



The Impact of Philosophy of Jainism on Various Aspects of Education

Purshotam

Research Scholar, Dakshin Bharat Hindi Parchar Sabha, Madras

Abstract

Jainism is a very old philosophy. It has exercised a great influence on the mind of man. Even Under the present-day educational system, boys and girls go to schools and colleges to follow a syllabus which has been set for them.

The aim of education can be both social as well as individual. From the view-point of education for an individual, it should be such as to help develop the physical, mental and moral aspects of an individual's personality.

The aim of education is thus not restricted to the one sided development of an individual's personality; it seeks on the contrary, to develop the "perfect Man."

Jainism presents equal background to the aim of education and life. The aims of education would be influenced by the aims of life. Education is the important means of fulfilling the aims of life. Jainism is quite a sound philosophy and provides permanent aims of education. Jainism is not only a real source of getting worldly enjoyments and heavenly pleasures, but is a science to purify the mundane soul to attain perfection, omniscience, and undying infinite true happiness. It is original, independent, scientific, rationalistic democratic, universal, systematic and primitive faith not only of mankind, but even of birds and bests. It provides freedom, pure bliss, self-responsibility, self-realization, all equality voluntary, co-operation, reciprocal help, spiritual advancement, all love noble thoughts, sweet temper, simple living, pure food, contentment, international peace, exemplary action and brave conduct.

Key Words: *Impact, Philosophy, Jainism, Aspects, Education*

Education

Jainism is a very old philosophy. It has exercised a great influence on the mind of man. Even today when people are not ready to accept any old philosophy. Jainism has certain attractions while appeal to human mind and thereby exercise a potent influence on human thinking. In education, Jainism has influenced important aspects of education. It supplies good ideals and aims of education.

Aims of Education

Under the present-day educational system, boys and girls go to schools and colleges to follow a syllabus which has been set for them. The teachers prepare lessons based on the prescribed syllabus and convey to the pupils all the information they have gathered. Many times, what is conveyed is not on the basis of understanding born out of experience or assimilation. The students consequently learn certain facts, only for the purpose of passing examinations. The result is the information is not digested in their minds; and then lives do not reflect any evidence of their learning. While acquisition more important purpose of education. Man has created new horizons for himself through expanding the field of knowledge. Those who have contributed to the widening of this horizon have been men of character and strength, men who could face odds and difficulties, and risk dangers and suffering for the ideal for which they lived. The purpose of all education should be to make such men.

The aim of education can be both social as well as individual. From the view-point of education for an individual, it should be such as to help develop the physical, mental and moral aspects of an individual's personality. The social aim of education, on the other hand is that it should prepare an individual for the purpose of building a happy and prosperous society. In keeping with this latter, aim, education being individual – centered, but in the last resort, the individual is a constituent unit of the society he belongs to. The aim of education, therefore, is to build society through the building of an individual. "The purpose of education, it is admitted by thinkers of East and West, is to provide a coherent picture of the universe and an integrated way of life. We must obtain through it a sense of perspective, a synoptic vision, a Samanvaya of the different items of knowledge. "We have to establish harmony among different branches of knowledge through education. In ancient India too, the aim of education was to develop wisdom in person along-with a systematic growth of knowledge."

The aim of education is thus not restricted to the one sided development of an individual's personality; it seeks on the contrary, to develop the "perfect Man." Under the present circumstances, our educational system must find its guiding principle in the aim of the social order for which it prepares, in the nature of the civilization it hopes to build. Unless we know whether we are tending, we cannot decide what we should do and how we should do. Societies, like men, need a clear purpose to keep them stable in a world of bewildering changes.

Jainism presents equal background to the aim of education and life. The aims of education would be influenced by the aims of life. Education is the important means of fulfilling the aims of life. We have seen that according to Jainism the personality of the individual and man's soul is more important than his physical structure. Man is really a soul. The entire creation is conceptual. Nature is incomplete in itself. There is the soul of the universe behind it. Man's soul is a part of this soul of the universe. The real structure of this is magnificent. The whole universe may be encompassed in it. According to Jainism the aim of human life is to acquire the knowledge of this soul. Therefore, self-realization is admitted as the aim of education according to Jainism. It is to be remembered that this self is not only a body. Philosophical self is different from psychological self. Psychological self is the consciousness about ourselves. Psychologically speaking, first of all, we have visual perception of the visible parts of our body and clothes and later on visual, tactual and other sensations are mixed up with images or ideas. Thus, we have the consciousness of the perceived self. Side by side, we go on developing idea of self, the perceiver. At this stage we enter into philosophical speculation of self. It is this self which is to be realized by the individuals. 'Self' here means the real nature of man. That is why the word 'Soul' has been used here. Man has to realize this real form. The aim of education is to enable the child to realize the soul; recognize his real form, and proceed towards self-knowledge.

Jainism as we have already noted contents that man is the grandest handiwork of God. In the words of Shakespeare, man is the 'Raragon of Creation.' He has in him an individuality, a pattern of self, inborn with him. Education ought to make this pattern perfect. Jainism has given us very lofty aims of education. Some of the important aims of education propounded by Jains are as under:

(i) Self-realization or Exaltation of Personality

Jainism emphasizes the work of man's personality and spiritual nature. Man's soul is more important than his material structure. Man is merely soul. The entire creation is conceptual. Nature is incomplete in itself. There is the soul of the universe behind it. Man's soul is a part of this soul of the universe. The real structure of the soul is magnificent. The aim of human life, according to Jainism, is to acquire the knowledge of his soul. Therefore, self-realization is admitted as the aim of education according to Jainism. It is said to be "The Summun Bonus" of life and education. Here the word 'Self' has been used for 'Soul,' the real nature of man. The aim of education is to enable the child to realize the soul; recognize his real form, and proceed towards self knowledge. The knowledge of the world's soul is also necessary. The soul of the universe is the final truth. It is Good and Beautiful. It is realization of that ultimate Truth which may give enjoyment. That is the aim of development of child's whole personality.

Universal Education

Jainism believes that every man is equally the noblest work of God. There should, therefore, be made no exception in the education of children. Education should be universal, without distinction of wealth or status, creed, caste or colour. It should be for the favourite few. This is the Jain Charter of universal education.

(ii) Preservation and enrichment of cultural environment

The child's environment is not merely physical or material like that of Ramu, the wolf-boy but human, material or cultural also. To Jainism, the spiritual or cultural environment is an environment of man's own making; it is the fruit of man's own creative activities; it is the product of ages and it is always in the process of growth. It belongs to all and it is the common heritage of mankind. The aim of education should be to enter into this cultural heritage to the best of his capacity, preserve it and improve upon it. Rusk says, "Education must enable mankind through its culture to enter more and more fully into the spiritual realm, and also to enlarge the boundaries of the spiritual realm."

(iii) Development of Moral sense

Fourthly, the aim of education according to Jainism is to develop the child's moral sense and thus enable him to distinguish right from wrong, to love good and despise evil. The goal of life as well as of education should be the realization of moral values by developing the spiritual character of the child.

(iv) Development of inventive and creative powers

Man is not helpless like other beings. He has got certain inventive and creative powers. He is 'sui-geneous.' He must develop his inventive and creative powers. Through these inventive and creative skills, he should change and modify the environment according to his needs and purposes.

(v) Development of complete man

The physical aspect of education has also been considered by the idealistic school of philosophy. In the words of Ross, "The health and fitness of the body must receive due attention, for without such health and fitness the pursuit of spiritual values is seriously handicapped. Moral values, which are spiritual can be found in physical activities, intellectual values are preserved in the application of skills to the problems of physical environment; and a man acquires over his material in his crafts." In this way, education, according to Jainism

should aim at developing child into a complete man with full physical, intellectual, moral, spiritual, emotional and cultural uplift. Physical he must be stout; intellectually he must be alert and think like a philosopher, and scientist; morally he should have determination to follow good and to avoid evil; spiritually he should have the freedom of mind, freedom from ignorance, wants and passions. The aim of education should be to train the whole man completely and fully for manhood and not some part of man.

(vi) Simple living and high thinking

Jainism regards that simple living and high thinking should be an other aim of education. More than the environment it is the mind that needs to be controlled and Napoleon, the warrior justly said, "The only conquests which are permanent and have no regards are our conquests over ourselves."

Curriculum

Now the question arises as to what should be the nature of curriculum according to Jainism in order to fulfil the above aims. The student becomes habitual of living in the type of environment in which he is born. It is definite that we cannot neglect this environment while constructing the curriculum. It is possible to allot some place in the curriculum for those activities which cannot be said to be perfectly true. Jainism does not regard it as a glimpse of truth. The Jain advise us that we should acquire the final truth in this material world with its cooperation. Man's spiritual environment is more important but natural environment cannot be neglected. Man is a combination of body and mind, of which the latter is more important. But even mental activity would be difficult if physical needs are not fulfilled. Man can proceed towards self-realisation only when he controls his physical needs. Therefore, the knowledge of the material world is also necessary. The student should have the knowledge of natural environment. Besides special attention should also be paid to spiritual environment. Man's intellectual, aesthetic, moral and religious activities are included in the spiritual environment. His knowledge, at, morality and religion come under this spiritual environment. Society has got both – natural and spiritual needs. Man is influenced by natural environment. He has created spiritual environment by developing art, religion and morality. In order to stabilize itself society, desires that its future members should acquire a knowledge of natural and spiritual subjects. It does not want that all the persons of society should be similar. Therefore, the knowledge of natural and spiritual environment should be included in the curriculum from the view points, of both the individual and the society. Man can realize himself only by trying to fulfil both kinds of needs.

From this point of view Jainism cannot ignore physical training. Its curriculum would also include physical education. Knowledge of natural environment is acquired through natural sciences, therefore, Jainism does not condemn subjects like Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Geography, Astronomy, Geology, Botany and Zoology. For spiritual development subjects like the Art, Literature, Ethics, Philosophy, Religion, Psychology and Music are more important. The study of these subjects develops the soul of man. Without the study of these subjects man would be confined to natural environment and Music are more important. The study of these subjects develops the soul of man. Without the study of these subjects man would be confined to natural environment.

Methods of Education

A great deal has been written on methods of teaching in our schools and colleges. The activity method, the project method, individual attention, relating teaching to pupil's experiences, use of audio-visual aids such as the cinema, drama, radio and television and a variety of similar devices have been recommended by eminent teaches and academicians. The basic objective of using all these methods is to create interest in the pupil, so that he is

able to concentrate his mind on the subject of his study. But in practice, in many cases this basic objective has been forgotten and these methods themselves have been adopted as the objectives. But Jainism takes methods as tools and not ends in themselves. It provides lofty aims of education but speaks very little about methods of teaching. It advocates one method of teaching by which to attain knowledge, that which is called concentration. The very essence of education is concentration of mind. From the lowest man to the highest yogi, all have to use the same method to attain knowledge. The Chemist who works in his laboratory concentrates all the powers of his mind, brings them into one focus, and throws them on the elements; the elements stand analysed, and thus his knowledge comes. The astronomer concentrates the powers of his mind and brings them into one focus; and he throws them on the objects through his telescope; and stars and systems roll forward and give up their secrets to him. So it is in every case; with the professor in his chair, the student with his book and with every man who is working to know.

All success in any line of work is the result of this. High achievements in arts, music, etc. are the result of concentration. When the mind is concentrated and turned back on itself, all within us will be our servants, not our masters. According to Jainism the power of concentration is the only key to the treasure-house of knowledge. It advocates that the very essence of education is concentration of mind not the collection of facts. Concentration of mind is the secret of the source of power of the scientists who probe the external world, or the prophets who probe the inner world of the spirit. Stuffing the mind with certain facts and figures is not education. Development of the personality of the child, so that each boy and girl can reach the highest level of attainment in his and her own life, according to his or her own genius is the end of all education. To achieve this end, it is necessary that we must develop in each the instrument and the means of that attainment. Cultivation of an undertrained mind resulting in single minded concentration is the sure instrument for this end.

One of the fundamental principles of education that Jainism follows is to see the best in every person. It believes that seeing and emphasizing the strong points in an individual is the best way of building that individual. Therefore, Jainism is against all negative attitudes and expressions.

Spiritual qualities should be lived in daily life. Religion is nothing unless it is practiced. Qualities such as love, purity and selfless service should become part of our day to day activities. The educational system should plan and provide activities which will develop such qualities. Progressive methods of education all over the world aim at making children active participants in the process of learning instead of being passive recipients. With this end in view, various kinds of activities have been devised. Mahatma Gandhi considered that education of the body, the intellect and the emotions could be achieved through the intelligent and scientific use of handicrafts, leaders in education in other countries have used a variety of other activities for teaching children. Jainism has suggested that our daily duties could become the basis of designing learning activities in the school and the home.

The Role of the Teacher

According to Jainism high qualities were expected of the teacher. The modern books on education describe some specific qualities that a teacher must possess to be successful in his profession. He must know his subject well, he must know how to teach effectively and he must have genuine love for his pupils. This implies; he must be learning continuously, to be up-to-date in his field of knowledge. Such a man should really love his subject; for without love, he cannot go deep into or enjoy learning it. He must also love his pupils, and be devoted to them. Without love one cannot give his best to his pupils. It is only through love, affection and regard, the teacher can understand the needs of the pupils and ways of fulfilling them. In addition, a good teacher must have good memory, personality determination, will power,

persuasive ability, tact and understanding of the ways of the young. All these have been prescribed as the essential qualities of a teacher in Jainism and in our ancient books also. Further more Jainism advocates that teacher must be a good example to his words. He should live in his daily life, what he preaches.

There were also regulations prescribing rules for the teacher regarding relationship with his pupils. The teacher should love the pupils as his own son. He should teach him sacred science with whole hearted attention, without withholding from him any part of the whole law. He has been described as leading the pupil from the darkness of ignorance to the light of learning. A teacher who neglects the instruction of his pupil ceases to be his teacher. While the student should serve the teacher in all possible ways, it is incumbent on the teacher to see that he does not give him such work as will interfere with his studies. Although it is the duty of the pupil to render services to the teacher, the teacher must be careful to see that the pupil is not exploited for selfish purposes to the detriment of his studies. Such services are meant for the pupil's own moral improvement and not solely for the economic advantage of the teacher.

The teacher is the pivot on which any educational system revolves. The best scheme of education can become bad, if the teachers handling it are bad. The quality of any educational system depends to a large measure on securing well-educated and well-equipped teachers, steeped in learning, strong in character, with high ideals, and devoted to the spread of knowledge. If India was a great seat of pilgrimage and learning and men from far off countries came to her facing tremendous difficulties, it was because there were masters who regarded the pursuit of knowledge and truth as the greatest thing in their lives. They were eminent not only intellectually but also were spiritual lamps, who lighted the light in other souls.

According to Jainism the teacher should throw his whole force into the tendency of the taught without real sympathy we can never teach well. Do not try to disturb the faith of any man. If you can, give him something better, but do not destroy what he has. The true teacher is he who can immediately come down to the level of the student, and transfer his soul to the students soul and see through and understand through his mind. Such a teacher can really teach and none else.

Jainism believes that teaching through speech, where there is absence of application, will not be effective. When a man feels intensely, his words are few, silent example is the best way of education. Speech mars its effect. For example, if you slap a child, the first thing he will do, will be to look at your face. If there is the expression of anger on your face the child will begin to weep, but if he finds you smiling, he will not take it ill and smile instead, because the silent language of the facial expression can be silently understood. The face is the index to our heart. The child will immediately understand the language of hate or love. The present-day education is an imposition from above. If the heart of the teacher speaks, the teaching will go home to the student.

A teacher can change the life of his pupils by his personal example. Ashram education, in olden times, was ideal education. In the Ashramas the students and the teachers used to live together. The teachers were simple in their dress, food and habits. The student who followed their teachers, also followed the high ideal of simple living and high thinking.

Discipline

Like idealistic philosophy, Jainism enjoins strict discipline for the pupils. True education cannot be imparted without discipline, Anger, ego, luxury, illness and laziness are some of the main hindrances in acquiring true education.

Jain Philosophy ways stress on the following eight qualities which are of great help for the pupils to get true education.

1. He should not laugh all the times and try to pick up knowledge with perseverance.
2. He should have control over his passions and senses and he should concentrate his mind on his studies.
3. He should have a good character.
4. He should not use indecent language which reflects on our character.
5. He should be fair in his dealings.
6. He should not be susceptible to flattery.
7. He should not loose temper.
8. He should be an ardent follower of truth.

Jainism is quite a sound philosophy and provides permanent aims of education. Jainism is not only a real source of getting worldly enjoyments and heavenly pleasures, but is a science to purify the mundance soul to attain perfection, omniscience, and undying infinite true happiness. It is original, independent, scientific, rationalistic democratic, universal, systematic and primitive faith not only of mankind, but even of birds and bests. It provides freedom, pure bliss, self-responsibility, self-realization, all equality voluntary, co-operation, reciprocal help, spiritual advancement, all love noble thoughts, sweet temper, simple living, pure food, contentment, international peace, exemplary action and brave conduct. It is an intimate friend of all, even of the most sinful and lowly being but is an enemy of injustice, vice, ignorance, desires, passions and impurity. All sorts of distinctions of birth, caste, class and state and all differences of rulers and the ruled. Masters and servants, high and low, rich and poor, traders and labourers automatically disappear and in the words of a German thinker Dr. Charlotta Krause, "This miserable world may become a paradise with peace, everlasting joy and true infinite bliss, if Jainism is practiced by all the people of the world."

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