
Krishnamurti's Views on Education

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ABSTRACT

Present-day education is a complete failure because it has overemphasized technique. In overemphasizing technique we destroy man. To cultivate capacity and efficiency without understanding life, without having a comprehensive perception of the ways of thought and desire, will only make us increasingly ruthless, which is to engender wars and jeopardize our physical security. So Krihshnamurti advocated education that could improve the soul.

KEY WORDS: *Traditional education, man-making education*

Education forms the core of Jiddu Krishnamurti's thoughts. He wrote profusely on education, yet to call him an educational philosopher, in the strict sense of the term, would be a negation of the term. Neither by aptitude nor by qualifications could he be termed an educational thinker. His deep and insightful remarks on education, all the same, aroused people to think on education in its modern day context. Krishnamurti's views aroused deep interest as well as great controversy. This is true not only about his views on education but also on most of subjects like religion, nationalism and religion on which he deliberated.

Cambridge online Dictionary provides us two different versions of it: (U.K. meaning): "the process of teaching and learning, or the organizations such as schools where this process happens". (U. S. meaning) the process of teaching or learning in a school, or the knowledge that you get from this. The *Longman Online English Dictionary* hails education as "the process of teaching or learning in a school, or the knowledge that you get from this." According to P. H. Phoenix (1958) "Education is the process whereby persons intentionally guide the development of persons" (P. 13) p. 13) *Encyclopedia Britannica*, defining education, calls it "as the transmission of the values and accumulated knowledge of a society." On this subject, Gandhiji said, "By education I mean drawing out of the best in child and man—body, mind and spirit." (Harijan, on Internet) 1937) Madhu Kapani defines education as "a discipline that is concerned mainly with methods of teaching and learning in schools or school like environments as opposed to various informal means of socialization." (Madhu Kapani, P. 45) The great Indian Noble Laureate "Rabindranath Tagore hails education as "all round growth and development of the individual in harmony with the universal, the supreme person who has in himself the various levels of consciousness and experiences corresponding to man's physical self, life, mind and soul". (quoted from Madhu Kapani, P. 22) *New Catholic Encyclopedia* defines education as the aggregate of all those experiences that enlighten the mind, increase knowledge, foster insight, develop abilities and attitudes and strengthen the will. It also focuses to attam social competence and optimum personal development." (P. 111) The holy Vedas considered education as a great liberating force –'Sa Vidya Ya Vimuktaye': Here 'sa' means

“She”, ‘Vidya’ means “Knowledge”, ‘Ya’ means “that” and ‘Vimuktaye’ means “Freedom”. Thus the sloka means ‘knowledge is that which liberates.’

Education can well be hailed as a man-making process. Its specific role is to advance and expedite the holistic development of body, mind, intellect and emotions of man. It is through the process of education the savage and inhuman tendencies are streamlined into constructive and useful channels. In this sense, education is an ever ongoing process which brings out a person out of quagmire, darkness, poverty and misery and leads him to enlightenment, prosperity and happiness. Krishnamurti emphatically said that “Conventional education makes independent thinking extremely difficult. Conformity leads to mediocrity. To be different from the group or to resist environment is not easy and is often risky as long as we worship success.” Krishnamurti, Education and significance, P. 3)

According to Linguists and etymologists the word “education” comes from a few words belonging to the Latin Language. These Latin words are “educare”, “educere”, “educatum”, “E+duco” “educates” and “education.” The word ‘educare’ means “to bring” or “to bring forth.” The word ‘educere’ means to “bring forth” or “to draw out.” The Latin term ‘Educatum’ bring to mind the idea of “teaching” or “training.” The terms “E-duco” has two parts, “E” which means “out of” and “duco” means “to lead”. “Educatus” means “to rear” or “bring up.” The last term “education” refers to “rearing” or “breeding.” Thus, we find these so many Latin words bring to mind the idea of education. The word “education” entered the English language in 1530’s.

India has given birth to many great educationists that have enlightened the world with their sage words. Among them honourable mention must be made of Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902), Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833), Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950), Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1048) Servapalli Radhakrishnan (1888-1975) and Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895-1986). These philosophers have made a shared search in the field of education and allied disciplines.

These great Indian educational philosophers were highly dissatisfied with the type of education that was being imparted in modern schools and colleges in India. They felt that modern education is making our learners plodders and sluggards. Krishnamurti fought against this tendency tooth and nail. This is the reason why Krishnamurti has been hailed as a “revolutionary teacher . . . who worked tirelessly to awaken people—to awaken their intelligence, to awaken their sense of responsibility, to awaken a flame of discontent’, and this commitment to awakening the consciousness of people was undoubtedly based on a ‘strong moral passion.” (Anonymous, P.58)

J. Krishnamurti looked at education as an instrument of one’s liberation which could give the right direction to one’s life. He put forward a way of education which could make a man advance towards liberation. He did not suggest any pattern to approach truth. He tried to make every man to be his own truth-seeker without seeking or receiving help from any sect, organization or guru whatsoever. He was deadly against any guru, book or a certain sect which could be particularly evolved to approach truth. Krishnamurti’s approach could be better understood only by the person who was a staunch believer of self-realization; who was willing to put faith in himself in totality. He was keen to make us realize that human beings by instinct were expected to be keen to learn and be curious by temperament. The way of life as suggested by Krishnamurti all his life redefining the various subjects as interrelated that could not be understood when taken up

separately. Through his remarks on education, he put emphasis on making a society based on the willingness to give birth to a new culture as Bertrand Russell suggested: “Krishnamurti desired that education should inculcate in man the keen desire to develop spiritual, moral, intellectual, ethical and social values : “It must foster and promote die precious wealth of moral strength and spiritual victory. Mere mastery of books does not entitle a man to be known as ‘educated’. Without the mastery of the inner instrument of emotion no man can be deemed to be educated. The latent has to be cleansed so that the patent can flourish. It must purify the inner impulses of man.”(P. 9)

Jiddu Krishnamurti's acute observations on education are unconventional and innovative. The traditional and old-fashioned educational ideals look at education as a means to provide theoretical and vague academic information. The centre of attraction is the external and woerldlly materialistic success that can certainly provide a man things like wealth, power, and position, with hardly any focus on spiritual gain. On the other side, for Krishnamurti education was supposed to emphasize chiefly on the awakening of human intelligence. His views on the performance of the tutor, the teaching methods,, school atmosphere and other issues related to education were very unconventional and nonconformist.

J. Krishnamurti's approach to education is radically different from that of many other Indian and world educational thinkers. Time and again her broached the idea of education and felt that modern day education was not adequate or proper; it did not lerad to the proper development of human personality. In his talk, dialogues and articles he repeatedly asserted about the failure of present day education. He sincerely felt that fragmentation was one of the basic problems faced by our contemporary generation, which engaged almost every field of activity including education. The basic defect of the present day education was that it laid more emphasis on technique than human personality. It attempted to make man methodical and systematic in developing capacity without an overall understanding and appreciation of the ways of thought and aspiration. Jiddu Krishnamurti's chief concern therefore was to awaken assimilated intelligence of the individual through education, rather than encouraging the individual to be bound to a pattern and in this way checking his understanding and perception of himself as a total process.

India produced many great educational thinkers in the twentieth century but amongst them Krishnamurti remains the youngest and the most innovative. He did not take a cue either from Mahatma Gandhi, or from Sri Aurobindo and S. Radhakrishnan, the three stalwarts of contemporary Indian educational thinkers, but went against tradition, and fashioned his own language to tell his thoughts. While most other Indian thinkers based their teachings on ancient Hindu systems and traditions Krishnamurti did not advocate or recommend the traditional methods and doctrines. He considered education as a process that encouraged man to look in himself and explore the world within, in his soul. He did not whole-heartedly accept all organized religions because he did not want tradition to usurp and take the place of real values and truth. Though his original and unconventional approaches of teaching give him somewhat a different place among the contemporary thinkers, yet it cannot be contradicted that there are some hoary principles in his teaching culled from Buddhist, Vedantic and some existential sources.

End Notes

- i. P. H. Phoenix, *Philosophy of Education*, Halt and Rinehart, New York, 1958.
- ii. Anonymous. *Krishnamurti as a Moral critic. Rishi Valley Education Centre, India, KFI*, 1998.
- iii. Madhu Kapani, *Education in human values*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers private. Ltd, 2000,
- iv. William J. Me Donald (ed), *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol.5, Washington: Catholic University of America, 1981
- v. Bertrand Russell, *Education and Social order*, Boston and London Unwin Paperbacks,1977
- vi. Krishnamurti, *Education and the significance of Life*,1953.

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