



IMPACT OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF GURU KABIR JI ON EDUCATION AND IT'S RELEVANCE TO MODERN SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

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Abstract

Guru Kabir ji's philosophy is based upon idealism. He tried to remove the caste system prevalent in the society at that time. He was of the view that human being is recognized by his work and not on the basis of religion and class. He was also in favor of providing equal opportunities to women in the society and also in the field of education. He was revolutionary in the field of education and touched every aspect of it. In respect of modern context Guru Kabir ji's philosophy is required to study impact of the Philosophy of Guru Kabir ji on education and it's importance as well. He was in favor of providing equal education to each and every section of the society. His ideas on various aspects of education are more relevant and are needed today than probably during his lifetime. In modern time Education system is suffering and as we know education is the base for civilians of any civilized society i.e why there is once again a need to revive the educational Philosophy of Guru Kabir ji.

Statement of the Problem

Impact of the Philosophy of Guru Kabir Ji on Education and it's relevance to Modern System of Education.

Objectives

1. To highlight the importance of education given by Guru Kabir Ji.
2. To study the General Philosophy of Guru Kabir Ji.
3. To study the Educational Philosophy of Guru Kabir Ji.
4. To study the impact of Philosophy of Guru Kabir Ji on different aspects of Education.
5. To study the importance of Educational Philosophy of Guru Kabir Ji in Modern System of Education.

Method and Procedure

This study was Historical and Philosophical in nature. The investigators used the primary as well as secondary resources concerning educational ideas of Guru Kabir Ji. This study was completely based upon library work.

Introduction

Education consists of all those experiences which affect individual from birth till death. Education is a process in which an individual freely develops his self according to his nature in a free and uncontrolled environment. It is an all-round development of the personality of child i.e. physical, mental, moral, social, vocational and spiritual aspect. If there is anything on this earth which purifies human mind i.e. knowledge. Education enables a person to solve his problem. Education makes a man self-reliant and selfless. Modern education is provided through formal, informal and non-formal mode. Education is a tripolar process in which educator, educand and social environment are involved. Education develops ability in a person to realize his inner capacity to discriminate between good/bad and right/wrong. Education is to forge a child into perfect social being i.e. one who works for the welfare of society, who helps in the development of social setup, one who can change the society with the change of time and needs. There is controversy regarding the date of birth and death of Guru Kabir ji. Most probably, he was said to be born in 1425 A.D by Parshuram Chaturvedi and Dr. Pitamber Dutt has said it to be 1427 A.D but the most popular controversy years are 1455 A.D and 1456 A.D and the month was Jayeshth of Indian calendar. Acharya Ramchandra Shukla and Dr. Surajmal 'Sitam' agreed as 1455 is a true birth year (in the book named –Guru Kabir ji ki jeevni aur unki vichardhara-page -14), as couplet said-

Chaudah sau pachpan saal gaye, Chandra vaar ko hatth bhaye

Jeth sudi barsayit ko, pooran maasi pragat bhaye

About birth also, there are many controversies. According to popular beliefs, Guru Kabir ji was the son of as Brahmin woman. While infant, his mother left him near as tank of Banaras's Muslim weaver named Niru found the child and took it home. His wife brought up the child like her own son. The child was named as Kabir. Guru Kabir ji grew up as a Muslim. He learnt weaving and worked as a weaver. Another view point is that Guru Kabir ji was born from the bunch of light on the lotus flower which was produced from the sperm cell of a deity fallen on it, which is quite impossible scientifically. But all these were mere gossips and nothing more, rather it was the conspiracy by Brahmins, after seeing the popularity of Guru Kabir ji they wanted to prove that only Brahmins can be intelligent and not the other caste people. But we are sure that he was the real son of *Pita Neeru* and *Mata Nima ji* who belonged to lower caste –a weaver class and he was married to *Mata Loyee*. He was contemporary to *Guru Ravidas ji*. He was social reformer . He praised humanity and tried hard for uplifting of the downtrodden people. He vehemently opposed dogmas in Hinduism.

He was social revolutionist, who often advocated leaving Vedas aside .He worked hard for social reforms because at that time the Hindu society was indulging in many impractical dogmas. He wanted to make people aware, to follow the meaningful ideas instead of ‘Norms’ of society according to ‘*Manu Smriti*’ as it was the most rigid evil in that social system of Hinduism, which is unable to demolish even today i.e. caste system. Caste had always been decided according to the birth of child, whereas it was according to the person’s profession. Profession can’t be decided by birth .Also superiority can’t be shown by birth. So, Guru *Kabir ji* challenged the superiority of Brahmin class by saying-

jo tu brahmin brahmni jaaya

tau aan baat kaahe nahin aaya

-If you are indeed Brahmin by the birth from Brahmin mother, then why did not you come from some other way? This had no answer as the process of birth in human beings is same despite of caste system. So how one can be superior over other; just because of their birth. He was against the caste system imposed by the Hinduism. Guru *Kabir ji* was a revolutionary. He placed emphasis on the equality and fraternity of all individuals. Among all Saints and Gurus those contributed in the social reforms, Guru *Kabir ji*’s contribution is largest. He tried to make downtrodden aware to improve the status of women and to educate *shudras*, untouchables and women. He wrote 227 *Padas* in 17 *Ragas* and 237 *Shlokas*. He not only tried to uplift the downtrodden but also warned the people belonging upper caste to establish the system based on equality. At last he died at *Maghar* in Gorakhpur district. That’s why Guru *Kabir ji* wanted that one should be educated but he was not in favour of prevailing education system of his time. He wanted to make revolution in the field of education. Earlier education means just reading and cramming of religious scriptures. The teachings were not inculcated in the way of living. It was just parrot learning.

General Philosophy of Guru Kabir Ji

Guru Kabir ji had leaded a common life and so he fought for the common life and so he fought for the common people. He fought for the lower caste people, who were downtrodden and were exploited by all the three upper castes but were specially ill-treated by Brahmins. He led movement to uplift the downtrodden. He criticized show offs, caste system, dirty knowledge and superstitions. He wanted to establish the rule of city called ‘*Beghampura*’. In that city there will not be the exploitation of original inhabitants of India called untouchables, shudras etc. Fraternity, justice, liberty and equality would be there. He motivated shudras, exploited slaves and insulted original inhabitants of India called untouchables, shudras etc. He every time tried to educate people belonging to lower caste against the wish of people

belonging to upper castes. People are always praised by their knowledge and not by their caste or status. In his view knowledge is supreme.

jaati na poochhau sadhu ki, poochh leejaye gyan

mol karo talvaar ka, pada rahan do myaan

Equality

He challenged the superiority of Brahmins as said by them. He gave the scientific arguments against their superiority as about the physical appearances, skin, bones, parts of body etc. as said in his couplet-

Ekei twacha haad mal moota, ekei rudhir ekei goodha

Ek boond te sirti rachi, ko hai vaman ko hai sooda

He had also given an argument about the process of birth which is same for all castes either Brahmin or shudra. All children get birth in same manner as his couplet said-

jo tu brahmin brahmni jaaya

tau aan baat kaahe nahin aaya

Liberty

When we talk about liberty it means liberty to live life in one's own manner, to choose profession according to one's own will, and many other such freedoms comes under the liberty. Even today we are unable to see this type of liberty in some parts of India, let's think about the time period of Guru Kabir ji. It was the time when shudras were not having any right and liberty, also they were very poor, so were exploited by the ruler i.e. foreign invaders as well as by the upper caste i. e. Brahmins. That's why Guru Kabir ji had said-

"Chalti Chaaki Dekh Kar Diya Sant Kabir jia Roye,

Dui Pataan Ke Beech Mein Saabat Bacha Na Koi",

Justice

As caste system was so much in existence in the society during fifteenth-sixteenth century that people of lower caste did not have any right, liberty, equality so how can we expect that justice in such society which is full of discrimination. People were marginalized; oppressed and subjected to all sorts of injustice, they were rather inhumane. Guru Kabir ji had criticized that condition of injustice which is intolerable as he said-

Karni karni sab kahe, karni maahe bibek

Veha karni bahe jaan dey, jo nahin parkhe ek

Justice means treating everybody in a similar manner, which was taught by Sant Kabir ji in his thoughts through his couplets.

Fraternity

Guru Kabir ji always tried to spread love, friendship and support for the needy and downtrodden people. But this did not mean that he hate the other people rather he love all as he knows that all are equal. He just want to clear the false concepts made in Brahmins' mind. Otherwise he speaks sweetly with all the people and asks others to do the same as in his couplet-

Aisee Vani Boliye, Mun Ka Aapa Khoye

Apna Tan Sheetal Kare, Auran Ko Sukh Hoye

Respect for humanity

He gave respect to all the people without any discrimination. He considered everyone equal. In his eyes everybody is equal, as all has one head, two arms, two legs etc .He asks if all people look similar then how can we discriminate one from another on the basis of caste and religion. Their looks can be different because of their prevailing environment, climate and can have some other factors but their basic body structure remains the same. This proves that all people are same in spite of their caste and religion as Guru Kabir ji has given his example-

Hindu kahun toh main nahin, musalman bhi naahi

Paanch tat ka putla, gaibi kheyle maahi

Feeling of co-operation

As in above all points it is almost clear that Guru Kabir ji was against caste system and any other kind of discrimination and favored equality, liberty, justice and fraternity which indirectly promotes the feeling of co-operation among the people. He wanted that all people should live together, should share their happy moments and should help them in the bad time of each other. He wanted to promote this feeling of co-operation in following words-

Sat hi mein sat baant hi, roti mein te took

Kahe Sant Kabir ji ta das ko, kab hun na aave chook

Guru Kabir ji was strictly against the practice of hypocrisy and did not like people maintaining double standards. He always preached people to be compassionate towards other living beings and practice true love He urged the need to have company of good people that adhere to values and principles-

Kabira sangat saadh ki, jyon chandan ki baas

Compassion

Guru Kabir ji himself was very compassionate towards people and always tried to inculcate the same feeling in others. He shows sympathy, not only towards people but towards animals also. He in his thoughts always preached to be sympathetic and to do sympathetic deeds for

who are in need. He had said that one should be compassionate towards everyone without any discrimination of caste, color, creed, status etc. everyone should be treated equally whether a small creature or big one as said in couplet-

Daya dil mein rakhiye, tu kyon nirdayi hoye

Saen ke sab jeev hain, kiri koonjar soye

Condemned Idol- Worship

Guru Kabir ji was never in the favor of idol worship rather he opposed it because it was a social evil which is uncovering the roots of healthy society. It is like the weeds which are destroying the crops. It is like a termite eating wood and making the base weak. Although idol worship was also one of the way of the priests to loot the common people of that time those were very innocent and are unable to understand the conspiracies by them. By this they showed threat of other world to the people to get more and more money out of their pockets. So Guru Kabir ji stressed to do work by which one can lead to a better life instead of worshipping God. That's why he had said-

pahan pooje hari mile, to main poojun pahaar

yate toh chaaki bhali, pees khaye sansar

Educational Philosophy of Guru Kabir ji

Education

Education is to forge a child in to perfect social being i.e. one who work for the welfare of society, who helps in the development of social setup, one who can change the society with the change of time and needs. That's why *Guru Kabir ji* wanted that one should be educated but he was not in favor of prevailing education system of his time. He wanted to make revolution in the field of education. Earlier education means just reading and cramming of religious scriptures. The teachings were not inculcated in the way of living. It was just parrot learning.

As he said,

pothi parh-parh jag mua pandit bhaya na koi

According to this, he meant that people just crammed the scriptures and read it for whole of their lives and then died. But no one used the knowledge to master his emotions or senses. Such emotions never bring maturity to lead life purposefully and with beauty rather mere reading of such scriptures made the orthodox and dogmatic. So according to *Guru Kabir ji* the aim of education should not be only learning and reading but it should have practicality to improve the human life.

So to influence the child to make or to forge one's personality there are different aspects of education-

Aims of education

It is the function of educational philosophy to decide the aims of education. The aim of education is directly related to the aim of life and the aim of life is always dependent on the philosophy that prevails. It is philosophy that determines the aims of education as whether it should be moral perfection, intellectual development, it should be vocational or liberal, is it should be for individual development or for social development?

The aims of education have been changing with the changing philosophy of life i.e. with changing ideas of life. As in ancient Sparta, there was different philosophy of life, whereas in vedic period philosophy of life was different i.e about moksha. Gurut Kabir ji was indifferent to all those prevailing philosophies. From the childhood period he saw the miseries of poor class and lower caste people, so he was the social revolutionist, who tried to revive the society by getting it out of old rotten rituals and dogmas. According to him education is to clean the wounds of society, to heal those wounds which were hurting the society. Because the very first aim of life which can be taught is, to serve the humanity and not to harm the people of society on the basis of caste, color, creed, sex, or on the basis of other ill practices. So according to Guru Kabir ji the first aim of life should be to be a person or simply a human being. Further it should be to have complete development of the child by developing logical power, rational thinking, imaginative powers and development of democratic outlook based on liberty, equality, fraternity and justice.

Curriculum

Curriculum is the content of education. It is just like a gun powder for the soldier. Through curriculum education becomes effective or ineffective. It is not fixed for all the schools of philosophy rather it is different for different schools of philosophy. So was the case, where Guru Kabir ji favored the different curriculum from the prevailing one. He favored value based curriculum which can develop logical power and can train the young to be good citizen and to play his part effectively in rebuilding society, culture and economy. It should be such that it can help in modification of behavior from immature to mature. It should also develop the spirit of entrepreneurship i.e. one should be ready to take risk to do some work.

jinh dhoondha tinh paeya, gahre paani paith

In that period by birth those were Brahmins were taught to teach, kshatriyas were taught to fight, vaisha were taught to do business and the shudras were taught to do service of above four castes especially of Brahmins. The shudras were compelled to opt for their family

profession. They were not allowed to choose profession of their choice. This shows the inequality prevailing at that time and Guru Kabir ji was completely against it and he provoked against it. He gave his view to promote equality in society, also in teaching-learning process. He demanded for equal education for all. According to him education should be such which can be based on the equality and which can spread equality in the society. Curriculum should be such which can provide equal opportunities to all to opt for further selection of profession. He proposed for such curriculum which can help to lead an ideal and perfect life. It should be according to interest, ability and capability of child. It should be helpful to develop problem solving attitude, to make child aware about his existence as why he or she is being considered unequal if he or she belongs to the lower caste, they should be able to know about their history. Curriculum should not be too bookish rather it should be somewhat natural and near to reality.

Methods of Teaching

Method has an important place in education; it is also influenced by the ideas of an individual. It is through method that teacher establishes and maintains the contact between the child and the subject-matter. Guru Kabir ji proposed the simple method of teaching by which child can easily understand whatever is taught. He favored the simple to complex method and always supports the method of explanation through proper illustrations and examples. Child learns more through examples, so he advocated teaching –learning through the examples. He had also promoted the method of learning by doing. According to him unless and until one doesn't work with his hands he can't learn anything.

Teacher

A teacher is the king-pin of social fabric. He is simply to guide a child in various learning activities. According to Guru Kabir ji every teacher should strive with heart and soul to raise children up to highest perfections of mankind to such a degree so that every one of them will be trained in the use of mind in acquiring knowledge, in humility and lowliness, in dignity and in ardor and love. Guru *Kabir ji* had also talked about Teacher-Student relationship. It should be respectful towards teachers and kind, soft towards students. In his view teacher should be democratic to have equal feeling for all students while teaching despite of religion and caste. As we know, at that time, society was full of discrimination, only few people have thoughts like Guru *Kabir ji*. According to him teacher should not be greedy -

guru to aisa chahiye, sikh se kachhu na ley

Teacher should not take anything for teaching the students. He should be revolutionary to bring positive changes in society. He should be like candle that consumes itself to light the

way for others. He should be epitome of knowledge, who nurtures a wonderful future for students. For this, teacher should have its own thinking and philosophy which can help him in a following manner:

- Understanding man (pupil), his life, his actions, ideals and problems.
- Providing directions to himself or herself.
- To become a perfect guide for the students.
- It helps the teacher to think critically, constructively and rationally.
- It enables the teacher to handle disciplinary situations satisfactorily.

During that time period so called priest class i.e. Brahmins and Maulvis called themselves as teachers but Guru Kabir ji had denied them as teachers because they didn't have any of above quality like understanding, direction, guide, rationality and discipline. In few words Guru Kabir ji considered teacher as a role model, self confident, energetic, intellectual, optimistic, democratic, fair and just, sympathetic, punctual and social.

Student

About the concept of students it can be said as who deserves to be educated. How one should get education. It also helps in studying the place of students and clarifies the relationship between teachers and educands or students. At that time education was just for the Brahmins and for the Kshatriyas. Other castes were not having any right to get education. Also the language was not the local but it was Sanskrit which was understood only by the Brahmins. Guru Kabir ji was completely against such education which divides individuals on the basis of castes, which were manmade. He also advocated that student should be enthusiastic, energetic and dedicated towards his study which shows that he had also classified the categories of students but it was completely based on the abilities of students and not on their castes because Guru Kabir ji was very much against the prevailing social system based on castes. Moreover he wanted to make child able to discriminate between worthy and unworthy, and right and wrong. He also wanted to make child the productive member of society who can bring the positive social change in the society. According to Guru Kabir ji student should be like a devote-

sikh to aisa chahiye, guru ko sab kuchh dey

For the students teacher should be ideal and being followed properly. Teacher should be most respectable; even it should be worshipped before Supreme Power. Guru *Kabir ji* had said it, in very beautiful verse;

guru gobind doyu khade, kake lagon payen

balihari guru aapney, jin gobind diyo bataye

According to Guru *Kabir ji*, teaching should be such which can help one to stand on its own feet. Practical knowledge and education should be given to the students. He used examples to prove his views and encouraged teaching with examples. This can develop the power of insight among students. It should be such by which student learn to be self-discipline. Student himself should get matured by education. Maturity in living, in speaking, in emotions, in relations etc. should be seen.

Discipline

School discipline is the system of rules, punishments and behavioral strategies appropriate to the regulation of children and the maintenance of order in schools. Its aim is to create a safe and conducive learning environment in the classroom. A disciplined student is in compliance with the school rules and codes of conduct. These rules may, for example, define the expected standards of clothing, timekeeping, social behavior and work ethic. In this way there are two types of discipline self or inner discipline and imposed discipline. Guru Kabir ji was in the favor of self discipline, the discipline from within. He believed that at early stage-imposed discipline can be there but later on after the maturity is attained there should be self discipline.

Relevance of Educational Philosophy of Guru Kabir ji in the Present Context

Guru Kabir ji was in favor of large classrooms as universe, students full of humanity and his subject of study was equality. As Guru Kabir ji had done a lot for establishing equality in society. As he wanted education for all, same is the motto of present education system, to provide education for all. The path by Guru Kabir ji is being traced by modern education. He favored all round development of the personality of child i.e. moral, intellectual, social and spiritual etc. Modern aim of education is the all round development of child. Guru Kabir ji stood for liberty, equality, fraternity and justice among the rich and the poor, the high caste and low caste to combine to form one fraternity and one union for the service of humanity. Same is prevalent in democratic set up of modern India by Constitution of India. Guru Kabir ji tried to develop the will power in the lower caste and downtrodden people because it pours enthusiasm, courage, determination and optimism in the personality of them. In modern context also teacher can develop will power in the students to make them healthy mentally, physically, socially and emotionally and economically to do new inventions and developments in the field of science and technology. Guru Kabir ji was in favor of developing logic, creativity and reasoning. So, to develop these Continuous and

Comprehensive Evaluation System is the need of time. He was in favor of simple living and high thinking. He was happy and satisfied with his work. He never considered women lower to him. So at present once again there is a need to revive the teachings of Guru Kabir ji.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that as far as Modern System of Education is concerned although it has achieved a lot but still these achievements are in books only. Still there is a lot has to be done to remove casteism and discrimination for successful implementation of education system in a democratic set up. For women Education a lot of policies have been made but still for upliftment of women in society and Education System Guru Kabir's Philosophy needs to be followed. Still lower and weaker section has not come in mainstreaming of Education. SSA and other Policies of Education have not achieved their targets. Although Article 45 of the Constitution of India provides free and compulsory education to child irrespective of caste color, creed etc. Modern Educationists must consider Educational Philosophy of Guru Kabir ji while framing different education policies.

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