

Foundations of Curriculum- Philosophical point of view

What is Philosophy?

- The word 'Philosophy' comes from a combination of the Greek word words 'Philos' means 'Love' and 'Sophi' means wisdom (Philos+ Sophi=**Philosophia**) which means '**Love of Wisdom**'. Simply, philosophy is the study of fundamental questions about the world, including reality, knowledge and value. Philosophy seeks the answers of fundamental truths. It is a systematic study of general and fundamental questions concerning topics like existence, reason, knowledge, value, mind and language.

Name of some great philosophers are- Aristotle, Socrates, Kant, Karl Marx, Plato, David Hume.....

- Name of some great Indian philosophers are- Gautama Buddha, Rabindranath Tagore, Adi Sankara, Sri Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Vivekananda.....

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Definitions of Philosophy:

- **Aristotle**: “Philosophy is the science which investigates the nature of being, as it is in itself”.
- **Radhakrishnan (1888-1975)**: Philosophy is a logical inquiry into the nature of reality.
- **Fitche’s views**: Philosophy is the science of knowledge.
- (Platto :“He who has a taste for every sort of knowledge and who is curious to learn and is never satisfied may be termed philosopher”).

Basic features/ Characteristics

- Philosophy is systematic enquiry about the ultimate reality of the universe.
- Philosophy is study of general principles & understanding of all that comes in the range of human experience.
 - It is a way of life.
- It is the oldest and original discipline of thought.
- It is a search for truth and reality.
- It is based on enquire about life and existence.
 - It is logical in its approach.
- It is ever growing and developing.
- Philosophers try to see life as a whole.
- Philosophy is related to condition of life and society.

Major branches of Philosophy-

- **Epistemology**: The study of knowledge
- **Ethics**: It investigates moral principles.
- **Metaphysics**: The study of reality, existence, objects.
- **Logic**: The study of reasoning and it explores how good arguments can be distinguished from bad ones.
- **Axiology**: The study of values and ethics
- **Aesthetics**: The study of beauty, art, and taste .

What is educational Philosophy?

- Combination of two subjects/ disciplines-

EDUCATION & PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy and education are closely inter-related and inter-dependent. All educational problems are questions of philosophy. In other word we can say that the application of philosophical principle in the field of education to solve various educational issues is regarded as educational philosophy. In fact, educational philosophy is that philosophy which provide answer to the educational issues of why to educate (aim), whom to educate (child), who to educate (teacher), where to educate (school), what to educate (curriculum), how to educate (methods), when to educate (motivation) etc.

John Adams defines “Education is the dynamic side of philosophy.”

T. P. Nunn defines “Education aims are correlative to ideals of life.”

- We may define educational philosophy thus; it is the application of philosophical principle in the educational practices which direct the process of education towards the aims of human life. In short, educational philosophy relates philosophy of life through the medium of education.

Major Schools of Philosophy:

- Idealism and curriculum
- Naturalism and curriculum
- Pragmatism and Curriculum
- Realism and Curriculum
- Existentialism and Curriculum.

Idealism

- The word 'Idealism' is derived from the word 'Ideas' or 'Ideals', this philosophy seeks to explain man and Universe in terms of Spirit or mind. The founder of this philosophy is the great philosopher **Plato**.
- **Characteristics-**
 - **Idealism believes in the universal mind or god-** It believes that along with the physical or material universe, there is also a spiritual universe.
 - **Idealism believes that man as a spiritual being.**

- The world of ideas and values is more important than the world of matter.
- Real knowledge is perceived in mind.
- The main exponents of this school of philosophy are- Plato, Comenius, Kant, Pestalozzi, Hegel, Froebel, Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi.

Idealism and curriculum-

- Idealism aims at developing a true sense of appreciation of truth, goodness and beauty (attainment of spiritual perfection) and this aim directly reflects in construction of curriculum. Therefore, idealistic curriculum provides for the training and cultivation of the intellectual, moral and aesthetic activities.
- For the intellectual advancement of the child , languages, literature, science, social science and mathematics are included in the curriculum.
- For the aesthetic and moral development fine arts, poetry, ethics and religion are provided.

- Idealistic philosophy of education at the same time, does not ignore Physical education. Physical activities include game and sports, physical exercises, health and hygiene, gymnastics are included in curriculum.
- Idealistic curriculum mainly helps to develop two activities-
 - Curriculum related to physical activities.
 - Curriculum related to spiritual activities (intellectual, moral, aesthetic and religious)

Naturalism

- . This philosophy believes that nature represents the entire reality. It mainly focuses on two types of nature – natural world and man's own nature. According to this philosophy human life is a part of nature. According to this philosophy there are three forms of naturalism such as-

Physical naturalism

Mechanical naturalism

Biological naturalism

- Naturalism and curriculum

- Education should not only be according to physical nature but also in accordance with the nature of the child. Education should be according to the child's tendencies, capacities, instincts, likes and dislikes. That is why, the naturalists do not advocate a fixed curriculum. Every child is given the right to determine his own curriculum. The child is expected to learn directly from nature through personal experiences.
- Naturalists give importance on teaching of science subjects mainly like- physics, chemistry, mathematics, nature study, agriculture, gardening, art and craft, botany, geology, geography and astronomy etc.

- Along with teaching of science subjects it focuses on subjects which help the students in their physical growth and development.
- The main exponents of this philosophy are- Rousseau, Bacon, Herbert Spencer, Froebel, James, Tagore etc.
- Rousseau's book 'Emile' is based on the principle of 'negative education'-
 - No book learning
 - No method of teaching
 - No rule-regulations
 - No fixed curriculum
 - Learning from direct experience.

Pragmatism and Curriculum

- The term 'Pragmatism' is derived from a Greek word 'pragma', which means "action" or "affair". Pragmatism basically is an American philosophy. In other word, pragmatism is a philosophy which believes in practical work or action. A pragmatic philosopher lives in the world of facts and not in a world of ideals or ideas. The pragmatic philosophers try to experiment many new ideas and try to adopt those which help to solve day to day problems. They try to build up a philosophy of life which is based on their own experiments and experiences. According to them values are not fixed in advance, they are made. The main exponents are- William James, John Dewey, Kilpatrick etc.

The characteristics are-

- No ultimate values
- Emphasis on experimentation
- Belief in practical philosophy.
- Human development according to environment.
- Faith in democracy

Pragmatism and curriculum

- Activity based curriculum(learning by doing)
- Practical curriculum (project method, learning through experiences and activity)
- Vocational courses.
- Curriculum for social development (Curriculum for making unity, integration, cooperation)
- Science education (experimentation)

Realism and curriculum

- Realism is that philosophy which believes in reality, real world, facts and objects. It defines that real knowledge can be acquired through our sense organs. For realists, the basic question about reality is that there is a 'real' world of objects that exist independently of us and we take knowledge from this real world. Milton, John Locke, Bacon, Russel are the philosophers who believe in realism.
- The Realist curriculum emphasizes the subject matter of the physical world, particularly science and mathematics.

- Educational realism believes that the students should study logic, critical thinking, and the scientific method to teach students to perceive and understand reality. It suggests that students should learn the methods of learning which help them to discover objective truth.
- Experience based learning
- Practical subjects.
- Freedom of expression.
- Knowledge from sense organs.

Existentialism and Curriculum.

- Existentialism is a philosophical movement that explores human existence and the meaning of life. It emphasizes the individual's responsibility for creating their own purpose and meaning in life.
- Existentialism is a philosophy of human nature that identifies people as having free will to determine the course of their lives.
- It gives emphasis on individuality and individual difference.

- Kierkegaard is regarded as the father of existentialism.
- It emphasizes the importance of individual choice, authenticity, and personal experience, and encourages students to develop their own unique identities and take responsibility for their own learning.
- Curriculum gives emphasis on Individuality.
- An existentialist curriculum would encourage students to explore their personal beliefs, values, and goals.

- Existentialism recognizes the uncertainty of life. An existentialist curriculum would prepare students to cope with and find meaning in uncertainty. This might include discussions on complex, open-ended issues without clear answers, helping students develop adaptability.
- Existentialism also deals with the individual's responsibility for defining their own morals and ethics, the curriculum might include a strong emphasis on ethical education.

- Existentialist approach to curriculum is deeply student-centered, focusing on personal growth, ethical responsibility, and the development of an authentic self. It encourages an educational experience that is as much about personal development as it is about acquiring knowledge.