EDUCATIONAL THOUGHTS OF JOHN DEWEY

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Education, therefore, is a process of living and not a preparation for future living.

John Dewey

Abstract

John Dewey, the legendary educationist is remembered in the classroom everyday everywhere due to his wonderful contributions to the field of education. His pragmatism and laboratory schools are the examples of his greatest contribution. Dewey is the most important single force in the progressive educational movement. Building on various reforms he had been initiated and formed a new philosophy of learning and logic of thinking. The main aspects of John’s philosophy are:

• Truth is that which works, which fulfills our purposes.
• There are no fixed values. All values change with time and space. Human life is series of experiments and purposeful actions.
• Everything is provisional. Nothing is ultimate. Knowledge is a means and never ends in itself.
• Knowledge and thinking are associated with actions. Action is superior to thought what at the same time thought and action are complimentary.

Dewey’s philosophy is fundamentally derivative from his analysis of scientific method. According to him, “philosophy to be significant and intelligent must be scientific that is most follow in it’s enquires the method of science. Dewey takes modern science as example of what knowledge is and the method of modern science as standard of the method of knowing. For John there is no absolute knowledge other than the knowledge gained by the methods of natural science. Knowledge must have past experimental test before it can be considered knowledge are sufficient proofs of the statement. Dewey does not see any difference between knowledge and experience. According to him knowledge is only a result of our various types of experiences. He does not believe in any truth. He does not accept the permanence of reality forever.

Key Words : John Dewey educational Views

Introduction

According to him education signifies the sum total of all processes of which a community or social group whether small or large transmit its acquired part and aims with a view to securing its own continued existence and growth. The education consists through communication. According to Dewey, “true education comes through the stimulation of the child’s power by the demands of social situations in which he finds himself.” His views are that child is born with certain powers and capacities. These capacities are to be developed according to the demands of the society. So education should enable the individual child to act and react with his environment to gain experience for proper social experience.

Aims of Education

Education is not preparation of life, education is life itself.

John Dewey, as being a pragmatic educator, contends that there are no fixed and ultimate aims of education. Aims are proximate. The aims grow out of the situations. It is not to reach at any prefix final goal. Education therefore, is a means as well as an end. In dewey’s view there are four functions of Education

• Education is a process of growth
• Education is life and life is education.
• Education leads towards Social efficiency
• Experience is base of philosophy

Education is a process of growth: His words are, Growth, Unlimited and illimitable. Thus, growth must be wise and economical and directed towards a desired end. The aim of education is more education and the end of growth is more growth. The aim of education is more education and the end of growth is more growth. What the child learn in the class is growth.

Education is life and life is education: life is a byproduct of activities and education is born out of these activities. Child lives in the present. The future is meaningless to child. School being an extension of home provides life experience to the child.
Education leads towards Social efficiency: Dewey says what nutrition and reproduction are to be considered as physiological life, education is to social life. Man is essentially a social being, citizen, growing and thinking in the vast complex of interest and relations. Through education he is developing reasoning in social relations, cultivating social virtues and thus becoming socially efficient. At the same time he is developing social awareness. Social efficiency includes economic and cultural efficiency. In this regard the term given by the Dewey is socialization of an individual.

Experience as the base of philosophy: Dewey says that education is the process of reconstruction and reconstitution of experience giving it a more socialized value through the medium of increased efficiency. Every generation inherits experiences from its past generation and these experiences are modifying according to the developing situations. With their own experience and participation individuals reconstruct new experiences ensemble the changing circumstances and problems of life. The individual has to face old as well as new situations and problems from time to time. Thus experience is reorganized. The role of education is to create conditions for promotion of continuity of experiences.

Thus the important functions and aims of education is to create social environment in which a child may successfully participate for social awakening of mankind. The education should enable man to understand his past as well as future experiences. Education should create a capacity in the child that he is able to face social situations strongly and come out successfully in the struggle, only that education is successful which create the will to develop continuously education. Education gives man such an insight that he is able to gather necessary means.

The methods of teaching and learning

John Dewey is quite against the traditional methods of teaching. He emphasizes direct experience as the basis of all methods. To him knowledge should arise from concrete and meaningful situations. concrete and meaningful situations should provide knowledge to the learner. Learning if it is to be moral and sound must come as a result of the normal experiences of the child. Dewey considers mind as a product of activity and develops through activity. Dewey believes that all true efforts come from a deep and natural interest in the task. If such an interest is absent, it is necessary to arouse it, because an artificial kindling of interest will be functionally bad. Dewey has declared that all learning which comes from artificial stimulation is morally wrong. Hence Dewey doctrine of natural interest, efforts and motivation.

Dewey advocated a number of methods of teaching and learning, Dewey recommended projects to be used as teaching techniques.

- Project Method
- Activity Method

Project method: is a democratic way of learning in which cooperation and citizenship are foster. This method stresses on self effort in place of memorizing. Moreover there is also correlation of activities and subjects. Since activities centered around real life problems. This procedure gives interest to students. All learning must come as the product of experimentation. Dewey started his experimental school as laboratory school. He wanted to test everything. His experimental method is in tune there. Direct experience is the surest basis of all methods of instruction. The main function of the school is to provide an environment and improvise activities for learning through the use of their senses. It is belief that learning can be effective when it is based on the interest of the children. Interest can be aroused when children are provided activities which have a genuine appeal for them. Dewey emphasized

- Self-education,
- Self-learning,
- Play-way technique
- Motivation

Activity Method: In this method learning comes indirectly in response to action, the situations which arouse activities furnished the natural conditions for the growth of knowledge. The first approach in any subject in any school, if thought is to be arous and not words acquired should be as unscholastic as possible. In the teaching process it is to be kept in mind that knowledge of subjects is given through natural activities. The subjects too should be correlated. He wants that every subject should be correlated with the natural activities. Activities of children as recommended by Dewey are:

- Carpentry
- Leather work
- Spinning
- Cooking
- Weaving
Curriculum of the Education

Dewey’s curriculum is not mere scheme of studies, not a list of subjects. It is an entire range of activities and experiences. For him subjects are only summaries and recapitulation of human activities. He does not recommend any readymade curriculum. He rather wants the curriculum to grow out of the student’s impulses, interest and experiences. Curriculum should consist of educative experiences and problems. Only those experiences are educative which pay due regard to the natural inclinations of the child in the context of social, political and economic conditions of the society.

Sciences

Social Sciences

Occupational Education

Craft Education

Aesthetic, moral and religious education was not omitted by Dewey in the curriculum. He does not want to give such education through lessons but by practical experience.

“A religion can be realized itself only through science, without science, religion is bound to be forma, hypocritical and a mass of dogmas.”

Discipline

In the opinion of Dewey, Children are individuals whose freedom should be respected. The new education emphasizes the freedom of the learner and aims at greater attention to distinctive individual needs. Hence they are provided by a great degree of freedom of action and discussion. According to him if, in a school, children are given opportunities of working as per their interest, there will be no problem of discipline. Standard for discipline is not how silent a classroom is or how few and uniform the kinds of tools and material that are being used, but the mount of quality work by the individuals and the group. He stress on the view of individual freedom and social control. The ideal aim of education is creation of the power of self control. Self-discipline and group-discipline develop through the will of the students themselves. According to dewey, through the functioning of will in the achievement of self control and the application of social values, children will themselves develop morally in the social environment through the natural activities.

Concept of Values

In the opinion of Dewey, “Values are as unstable as the forms of clouds. They keep on changing from time to time and reality is still in the process of making. Ideal end are remotely connected with immediate and urgent conditions. Man naturally devotes themselves to the present conditions than the remote. There are no fixed values for all times. Even truths are manmade product. There is nothing like an absolute truth. Whatever fulfills, man, purposes and desires and develops his life, is true. Truth is that which gives satisfactory results when put into practice. Values of democracy are of great importance to John Dewey. According to Him, it is only through democracy that an individual can realize maximum development of his personality. The aim of education is the creation of new values. The educator should educate the individuals to develop values for themselves. For the creation of new values, activity and experience are important. Education should provide physical, intellectual, moral and aesthetic activities as the media for the creation of values.

Conclusion:

Dewey’s Pragmatism, in spirit it is naturalistic, in method it is scientific and practical, in purpose it is social and human. It strongly believe in the reality of change over permanence, the relativity of values, the social and biological nature of man, the importance of democracy as a way of life, the value of critical intelligence in all human conduction, social virtues are of great importance to John Dewey. In the end Dewey’s philosophy variously termed as experimentalism, functionalism, instrumentalism, operationalism, progressivism, practicalism and above all pragmatism

REFERENCES