factor here is that the materials in Freirean method are not illustrations or just pictures; rather they are codes of a complex and relevant social reality.

4.4.1.6 Phase 6. Once the above steps are taken the codified situation is taken to the cultural circle for “decoding”. The participants are invited to express their opinion, objectify their problems, reflect on them and in reflecting on the problems, recognize themselves as subjects. There is no teacher-student relationship rather a subject-subject relationship. Once the generative word is introduced the semantic link between the word and the object is established. Then the word is broken into syllables and once these are recognized, the card presenting the phonemic families is shown. Using these cards, the learners form new words combining syllables. The group

would decide which combination is meaningful and which are not. Combinations, which do not mean anything, are called, “words of thinking.”⁵³

4.4.2. The Fundamental Distinction Between Banking Concept and Problem-posing Education

He distinguishes between banking method and problem posing method of education. Banking education resists dialogue; problem-posing education regards dialogue as indispensable to the act of cognition, which unveils reality. Banking education treats students as objects of assistance; problem-posing education makes them critical thinkers. Problem-posing education bases itself on creativity and stimulates true reflection and action upon reality. In sum: banking theory and practice, fails to acknowledge human beings as historical beings; problem-posing theory and practice take human being’s historicity as their starting point.

Problem-posing education affirms human beings as beings in the process of becoming—as unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality. Indeed, in contrast to other animals who are unfinished, but not historical, human beings know themselves to be unfinished; they are aware of their incompleteness. In this incompleteness and in this awareness lie the very roots of education. The unfinished character of human beings and the transformational character of reality necessitate that education be an ongoing activity.

The banking method emphasizes permanence and becomes reactionary. Problem-posing education—which accepts neither a “well-behaved” present nor a predetermined future—roots itself in the dynamic present and becomes revolutionary.

Problem-posing education, points that human beings subjected to domination must fight for emancipation. To that end, problem posing education enables teachers and students to become Subjects of the educational process by overcoming authoritarianism. It also enables human beings to overcome their false perception of reality. Problem-posing education does not and cannot serve the interests of the

⁵³ Ibid., 75-76.

oppressor. No oppressive order could permit the oppressed to begin to question. In the revolutionary process, the leaders cannot utilize the banking method.⁵⁴

4.5 Education for Liberation

The process of pedagogical liberation begins when we recognize that dignity of human being has been cornered. Propaganda, management, manipulation which are dominating factors can not be the instruments of re-humanization. The only instrument is a humanizing pedagogy in which the revolutionary leader who establishes a permanent relationship of dialogue with the oppressed. It is not a teacher-student relationship in which the teacher is dominant. So, a revolutionary must accordingly practice co-intentional education in which teachers and students are both subjects, who know and recreate the knowledge of reality.

Education which is liberatory encourages learners to challenge and change the world, not merely uncritically adapt themselves to it. The content and purpose of liberatory education is the collective responsibility of learners, teachers and the community alike who, through dialogue, seek political, economic and personal empowerment. Liberating education cannot be developed by the oppressive classes. Liberating education demands a commitment which involves a political organization.

Transformative education cannot be brought about by formal education. Hence there is a need to emphasis revolutionary transformation and political education. It is impossible to separate politics from education.

Education can be either for domestication or for liberation. Both start from the same concrete reality. But the process of domestication takes them to pre-set goals, known beforehand. The process of liberation relies upon the praxis of collaboration and communication.

The educator must treat the area of action as a means for codification. That is, the area should be made into a scene of conflict. This would be the anti-thesis to the original thesis, and our decodification then gets under way. Then, through our selected generative matrices, there will arise a new codification, which will form the synthesis, and the thesis for the start of a new cycle of interpretation. By a series of such approximations, we arrive at a final decodification, which is the programme of action, the programme of liberation.

⁵⁴ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos (London: Sheed and Ward, 1972), 56-59.

Thus, the first codification is of the concrete reality. The first decodification is its interpretation by the people. The second codification is educator's tentative list of generative matrices. The second decodification is the joint research by the educator and the people to draw forth knowledge of words and their uses from these generative matrices. The third codification enables the educator to pare down and purify the tally of generative matrices or themes. The last decodification is again by the people who grasp the programme of revolutionary action together with the literary tools of comprehending reality.⁵⁵

4.6 Dialogue

“Dialogue is the encounter between men, mediated by the world, in order to name the world.”⁵⁶ Dialogue can not occur between those who want to name the world and those who do not want this naming; between those who deny other people the right to speak their word and those whose right to speak has been denied them. Dialogue with the people is radically necessary to every authentic revolution. Revolutionary acts with no dialogue with the people are not truly revolutionary acts. In order to dominate, the dominator has no choice but to deny people the right to say their own word and think their own thoughts. The oppressed and the leaders are equally the subjects of revolutionary action. Revolution is made neither by the leader for the people, nor by the people for the leaders, but by both acting together in solidarity. Revolutionary leaders can not think without the people, nor for the people but only with the people. They think with the people in order to understand them better.

4.6.1 Prerequisites for dialogue

Dialogue can take place only when the following criterions are taken into consideration. So it is worth examining them.

4.6.1.1 Love: Dialogue can not exist in the absence of a profound love for the world and for fellow beings. The naming of the world which is an act of creation and recreation, is not possible if it is not infused with love. Love is the foundation of

⁵⁵ Paulo Freire, *Education for Liberation*, 49.

⁵⁶ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 61.

dialogue and dialogue itself. Love is an act of courage, not of fear. Love is committed to others and to the cause of liberation. It is an act of bravery. It is not sentimental, not manipulative. If one does not love world, if one does not love life, and if one does not love human beings, one cannot enter into dialogue.

4.6.1.2 Humility: Dialogue cannot exist without humility. Naming of the world cannot be an act of arrogance. Dialogue, as an encounter between parties is addressed to the common task of learning and acting, is broken if the parties lack humility. One cannot enter into dialogue if one considers that naming the world is the task of an elite and the common people have no say in it. People lacking humility cannot come together and be partners in naming the world. Someone who cannot acknowledge himself/ herself as mortal as everyone else still has a long way to go before he/she can reach the point of encounter.

4.6.1.3 Intense Faith in Others: Dialogue requires an intense faith in human beings, faith in his/her power to make and remake, to create and re-create, faith in his/her vocation to be more fully human. The dialogical person believes in other person even before he/ she meets the other face to face. Whereas faith in others is an a priori requirement for dialogue, trust is established by dialogue. False love, false humility and feeble faith in others cannot create trust.

4.6.1.4 Hope: Dialogue cannot exist without hope. Hope is rooted in human incompleteness, from which they move out in constant search-- a search which can be carried out only in communion with other human beings. The dehumanization resulting from an unjust order is not a cause for despair but for hope. If the dialoguers expect nothing to come out of their efforts, their encounter will be empty sterile and bureaucratic.

4.6.1.5 Critical Thinking: True dialogue cannot exist unless the dialoguers engage in critical thinking. Thinking perceives reality as process, as transformation, rather than as a static entity. This thinking does not separate itself from action, but constantly immerses itself in temporality without fear of the risks involved. Only dialogue which requires critical thinking is also capable of generating critical thinking.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 62-65.

4.7 The Analysis of anti-dialogical and dialogical Method

4.7.1 Anti dialogical method

4.7.1.1 Conquest: The first characteristic of anti-dialogical action is the necessity for conquest. The anti-dialogical person, in his relations with other people, aims at conquering them by all means. Every act of conquest implies a conqueror, and someone or something, which is conquered. Conquest first reduces human beings to the status of things. In the conquest, the oppressor attempts to destroy people and keeps them passive. Oppressor is not with the people.

4.7.1.2 Divide and Rule: The oppressors though constitute a minority group subordinates the oppressed who form a majority. Oppressor divides in order to preserve the status quo and remain in power. This minority can not tolerate the unification of the people, which would signify a serious threat to their own hegemony.

4.7.2.3 Manipulation: Manipulation is an instrument of conquest. Greater the political immaturity of the oppressor, the more easily can they be manipulated. Another means by which manipulation is achieved is through agreement between the dominant and dominated classes. This image of dialogue is only superficial as the real aim of the dominant classes is to achieve their own ends. Manipulation is also a fundamental instrument for the preservation of domination.

4.7.2.4 Cultural Invasion: Here the invaders penetrate into the cultural context of another group and by ignoring the potential of the latter, they impose their own view of the world upon those they invade. The invaders inhibit the creativity of the invaded by curbing their expression. The invaders are successful if they convince the invaded that they are inferior. When invaded accept their inferiority they also recognize the superiority of the invaders. Cultural invasion further signifies that the ultimate seat of decision regarding the action of those who are invaded lies not with them but with the invaders.

The oppressors' approach will always reflect antidialogical characteristics such as conquest, divide and rule, manipulation and cultural invasion. On the other hand, the revolutionary leader will always adopt dialogical method such as co-operation, unity for liberation, organization and cultural synthesis.

4.7.2 Dialogical method

4.7.2.1 Co-operation: In the dialogical theory of action, subjects meet in order to transform the world. Subjects meet to name the world in order to transform it. Dialogue does not impose, does not manipulate, does not domesticate etc. Dialogue does not mean, however, that the theory of dialogical action leads nowhere; nor does it mean that the dialogical person does not have a clear idea of what he wants.

4.7.2.2 Unity for Liberation: Dialogical theory of action requires very much the unity of the leaders with the oppressed to make liberation a reality. Liberation can take place only through praxis i.e. reflection and action. It is easy for the dominant elites to practice this praxis because they have the instrument of power. They can come together when their fundamental interests are challenged. But the revolutionary group can not exist without the people and this can pose a difficulty for achieving the unity.

4.7.2.3 Organization: Organizing the oppressed is the integral aspect of creating unity. Liberation is a humble, courageous and common task. The leader makes the people aware that they are creators of history. The leader makes them aware of the historical context, the view of the world held by the people etc. Liberation can be achieved only when the oppressed begin to assert themselves which requires their total involvement.

4.7.2.4 Cultural Synthesis: Cultural synthesis is the exact opposite of cultural invasion and aims at establishing a close rapport with the people of the locality without imposing their own ideas or world-views. In other words, the people are treated as objects in cultural invasion while in cultural synthesis, the people become co-authors of the action and the only object in this process is the reality to be transformed for the liberation of people.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 108-150.

CHAPTER 5

RELEVANCE AND ASSESSMENT OF DEWEY AND FREIRE

After a brief study of some of the important aspects on education, according to Dewey and Freire, we are able to assess them. We will be dealing with the strengths and limitations of their methods and their relevance to our country.

5.1 Dewey's Impact on Modern Education

Many of Dewey's ideas have had great influence on contemporary education. Let us take a look at some areas of impact exerted by him.

5.1.1 The Aims of Education: Nowadays, one of the important aims of education is the teaching of democratic values. Dewey insisted on developing social qualities in the child. In contemporary schools these aims of education have been accepted.

5.1.2 Educational Methods: The impact of Dewey's ideas are seen in the methods of education. Dewey suggested that education should be based on the child's own experience and also that the method of teaching should vary according to the interest and inclinations of each individual child. The project method is also a result of Dewey's ideas.

5.1.3 Curriculum: The impact of Dewey's ideas on the subject of curriculum led to the introduction of manual skill subjects into modern curricula. Special importance is now being attached to various kinds of games, objects, the use of certain tools and implements etc. In selecting the subject to be taught, attention is now paid to the individual interest and abilities of the child.

5.1.4 Holistic education: Dewey's thinking and ideal also led to faith in holistic education. Education aims at the development of personality. Hence every individual must be given the opportunity to develop his/her personality through education. He pointed out that education was a social necessity, in that it was not merely a preparation for life, but life itself. It aimed at the development of both the individual as well as the society.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ G.R. Sharma, *Western Philosophy of Education* (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2002), 180-81.

5.2 Limitations in Dewey's System

Though Dewey's views on educational principles were enthusiastically received, they were also subjected to criticism on the following grounds.

5.2.1 Pragmatic Theory of Truth: Pragmatic philosophy does not treat truth as permanent and objective. Instead, as Dewey explains, truth is relative to time and space. No philosophy is always true or correct. It has its utility only in a particular set of circumstances. In actual practice, Dewey's philosophy is fairly useful, but when his principles are applied to his own theories, the latter also become relative to time and space and thus have only a limited utility.

5.2.2 Absence of Any Aim of Education: For Dewey education is life and it is not possible to set any goal or objective for it. Most scholars disagree with this opinion because they believe that education can progress only when it has some definite aim and objective. There is always some definite purpose in sending the *educand* to school.

5.2.3 Excessive Emphasis upon Individual Differences: Modern educational psychology accepts in principle that the curriculum of education must take into account the individual differences of children and that children must be educated according to their individual and unique interests and inclinations. Though the theory sounds good in practice it leads into complications. It is almost, if not completely, impossible to provide a separate educational plan for every individual child in a school. It is for this reason that all schools nowadays provide a uniform pattern of education imparted in the same manner. Even the teacher may have to teach the subject not of child's interest. But it is not possible to eliminate complex and difficult subjects from the curriculum just because the child is not interested in them.

5.2.4 Limitations of Learning Through Doing: There is no doubt that the child should learn by doing, as Dewey suggested, but the theory has its limitations. Many of the facts known to an individual are acquired from other persons. It is almost impossible for one individual to experience every fact known to him/her. Thus the *educand* should also try to benefit from the experience of his/her teacher, educator and colleague.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Ibid., 179-80.

5.3 Relevance of Dewey's Theory in India

During the days of Dewey, the educational environment was one that concentrated on preparation for the future jobs and memorization for the acquisition of knowledge. India too follows a similar pattern of education even today. Learning lessons by heart to pass the exams rather than utilizing the education in our day-to-day life is an issue in Indian educational system today. It is here that Dewey's insights on education are very relevant. According to him, "Education is a process of living and not a preparation for future living. Hence school must represent real life."⁶¹

Dewey emphasizes that school, like home, should be a genuine community with real life experiences. Instead of being a listening school it need to be an activity school. School should be a place where moral skills are acquired and the curriculum of the school should consist of economic, political and social activities and problems. Given the present Indian condition of poverty, lack of facilities and improper training of teachers it remains a distant dream, especially in the rural areas. Besides, our educational institutions do not have a homely atmosphere due to ragging, eve teasing and partiality on the basis of caste, culture and language. Of course a lot of creativity and financial assistance is required for the implementation of Dewey's ideas in order to create a better India.

Dewey speaks of three stages in elementary school. This structure is well accepted and followed in USA and many European countries. Perhaps we in India too can give a try. There are not clear evidences of having experimented or applied these stages in India. Quite many emotional and psychological imbalances that we see are caused because of education, wherein, percentage rather than person, certificates rather than character counts.

Dewey does include aesthetic, moral and religious education in his curriculum. One of the reason for the fatal state of our Indian schools is that painting, music, dance, drama and other aesthetic activities are not taken seriously. Though India has contributed much to the world, present generation seem to be less interested and trained tutors in these areas are considerably less. Rabindranath Tagore tried to integrate these values in Visva-Bharati and saw good results.

⁶¹ Schilpp., 461.

From the standpoint of advancing democracy and education, with the addition of the Internet to other traditional media, there is hope that learning can be widespread, human nature can be enriched, and human eyes can be opened. The boon for informal education and the challenge to formal education would be from Internet and other media which can increase our knowledge, if we know what to make out of it. Incidentally, I believe Dewey would have welcomed the possibilities opened up by Internet. Certainly, he would also have been one of the Internet's persistent critics, insofar as the power of that resource could be used for trivial or dehumanizing ends.

Democracy should bring about equality, liberty and fraternity. The education system which Dewey advocates should teach democratic values such as sharing, respect for the rights and lives of other persons, equality etc. Our education should teach us to inculcate these qualities so that we can make this world a better place to live in.

5.4 Impact of Paulo Freire on Education

Paulo Freire who was an exponent of liberatory education has made important contributions to contemporary education system. First, his emphasis on dialogue has struck a very strong chord with those concerned with informal education. His method which is a dialogical or conversational in form rather than a banking method, believes that dialogue involves respect for human persons. In dialogical method one does not subjugate another, rather works with the other in collaboration.

Secondly, Freire's idea of naming the world has been of great significance to those educators who have traditionally worked with those who do not have a voice, and who are oppressed.

Thirdly, Paulo Freire's insistence on situating educational activity in the lived experience of participants has opened up a series of possibilities for the way informal educators can approach education.. His concern to look for words that have the possibility of generating new ways of naming and acting in the world when working with people is a good example of this.

5.5 Pedagogy of the Oppressed Applied to the Indian Situation

Paulo Freire's critique of traditional education that suppress the oppressed and helps to keep the oppressed in subjugation need to be applied to the Indian

educational scenario. There is too much emphasis for narration and memorising in our system to the complete neglect of creative or critical thinking. This negates the possibility for the emergence of any revolutionary and radical leadership. The system is heavily loaded with material that is not related to the day today experiences of the students. Thus, the student can only attempt to master the material without critically applying it to his life/her or to the needs of the people. This methodology needs to be changed completely so that learning becomes a real cognitive activity which leads to meaningful and purposeful transformative action.

Integral liberation means the total freedom of everyone and the whole society. This implies that the dominant classes do not interfere with education or prevent the vast majority of the poor from having access to education at all levels. Only a new and fresh approach to the pedagogy followed in our schools and colleges with a view to resolving the contradictions found in the present system can bring about drastic changes in our social structure that are heavily loaded in favour of the rich and against the poor and the marginalized.

A country like India has a vast majority of people who are oppressed. Many are not aware of their rights, the government benefits they can get etc. Conscientizing them and making them aware about the reality can help them to live a dignified life.

5.6 Criticism on Paulo Freire

However some aspects of his method need critical appraisal. His aim of education was to provide basic literacy. But we can not apply his method universally. He does not tell us what is the next step after achieving literacy.

We are living in a world of technology. Technology takes priority over everything. I think Freire's method does not give any guidance in acquiring such skills.

Freire introduced his education system to help the native people. Education was in the mother tongue. But we live in a global world where we need to know other languages for our communication. For this Freire's method is not very handy.

Lastly, there are questions concerning the originality of Freire's contribution. As Taylor has put it-- to say that as many commentators do that Freire's thinking is "eclectic", is "to underestimate the degree to which he borrowed directly from other sources." Taylor makes it clear that the structure of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

parallels Kosik's Dialectic of the Concrete. Taylor also invites to compare Freire's interests with those of Martin Buber. Buber's concern with conversation, encounter, being and ethical education have strong echoes in Freirean thought.

5.7 Similarity Between the Two Thinkers

- Both stressed the need of combining theory and practice in education. For Dewey, knowing and doing are inseparable. Dewey wanted to prove that educational method really consists in the methods of thinking, made conscious and realized in action. On the other hand Freire speaks of Praxis. For him education bases itself on creativity which stimulates true reflection which leads to action.
- Dewey as well as Freire were against the traditional method of teaching. Both preferred problem posing education over banking method, where the child learns from experience. Both gave importance to the experience of the child or student. Dewey in his theory of experience says that we learn something from every experience. Every experience in some way influences all potential future experiences of an individual. In Freirean method too when the content of education is developed the investigator takes into account the present, existential and concrete situation of the individual.
- Both approached problems from the stand point of investigator or a child who tries to discover. They were against the belief that teacher who knows all the answers. Both of them did try to get rid of the subject-object, teacher-student distinction. According to them both teachers and students are learners.
- Both gave importance to change. Dewey's philosophy which was pragmatic in nature gave importance for change. Freire too says that we are incomplete and we are becoming.

5.8 Differences Between Freire and Dewey

- Dewey was an educationist, philosopher, and psychologist. He was interested in the inner nature as well as the environment of the child. But

Freire was basically an educationist and liberator who used education for conscientization.

- Dewey gave importance for critical enquiry in his educational system but Freire gave importance for conscientizing the people through awareness about reality.
- Both suggested a new method of enquiry. But their approach is different from one another. Dewey suggests finding out the problem, collecting the data, forming hypotheses and finally testing the hypotheses. But Freire suggests observation, selecting key word or themes for discussion, codification, decodification etc.
- Dewey prefers small group of children, small class room etc. The means suggested in getting educated are very expensive. But the means suggested by Freire are very economical without much expense and meant for the masses.
- In Freirean method the content of education is developed by a team of investigators but in Dewey's system content is formed from the problem about the reality that the child confronts.
- Dewey's education was primarily meant for the children of USA, a developed and well functioning democracy. He wanted adults to be good citizens of this society. He did not take into consideration the plight of the depressed in the society. But Freire is meant for those on the margin, for the poor in Latin America, Africa, Asia and the native Indians in USA who are also on the margin.

Conclusion

“We should be clear that our work, our activities as an educator will not be enough to change the world. But, at the same time, it is necessary to recognise that by doing something inside the space of the school we can make some good contribution.”⁶²

Educational system is one of the first institutions of socialization that a child comes in contact with after family. The schools have the responsibility of creating space for the children to grow mentally as well as emotionally. This means the task of

⁶² Paulo Freire & Ira Shor, *A Pedagogy For Liberation* (London: Macmillan Education Ltd, 1987), 180.

an educator is ever more challenging. My reading of Dewey and Freire has thrown light into my understanding of education propagated by these two educationists. My reading them may not bring a drastic change in me but certainly it is not a waste. It has enabled me to view education through different horizons. They do differ in their approach towards educating the people but the fusion of both these perspectives can be an enriching experience.

In my conclusion I shall recapitulate in brief the contribution of Dewey and Freire. Dewey, a philosopher, social thinker and an educationist is well accepted among the intelligentsia of the century. Given the fast evolving, multi-cultural chaotic American environment, Dewey attempted to bring purpose to individual life. He was at a crossroads where traditional values challenged the modern industrial development. He built a bridge between the traditional 'disciplined' education and the modern psychology.

Dewey, as well as his philosophy cannot be ignored in the field of education. His experimental school brought a drastic change in educational field. This school proved the success of his educational theory. The experimental school which is called as "The University of Chicago Laboratory School" has become a light-house to which everyone looks at. Experimental schools have been known for their flexibility and individual attention to students.

Dewey gives a considerable importance to the psychology of the child. The nature of a child is dynamic, reconstructive and reorganizing. Education, therefore, starts with the understanding of the psychological nature of children.

Deweyan education is a concrete application of his pragmatic philosophy. Pragmatism by its nature advocates change. For pragmatist truths are many and they are all in the making i.e. they are made. Man reaches truth only by his experience and verification

The educational scheme, which Dewey gives, may be well suited to contemporary society. The contemporary society is economy based which expects maximum output with minimum input. Contemporary society requires maximum use of human potentialities. Thus Dewey's educational scheme positively aims to draw the best in human beings.

Dewey tried to solve the problems inherent in the traditional educational system. Education becomes meaningful when related to life situations. Dewey made learning a joyful activity for children. As education affects a person positively, the

impact is felt in the whole society. This helps in building a better human society. Rusk gives an estimate of Dewey in the following words.

In education we can not but be grateful to Dewey for his great services in challenging the old cold storage of ideal of knowledge and bringing present day life and placing the general principle...that both philosophy and education should reflect main currents of contemporary thought.⁶³

Freire has presented an alternative framework of thinking and action which he terms as the theory of dialogical cultural action for liberation. It implies four-fold measures namely cooperation, unity for liberation, organisation and cultural synthesis.

Freire suggests a variety of multi sensory stimulating techniques like graphic, audio-visual aids to educate the people and to conscientise people. But the focus of conscientization should be the surrounding world. People should describe and 'name' the world and reality around them, create values rather than receive them, and thus develop their understanding and commitment for action. In other words, "Their understanding needs only to be organised, interpreted, discussed and refined."⁶⁴

Freire is very relevant to the teachers and educators in the developing countries. This is especially true in case of an adult, non-formal and extension programmes. Definitely the value of his technique and philosophy can not be ruled out even in the developed countries. He has no ill-will, malice, hatred or violence against the oppressors while showing concern, commitment and constructive action for the oppressed. Rather he advocated that the hearts of oppressors should be won through love, non-violence, and peaceful resistance and radical action. In doing so, Freire appears to be close to Gandhiji's views on life.

Dewey as well as Freire stress the need of being in touch with the reality of the student as well as reality itself. Reality is not fixed, complete, waiting for the teacher to bring it to the students like a package. It is becoming. Definitely the insight of these can help us to understand the real nature of education.

⁶³ B.C.Rai., 293.

⁶⁴ A.S. Seetharamu, 217.

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