



**CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF CONSTRUCTIVISM IN CONTEMPORARY
TEACHING ENVIRONMENT - INCLUDING USERS (CHILDREN, TEACHERS,
MANAGERS) PERSPECTIVE**

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Abstract

In this research article an effort has been made to analyze the concept of constructivism and its possible implementations in the current teaching – learning environment. The constructivist approach has been analysed from the point of view of learner, teacher, and managers. Focus of the research is to explore the points of agreement and disagreement between demands of contemporary education system and expected responsibilities assigned by this approach. By observing teaching learning practices directly and indirectly and gathering the information on current and upcoming system of education from related resources certain conclusions have been drawn which unfold the areas where we need to emphasise for the success of approach (constructivist) and system (Education) partnership.

Key Words: Approach, Behaviorist, Cognitive, Humanist, Constructivist



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Introduction

Education is one of the imperative factors to uplift the society economically, ethically Technologically, and ideologically .Composition of society is not limited to one or two

Groups or strata but it is the sum total of different heterogeneous groups and their associated aspects. As far as our country India is concerned, its human constituents apart from its general population also include some groups which hold special attention for some or the other reasons such as, tribal people, group of economically weaker section, women population, backward and schedule caste groups, along with special children.

During 67 years of independence education has experienced several changes to reach its recent phase, until 1976 state had the authority to take decision on all the matters pertaining to school education, in 1976 constitution amended to include education in concurrent list, in 1986 the country as a whole had a uniform policy of education system, and now our education has reached to the level of being constitutional right.

Right to free and compulsory education is a remarkable achievement in the area of Education. Implications of this right in current system are gradually changing the shape of our classrooms. Homogeneity in the age, integration of different social strata's along with physical and mental impairments have become the parameters of formulation of a class. This paradigm shift is not the upcoming phase of only government school but covering all public and private schools also.

Changing trends in Approaches of Teaching Learning

Two days classrooms have to be multidimensional not only in structure but in all respects to accommodate normal children, special children, children entering according to the age, first generation learners without, children from economically weaker section, children of migrants. Change in the structure of classroom is directly proportional to the change in methods of teaching learning. Along with these changes in education system, our teaching and learning approaches have also evolved along with time in following manner:

Behaviorist approach has taught us trial and error method of modifying the behavior. This approach describes learning as a connection between stimulus and response. This approach emphasizes that behaviour begins with reflexes i.e. natural responses and new behaviour results from the acquisition of new bonds of stimulus and response through experience. This approach considers environment more important than heredity.

Cognitive approach protested against the mechanization of mental processes and considered learning as inner psychological functioning as perception, concept formation, attention, memory and problem solving.

Humanistic approach is based on the philosophy that is concerned with human and humane interests and makes use of creativity, belongingness, self development, co-existence mental health, values etc .So as a whole we can say that it includes human beings as well as their total capacities, characteristics and potentialities. (IGNOU School of Education ES-332)

Changes in the approaches rectified the process of teaching with the passage of time and vice – versa. Currently that need of generating knowledge has been felt instead of filling brain with information. In this context an approach is attracting the attention of teachers and learners and this upcoming approach is known as constructivist approach .

Constructivist Approach

The roots of constructivist approach can be traced back in the philosophy of Giambattista Vico belonging to eighteenth century .He emphasized that human can understand only when they themselves construct . Further John Dewey said in this concern. **“Education is a process of involving continuous reconstruction and reorganization of experience.”**

Chapter two of NCF 2005 focuses on the need to recognize the child as a natural learner and knowledge as the outcome of the child’s own activity. Informal learning in society builds on the learner’s ability to draw upon and construct their own knowledge, to develop their capacity, in relating to the environment around them.

The constructivist perspective of learning is taken into consideration under heading Implications for curriculum and practice. Here it has been said that learners actively construct their own knowledge by connecting new ideas to existing ideas on the bases of material/ activities presented to them. The guiding principles of NCF 2005 explicitly show the desire of educationists and visionaries to bring forth the originality hidden in learners under the layers of rote memories and textbook centeredness. The guiding principles of constructivism:

- connecting knowledge to life outside the school,
- ensuring that the learning is shifted away from rote method,
- enriching the curriculum to provide for overall development of children rather than remain textbook centric,
- making examination more flexible and integrated into classroom life
- Nurturing an over-riding identity informed by caring concerns within the democratic polity of country.

In the present context children from different social and economic backgrounds with variation in physical, psychological and intellectual characters are to be ensured that they are able to learn and achieve success. In this context disadvantages in education arising from inequalities of gender, caste, language, culture, religion or disabilities need to be addressed directly not only through policies and schemes but also through the design and selection of learning tasks and pedagogic practice, right from the period of early childhood.

Identification of constructed knowledge

This is quite essential to know how a child or a teacher will identify that the information given by a child is his /her own creation. Often children have an idea arising from their everyday experiences or because of their exposure to the media, but they are not ready to articulate it in ways that a teacher might appreciate. **It is in this zone between what you know and what you almost know that new knowledge is constructed.** (NCF 2005) Such knowledge takes the form of skills, which are cultivated outside the school, at home or in the community. All such forms of knowledge and skills must be respected as they take the form of constructed knowledge.

Responsibilities of teachers in implementation of constructivism

Change in teaching learning environment is necessary from the point of view of fast changing world and competitive global context. For this purpose all the components of education either human or physical are to be modified. Human sources include learner, teacher, administrator, parents and as a whole we can say all the stake holders. Here the area of concern is their way of thinking and action. Apart from respecting children's native wisdom and imagination, some of the expected responsibilities of teacher are:

- Allow children to ask questions that require them to relate what they are learning in school and to things happening out side.
- Encourage children to answer in their own words and from their own experiences rather than simply memorizing and getting answer right.
- Intelligent guessing must be encouraged as a valid pedagogical tool.
- Students must be actively engaged in activities like enquiry, questioning, reflection, theory building, and creation of ideas.
- Teacher should cultivate an understanding of cultural and socio-economic diversity that children bring with them to school.

- Role of teacher is to provide a safe space for children to express themselves and simultaneously to build in certain forms of interactions.
- A teacher should be well versed with interdisciplinary approach.
- A teacher has to be sensitive and informed to be able to engage children through well chosen tasks and questions, so that they are able to realize their developmental potential.
- A teacher should be well versed with interdisciplinary approach.
- A teacher must be able to connect natural environment with printed world.

Role of administrators

In words of John Dewey school is a miniature society and if it is so than curriculum has to be inclusive and meaning full .Accumulating textbooks information and finding no application at social fronts is hopeless and disconnects the learner from the world. In homogeneous classrooms students are shielded from realities just for the sake of convenience and flawless administration. Outer world is full of diversities in all the terms ,either it be human resource or physical , so curriculum developers and administrators have to create heterogeneous environment to give an actual practice to the budding learners . As we have already discussed that a strong step has been taken for boosting education system through **Right to Educatio**.To dilute the compartmentalization, management and administration also have to broaden their horizon of action.As many of our schools now have large number of first generation school goers so they are completely dependent on schools for following aspects:

- To develop listening, reading, writing and speaking skills especially when mother tongue is different.
- To get assistance in all the subjects.
- To be punctual, attentive, and regular.

To cater these demands a conducive school environment and a sensitive curriculum is the need of hour and it can be fulfilled only through a cooperative approach adopted by administrators, curriculum developers and management. An extra effort is needed in the form of teaching aids, remedial classes along with an inspiring and creative infrastructure.

Role of learner in the process of construction of knowledge:

A learner has to develop its metacognitive capabilities, to which attitude, emotions and morals are integral part and are linked to the development of language, mental representations, concept

and reasoning.(NCF2005) .A learner should feel connected with his socio cultural and natural environment as the construction of knowledge begins before schooling.

Possibilities of Implementation of constructivist approach

Viewing the current situation of government and private schools directly and indirectly it is generalized that the schools are being assisted to fulfill the requirements of infrastructure ,teaching aids and to cope up with the dearth of teachers .New teacher are being appointed and they are given the time period of five years to complete their qualification.(Right to Education),guest teachers are appointed, Para teachers are already working. But the conditions are not so favorable for constructivist approach, as it demands passion on the part of teacher either it be a government or a private school teacher. Due to certain reasons lack of dedication has been observed in most of the teachers .Possible reasons for that are considering teaching as an occupation, approach is mere completing the syllabus irrespective of student's involvement, unable to handle the pressure of management.

How the difference in the attitude of teachers can be modified:

- Such attitude can be observed in any school but it can be minimized by proper supervision, like in private schools where an inspired coordinator can kindle the spirit of passion among her assisting teachers.
- One of the major problems faced by government schools is engagement of teachers with paper work. Concerned Facility can overcome this problem and can increase the efficiency along with effectiveness of teachers.
- Educational institutions are not only the medium to familiarize student teachers with methodology of teaching but can act as a mould to create inspired teachers. Consonance of school education and teacher education institution is a must for the fruitful implication of constructivist approach.

Conclusion:

In this research paper analysis of the current teaching learning situation from learner, teacher and administrator's point of view along with the concept of constructivism has been done. On the Basis of the analysis it is inferred that initially teacher educational institutions and later administration and management of schools can equip teachers to apply constructivist approach in teaching process.

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