

## J. KRISHNAMURTI'S OPINION ABOUT A CURRICULUM FRAMING AND ROLE OF TEACHER

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### ABSTRACT

The important aspect in educating is the curriculum. Curriculum means the course run by a sprinter. In other words, curriculum includes all those aspects that would bring about desired behavioural changes in a learner. Now, if this is the aim of forming a curriculum then one can say that curriculum framing will not help a learner. It is because the learner is not something that is to be moulded as desired by the society. An individual is complete within himself. Curriculum building, framing etc. has been one of the important exercises of educationists since Vedic age. In this paper we have discussed curriculum framing as well as the role of the teacher [6]

### Curriculum

All students together with their parents, teachers, society, nations expect to get a respectable job or a highly paid job. In the process they do not consider as to how much friction, disorder and violence is caused within and without the learner. While taking part in the exercise he drifts away from him 'human' character of being alive and changes into a machine that works according to the set rules of the society or the employer.

Therefore, the concept of curriculum seems to bind a learner into a given limit.

### Idealism

In idealism, almost all the propounders have divided curriculum based on different activities performed by a man.

Plato's views about curriculum has three broad areas

- (1) Intellectual
- (2) Aesthetic
- (3) Moral

These have been further divided into fields of language, literature, History, Geography, Mathematics, Science etc. which fall under the intellectual category. In the aesthetic category comes arts and poetry. Then comes moral category, which deals with religion, metaphysics and ethics.

Herbart gave importance to literature, History, Art, Music, poetry while giving some importance to science. Nunn divides the activities of man into [1] physical, social, moral and religious

### Literary and aesthetic

In the first category fall subjects like physical culture, Sociology, Ethics etc. and in the second category literature Art, Music, Handicraft, History, Geography, Science and Mathematics fall.

Ross has divided activities of man into -

- (1) Physical
- (2) Spiritual

Under the head of physical activities fall skills and health education and the spiritual category has been further divided into

- (1) intellectual
- (2) moral
- (3) aesthetic
- (4) religious

Now, after discussing the views of all these 'educationists' we come to the following conclusion.

- (1) There are certain people who would decide as to what is to be studied and what not.
- (2) It will be the ideas of certain people, guru or leaders, which will set the aims of education.
- (3) There are watertight compartments called subjects, which have nothing in common.
- (4) The subjects are totally different from what happens in real life.
- (5) There is a specific place, with specific people, who could bring about changes in others life.
- (6) It is a government or the society or a group of learned people who would decide who would learn what.

The above arguments explain that the concept of framing a curriculum itself is limiting the learning abilities of a learner. Krishnamurti's opinion about a curriculum is very simple. Learning cannot happen in a classroom alone or in a tense atmosphere. To bring about learning one does not need sophisticated tools, space, people or aims. Learning in the true sense is, knowing thyself. Now if true education is, to know one self, then nobody else can specify how and when to learn. Therefore, according to Krishnamurti [2] there is no fixed curriculum. Observing the nature would help learn geography and science. Observing ones own conduct would develop moral values. By observing others' suffering one would feel sympathetic. Therefore, no curriculum forced from out side would help a child to learn about himself. Moreover, music, art, craft, clay modelling, woodwork, sewing etc. these are innate tendencies of a human. These are developed on their own. By making them a subject and filling them into, the school system takes the joy away from it. Here also curriculum plays an important role. Since a set curriculum has to be taught to the students in a stipulated time, therefore the teacher has to hurry up through one objective to another and from one chapter to the other. Now in such a case we find two constraints over a learner. These constrain, then start to determine as to what is more important to learn and what is not. How much time is to be given for learning a skill? In such an atmosphere of force and influence, it becomes almost impossible for a learner to learn at his own pace. From here on the conflict within him, with his teachers and fellow learners begin. This makes the condition of a learner miserable. To add to his misery the system of examination is introduced. This compounds the problem and leads to friction between the teacher and the taught and between the students themselves. This encourages a child to resort to dishonesty, tell lies, cheat and impersonate. When such cheating comes to light then it is considered bad habit of a child and to refrain him from doing this again he is punished. This punishment further aggravates his problems instead of solving them. The child is now caught in a vicious cycle of follies and punishment, without moving ahead. If, this is the ultimate aim that education has to fulfil, the child does not need such education. A system that makes the life of child miserable is better to be given up. Moreover, the curriculum-framing individuals or agencies separate the daily life of a child from what he studies at school. A child is expected to behave differently in school and at home. Therefore the personality of a child is divided into two parts one at home the informal one and the other at school the formal one. When child has to behave in a formal way, he is not comfortable. If he is not comfortable in school, he always wants to run away from this state. It has therefore, been seen that children, especially young children dislike going to school.

Another problem that the setting up of curriculum causes is that it separates the real life from what has been taught leaving very little scope for education to help a child in his real life problems. The aim of education being getting a 'respectable' job causes the loss of interests in traditional profession. No one, who holds a degree from college would like to take up his ancestral vocation, be it farming, carpenter, pottery making, weaving etc. This also takes the child away from his traditions and traditional values. When such a void is formed, there is a friction between the two generations causing further misery to the child and his parents.

### Realism

The curriculum in realism is said to be constituted by “those subjects and activities which prepare children for actual day to day living”. [8, P202]

The idea seems to be very accurate but including realism in the education system has also not helped much. The emphasis of a realist is on subjects such as Science, Environmental science, and vocational subjects. It gives secondary place to subjects like art, literature and languages. Keeping science in the centre has been the prime aim of education in the 20th century. It was considered that science has answers to all questions and that science is a panacea to all ills. However, science has proved as curse in many cases. It was due to over emphasis on science that many agents of mass destruction, arms for warfare made which had the capacity to cause more and more damage to man and the earth. So realism that was needed to protect the earth itself helped in destruction of life on the earth. Too much emphasis on science has made the life of people more and more self-centred with very less respect for culture. Science has also led to many unethical acts.

Curriculum centred education makes curriculum more important than the learner, for whom the curriculum has been made. The creativity that a scientific method tries to inculcate would not happen if a child is forced into doing something. Moreover, creativity has nothing to do with scientific aptitude. Creativity is not copying, a plant, or a human, drawing beautiful patterns or singing certain melody. Creativity means to create something that never existed thus says Krishnamurti [3]. The most important virtue that should be cultivated in a child or developed in a child is of sensitivity. According to J. Krishnamurti, if we want to develop a child to his fullest we must try to enhance emotional quotient, because emotions are more intense than logic.

Learning takes place when a learner is eager to learn but this eagerness would be suppressed, if the child were under an influence. Therefore if there is a strict curriculum deciding what and how much to learn it would try to limit the child. A pressure will be enacted on the child and he will lose interest in learning. Moreover, the curriculum has been made keeping in mind harmonious development of mind, body and soul. But J. Krishnamurti is of the opinion that mind, body and soul are not three constituents of a human being but these are one and are inseparable.

### Naturalism

Curriculum according to naturalism should be such as would bring out inborn tendencies of a child. Subjects, such as games, physical culture, biology, physics, history, geography and study of nature, would develop inborn tendencies, natural interests and individual differences.

### Pragmatism

According to Pragmatism the learner is more important than the subject content it stresses on activity centred curriculum where in the child will learn by doing himself. The emphasis on curriculum has been laid because it is considered that an individual must have some skill in order to lead a successful life. Here leading a successful life means to have a highly paid job, well-maintained house and all luxury and comfort. Framing of curriculum is based on the so-called aptitude of a child. However, the curriculum

mainly means subject, which would lead a learner to a certain profession.

### Role of the teacher

The next important and the only human aspect of education is the teacher. The role of the teacher has been discussed far and wide, in all generation and across all countries.

### Idealism

Idealism believes the role of a teacher as of prime importance. He has a pivotal place in education. He is considered to be the most knowledgeable, who would give knowledge to others. He is the one who has to be believed blindly. He is one who would mould a lump of mud into a beautiful creation. It is the teacher who would decide what a child has to learn when and how much. A teacher is considered a role model for the child. He is the one who would infuse intelligence in a child. This concept is however not very fruitful in the present scenario.

First teacher cannot fit into a child any quality that he does not have. Secondly, a student is not an empty vessel instead, he is brimming with confidence, interest, and curiosity to know all that is around him.

Now the question arises that how can a person, who is himself a victim of faulty education system, guide a young mind into new horizons. J. Krishnamurti is of the opinion that "if the teacher is of the right kind, he will not depend on a method, but will study each individual pupil". This should be the spirit of a real teacher, one should not dream of ideal condition because ideals are convenient escape. A teacher needs to be sympathetic towards children. Love and sympathy will bring about true learning. Being sympathetic will help a teacher to understand that children are not machines but are living beings. It is the moral duty of the teachers to protect them from physical harm. Most unfortunately teacher resort to physical punishment when the children do not show desired results. This leads to children fearing the teacher and subsequently the gap between the teacher and the taught increases. The taught, in the process of learning, starts despising the teacher and has a negative attitude towards the teacher. Instead of following the rigid concept of idealists, it is better to see inside a child, by giving him freedom to flourish. It is this freedom, that will bring about total liberation of a human. Liberation from all the conformity he is in. Conformity stops him from thinking originally and freely. A real teacher will not force the children to follow what he says instead, he would help him to create new values of life not as a revolt from the previous but by understanding the chaos with in him and in his surrounding.

According to J. Krishnamurti "unless we voluntarily bring about a radical change in education, we are directly responsible for the perpetuation of chaos and misery". [2, P 31]

A teacher who is himself addicted to some ideology will not be able to give freedom to think and act. Thus all the people who are educators first need to change themselves, only then, there is a scope for change.

### Realism

The position of a teacher in realism is said to be 'fairly important'. "The teacher according to realists, is expected to have full knowledge of the content and the needs of children. Not only this, he must also be capable to present before children the content in a clear and intelligent way by employing scientific and psychological method". [8, P 203]

The above lines express, how limited and traditional is the role of a teacher in the lives of the students. As Krishnamurti rightly questions, "is the communication of knowledge the only function of the teacher – as it is now – passing on information, ideas, theories and expanding these theories, discussing various aspects of them? Is this the only function of a teacher? If this is all a teacher is concerned with, then he is merely a living computer". [3, P 34]

The questions raised by J. Krishnamurti are quite relevant since they force us to understand what has been going wrong in our educational system. Whatever new researches, discoveries and ideology has been said to be adopted, to improve the present educational system we have more or less struck to the primitive role of teacher, that is of imparting information. By love, affection, care, sympathy and sensitivity, a teacher can bring about total development of a child.

The central role of a teacher that has been professed by idealism has been continuing till date. Teachers still expect children to be afraid of them, to keep a distance and blindly follow them. They demand respect from them instead of generating it from inside. It is this autocratic behaviour of a teacher that makes him unpopular and overshadows all his virtues. J. Krishnamurti is of the opinion that the professionalizing teaching has lowered its standard.

The teacher has lost the respect and the trust of the society. Krishnamurti says that if teachers give complete love and affection to the students they can work wonders. Here also the lack of self-knowledge and true education come into effect. Since the teachers themselves have suffered a lot all through their lives starting from the kindergarten, they project the same suffering onto their students. A teacher is also suffering from the curse of conformity. He himself does not understand the chaos within.

Krishnamurti says, "If the teacher demands respect from his pupils and has very little for them, it will obviously cause indifference and disrespect on their part. Without respect for human life, knowledge only leads to destruction and misery. The cultivation of respect for others is an essential part of right education, but if the educator himself has not this quality, he cannot help his students to an integrated life". [2, P 34]

This we can say that thoughts and philosophy of J. Krishnamurti regarding a teacher is very much relevant in the present day scenario.

### **Naturalism:**

Naturalists such as Rousseau believe that nature is the supreme teacher. The role of a teacher should be to set the stage for the children and then give them complete freedom to develop themselves according to their innate tendencies. Like J. Krishnamurti, naturalists believe that the teacher should not impose his thoughts, ideals, culture, religion etc. on the children.

The teacher must behave sympathetically and affectionately towards the student. "Naturalists don't like that children should be taught in classes by teachers who are spoiled by the artificial atmosphere of the society". [8, P 215]

The above statement proves similarity between the views of J. Krishnamurti and of naturalism. However, there is a difference, the difference being the attitude about the teacher. Naturalists pose teacher as a 'spoilt person' but J. Krishnamurti has sympathetic view about teacher. He feels that a teacher is a victim of the faulty educational system that prevailed in his times. Now he is of the opinion that, this process of, people getting spoilt when they grow up or come in contact of the society, will continue until and unless a total revolution comes in the field of education. He feels that by totally changing the system of education one can get a new life. The change, he feels, cannot be brought by any government, any religion or any organization. This change will come when each member of the society will understand himself. When, each person will understand the chaos within him, and the disorder prevailing around him. This call for a total change in education as well as personal life of human beings has been proposed for the first time by J. Krishnamurti.

### **Pragmatism**

The role of a teacher in case of Pragmatism is that of a facilitator an approach similar to the one suggested in NCF- 2005 [6]. Pragmatism professes that a teacher must provide children with problems that he will solve himself. This approach to some extent is supportive of J. Krishnamurti's ideas but not in

totality. Teacher need not provide a problem in front of children, the teacher must help the child understand his inner self. Because any problem raised by the teacher is a worldly problem regarding good job, good house, good clothes etc. The solution of such a problem will lead child into misery for if he gets into a track laid by the teacher he is bound to find himself in a quagmire. In addition, if he tries to find out his own solution he will still fall deeper into the problem. Because solving a problem does not mean education. Education means to understand the problem, its causes and the miseries brought by it. Solving the problem means ignoring or escaping the cause of the problem, which would cause further friction and disorder in a person's life. The role of a teacher should be to help the child understand, the conditions that are causing problems. These conditions, arise because the child is in conformity with certain ideas.

The role of teacher is to help the child realize that it is because of this conformity that he is suffering and not because of some physical factor. In addition, help him to free himself from age-old traditions and rituals. Therefore, J. Krishnamurti's ideas are novel and innovative. This approach is totally different from the approaches we have had till now.

To understand, from within, the shortcomings and to change oneself is the real way to bring about change in the whole humanity. This approach of common good and bringing change from inside, is a new technique and is quite convincing. Therefore, we can say that following Krishnamurti's ideals in education, would bring about the desired change.

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