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# UNIT 3 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF EDUCATION

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## 3.1 INTRODUCTION

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In this unit we will discuss the inter-dependence of philosophy and education. After discussing the impact of philosophy on education and vice-versa, we will describe briefly the different schools of philosophy viz. Naturalism, Idealism and Pragmatism, and their implications for education in curriculum, role of the teacher and the nature of discipline. While explaining the ideas advocated by different schools of philosophy on above concepts, this unit will also incorporate the views of both Western as well as Indian thinkers.

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## 3.2 OBJECTIVES

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After completing this unit, you will be able to:

- define philosophy and education;
- explain the relationship between education and philosophy;
- identify the basic assumptions of different schools of philosophy viz. naturalism, idealism and pragmatism;
- analyse the applications of general philosophical principles of different schools of philosophy in the educational system;
- define the concept of school according to different schools of philosophy;
- compare the nature of discipline in different schools of philosophy;
- compare the curricular content advocated by different schools of philosophy; and
- identify and distinguish the role of the teacher in different schools of philosophy.

### 3.3 PHILOSOPHY, EDUCATION AND THEIR INTER-DEPENDENCE

The inter-dependence of philosophy and education is clearly seen from the fact that the great philosophers of all times have also been great educators and their philosophy is reflected in their educational systems. This inter-dependence can be better understood by analysing the implications of philosophical principles in the field of education. Before analysing the educational implications of general philosophy, we should know the concept of "Philosophy" and "Education". Each one of us has a personal philosophy which we apply consciously and unconsciously in our daily life. Each philosophy reflects a unique view of what is good and what is important. In this sense, philosophy is the system of beliefs about life. The literal meaning of philosophy is the love of wisdom which is derived from the Greek word "Philos" (Love) and Sophia (Wisdom). Wisdom does not merely mean knowledge. It is a continuous seeking of insight into basic realities – the physical world, life, mind, society, knowledge and values.

Education does not mean mere schooling. To become educated is to learn to become a person. Etymologically, 'education' is derived from "educare" which means 'to lead out' or "to draw out". In a broad sense, education refers to an act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character or physical ability of an individual. Education in this sense never ends, we truly learn from experience throughout our lives. Education and philosophy are inseparable because the ends of education are the ends of philosophy i.e., wisdom; and the means of philosophy is the means of education i.e. inquiry, which alone can lead to wisdom. Any separation of philosophy and education inhibits inquiry and frustrates wisdom.

Education involves both the world of ideas and the world of practical activity; good ideas can lead to good practice and good practices reinforce good ideas. In order to behave intelligently in the educational process, education needs direction and guidance which philosophy can provide. Hence philosophy is not only a professional tool for the educator but also a way of improving the quality of life because it helps us to gain a wider and deeper perspective on human existence and the world around us.

The chief task of philosophy is to determine what constitutes good life whereas the main task of education is how to make life worth living. So philosophy and education are mutually re-constructive. They give and take from each other. Philosophy deals with the goals and essentials of good life while education provides the means to achieve those goals of good life. In this sense philosophy of education is a distinct but not a separate discipline. It takes its contents from education and its methods from philosophy. The process of philosophizing about education requires an understanding of education and its problems. Hence, we can say that philosophy of education is the application of philosophical ideas to educational problems. It is not only a way of looking at ideas but also of how to use them in the best way. Therefore, it can be said that philosophy is the theory while education is the practice. Practice unguided by theory is aimless, inconsistent and inefficient just as theory which is not ultimately translatable into practice is useless and confusing. In the words of Ross "philosophy is the contemplative side while education is the active side". Philosophy deals with the ends while education deals with the means and techniques of achieving those means. Educational philosophy depends on formal philosophy because most of the major problems of education are in fact philosophical problems. Like general philosophy, educational philosophy is speculative, prescriptive critical or analytic.

#### Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the those given at the end of the block.

1. Describe in about ten sentences how the educational system of a nation is influenced by its philosophical ideals.

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### 3.4 NATURALISM AND EDUCATION

Naturalism as a philosophy of education was developed in the 18th century. It is based on the assumption that nature represents the wholeness of reality. Nature, itself, is a total system that contains and explains all existence including human beings and human nature. According to naturalists the material and the physical world is governed by certain laws, and man, who is the creator of the material world, must submit to it. It denies the existence of anything beyond nature, behind nature and other than nature such as supernaturalism.

In terms of epistemology or theory of knowledge, naturalists highlight the value of scientific knowledge. Francis Bacon emphasizes the inductive method for acquiring the scientific knowledge through specific observation, accumulation and generalisation. He also lays emphasis on the empirical and experimental knowledge. Naturalists also lay stress on sensory training as senses are the gateways to learning.

To naturalists, values arise from the human beings' interaction with the environment. Instincts, drives and impulses need to be expressed rather than repressed. According to them, there is no absolute good or evil in the world. Values of life are created by the human needs. The great names associated with naturalism are many but the important ones are those of Jean Jacques Rousseau, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, Herbert Spencer and Rabindra Nath Tagore.

Naturalism as a philosophy of education has exercised a great influence on the theory and practice of education. It decries all external restraint and it condemns all necessary formalities. In the naturalistic system of education there is no place for classrooms, text-books, timetables, curriculum, formal lessons or examinations. The teacher has to play the role of acquainting children with their natural environment. External discipline is altogether out of place. The only discipline is the discipline of natural consequences. Naturalism believes that formal education is the invention of society which is artificial. Good education can be possible only through direct contact with nature. Naturalism in education has the following common themes:

1. Look to nature and to human nature, as part of the natural order, for the purposes of education.
2. The key to understanding nature is through the senses. Sensation is the basis of our knowledge of reality.
3. Because nature's processes are slow, gradual and evolutionary, our education' also should be steady.

#### 3.4.1 Naturalism and Organisation of Education

According to naturalists, the existence of school is a natural necessity. All of us know that man is the most dependent creature of God as compared to other animals because of the long period of infancy of the child and its consequent dependence on adults. The offspring of other animals have negligible periods of infancy whereas the human offspring requires a few years even to perform simple functions of day-to-day living. Because of this important dimension of the dependency nature of man, education becomes an urgent necessity and so do educational institutions like the school. Naturalism attaches less importance to the existence of formal school and text-books because it hinders the natural development of children. For Rousseau "Everything is good as it comes from the hands of author of nature, but everything degenerates in the hands of man". According to him nature is the only pure, clean and ennobling influence. Human society is thoroughly corrupt. Therefore man should be freed from the bondage of society; and he should be enabled to live in the "state of nature". Human nature is essentially good and it must be given fullest opportunities for free development in a free atmosphere.

Gandhi's philosophy of education is also naturalistic in setting as he believes in the essential goodness of child's nature. According to him, children should be educated in an atmosphere of freedom – freedom from superimposed restriction and interferences. His main emphasis is on activity or learning by doing and shows aversion to artificiality and pedantry. Being a naturalist, he attempts to liberate education from the four walls of classroom and wishes it to be given in a wider sphere of the natural surroundings of the child.

The school to the naturalist is in no way different from the home; Frobel called the school as kindergarten or garden for children whereas Montessori calls it Case-de-Bambini or home for the children. According to Prestalozzi, there should be no difference between the school and home. Tagore also believes that education given in natural surroundings develops intimacy with the world. He puts more faith on the individual rather than institutions. Nature, to him, is the focus where the interest and aspirations of human beings meet. It is therefore essential not only to know nature, but to live in nature. "School", according to him, is like a large home in which the children and teachers with their family live together, sharing a common life of high aspirations, planned living and noble effort in contact with nature on the one hand, and with the spirit of joy on the other.

Naturalism also believes in the principle of individual differences which means that every child has a unique capacity to acquire knowledge and also the pace of learning is unique. So the school should have respect for personal diversity and it should cater to the varied and different interests of the child.

Naturalists advocate such methods of teaching which offer the child an opportunity for self-education, self-expression, creative activity and integrated growth in an atmosphere of unrestrained freedom.

#### Check Your Progress

**Notes:** a) Space is given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the those given at the end of the block.

2. Define the concept of school from naturalistic perspective.

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### 3.4.2 Naturalism and Curriculum

Naturalists emphasize the study of sciences dealing with nature - Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Zoology, Botany etc. They also give importance to the study of language and Mathematics. Naturalism gives a very insignificant place to spiritualism in the curriculum. However, naturalists like Rabindra Nath Tagore do emphasize spiritual values together with the study of literature and sciences so as to facilitate harmonious development of the child. At the same time, teaching of religion according to Tagore can never be imparted in the form of lessons, but in actual practice of living. By religion he does not mean, the religion of man or any narrow sectarianism. According to him, truth is the basis of all religions.

Spencer, an extreme naturalist, thinks that human nature is strictly individualistic and self-preservation is the first law of life. He wants that all activities should be classified in order of their importance and priority should be given to the activities which minister self-preservation. Thus in the curriculum he assigns a special place to "Laws of life and principles of physiology". He gives a very high place to science, which he considers best both for intellectual and moral discipline. According to him all studies should be correlated with science. But T.H. Huxley does not agree with Spencer for giving undue importance to science. He wants aesthetic culture to be imparted to children as a subject of priority.

Rousseau advocates negative education - which is typical of naturalistic philosophy - the subordination of the child to natural order and his freedom from the social order. He defines

negative education as one that tends to perfect the organs that are the instruments of knowledge before giving them this knowledge directly. The child should be left free to develop his body and senses. He attaches great importance to sense training as he believes senses are the gate ways of knowledge. For naturalists, genuine education is based on the laws of readiness and needs of the human being. According to them child's nature, interests, and needs provide the basis of curriculum.

### 3.4.3 Role of the Teacher

According to naturalists the teacher is the observer and facilitator of the child's development rather than a giver of information, ideas, ideals and will power or a moulder of character. In the words of Ross "teacher in a naturalistic set up is only a setter of the stage, a supplier of materials and opportunities, a provider of an ideal environment, a creator of conditions under which natural development takes place. Teacher is only a non-interfering observer".

For Rousseau, the teacher, first of all, is a person who is completely in tune with nature. He has a profound faith in the original goodness of human nature. He believes that human beings have their own time-table for learning. So Rousseau in his didactic novel "Emile" organized education according to Emile's (a boy) stages of development. For each stage of development, the child, shows certain signs that he is ready to learn what is appropriate to that stage. Appreciating the educative role of the natural environment as an educative force the teacher does not interfere with nature, but rather cooperates with the ebb and flow of natural forces. Significantly, the teacher who is aware of human nature and its stages of growth and development, does not force Emile to learn but rather encourages learning, by stimulating him to explore and to grow by his interactions with the environment.

Like Rousseau, Tagore is also an individualist and a naturalist. He says that everyone is unique and every individual is different from another. He believes that the natural teachers i.e. the trees, the dawn, evening, the moonlight etc. —nourish the child's nature spontaneously. Nature inspires the human being differently at different stages of human development. He gives an important place to the teacher because according to him a real teacher humanises the learning process and activates the mind instead of stuffing it. It is the teacher who kindles independent thinking, imagination and judgement.

Rousseau opines that teacher should not be in a hurry to make the child learn. Instead he should be patient, permissive and non-intrusive. Demonstrating great patience the teacher can not allow himself to tell the student what the truth is but rather must stand back and encourage the learner's own self discovery. According to him the teacher is an invisible guide to learning. While ever-present, he is never a taskmaster. Naturalists are of the view that teacher should not be one who stresses books, recitations and massing information in literary form, "rather he should give emphasis on activity, exploration, learning by doing".

#### Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the those given at the end of the block.

3. 'In a naturalistic set up the curriculum of the school comes from the child'. What do you understand by this statement?

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### 3.5 IDEALISM AND EDUCATION

Idealism is the oldest system of philosophy known to man. Its origin goes back to ancient India in the East and to Plato in the West. Generally, idealists believe that ideas are the true reality. According to them, the human spirit is the most important element in life. All of reality is reducible to one fundamental substance-spirit. The universe is viewed as essentially non-material in its ultimate nature. Matter is not real, rather it is a notion, an abstraction of the mind. It is only the mind that is real. Therefore, all material things that seems to be real are reducible to mind or spirit.

For idealists, all knowledge is independent of sense experience. The act of knowing takes place within the mind. The mind is active and contains innate capabilities for organising and synthesizing the data derived through sensations. They advocate the use of intuition for knowing the ultimate. Man can know intuitively, that is to say, he can apprehend immediately some truth without utilizing any of his senses. Man can also know truth through the acts of reason by which an individual examines the logical consistency of his ideas. Idealist like Plato believe that the spirit of man is eternal. Whatever he knows is already contained within his spirit.

In idealist axiology, or value theory, values are more than mere human preferences; they really exist and are inherent intrinsically in the structure of the universe. Value experience is essentially an imitation of the Good, which is present in the absolute universal realm of ideas. According to them values are eternal. They believe in three spiritual values. They are: 'The Truth', 'The Beauty', and 'The Goodness'. The Truth is an intellectual value, The Beauty an aesthetic value and the Good a moral value.

The purpose of education according to idealism is the development of the mind and self of the pupil. They like to educate the child for mainly two reasons. Firstly, education is a spiritual necessity and secondly education is also a social necessity. So the school should emphasize intellectual activities, moral judgement, aesthetic judgement, self-realization, individual freedom, individual responsibility and self-control in order to achieve this development.

In essence, idealists advocate that:

- Education is a process of unfolding and developing that which is a potential in the human person. It is unfolding of what is already enfolded.
- Learning is a discovery process in which the learner is stimulated to recall the truth present within mind.
- The teacher should be a moral and cultural exemplar or model of values that represent the highest and best expression of personal and humane development.

#### 3.5.1 Idealism and Curriculum

Idealism emphasizes the spiritual side of man. So, for the idealists curriculum is based upon the idea or assumption of the spiritual nature of man. They are of the view that the curriculum is a body of intellectual or learned disciplines that are basically ideational or conceptual. They arrange their curriculum in the form of a hierarchy in which the general discipline occupies the top most position and gradually it comes down to particular subjects in their relationship to general discipline.

Plato, a great exponent of idealism, conceives of the curriculum from the point of ideas. He believes that the highest idea of life is the attainment of the highest good or God; hence curriculum ought to impart inherent values in order to enable the educand to attain his highest good. The spiritual values, according to him are truth, beauty and goodness. These three values which determine three types of activities intellectual, aesthetic and moral. Each type of activity is represented by different subjects and should form a part of the curriculum. Intellectual activities are represented by subjects such as language, literature, science, mathematics, history and geography; aesthetic activities will be possible through the study of art and poetry and moral activities through the study of religion, ethics and metaphysics.

Ross talks of two types of activities i.e. physical activities and spiritual activities to be included in an idealistic curriculum. Physical activities include subjects such as health and hygiene which foster bodily skills viz. gymnastics and athletics that lead to good health

and fitness and thus make the pursuit of spiritual values possible. Spiritual pursuits imply the intellectual, aesthetic, moral and religious studies. Hence such subjects as history, geography, language, fine arts, morality, ethics, religion, science, mathematics and others should be included in the curriculum.

Sri Aurobindo also in his Integral Philosophy of Education gives importance to moral, religious and physical education. By moral education he means the training of moral faculty, i.e. the ability to distinguish between what is right and what is wrong. Another important thing in moral education is the value of suggestion. The suggestion by the teacher has to be exercised by personal example, daily talks and *svadhyaya* i.e. reading good books. Narration of the deeds of great men in interesting style always carries much impression upon the young minds. In addition Aurobindo advocates that religious education should also be imparted not only through religious books or religious sermons but by the practice of religious life and spiritual self-training. Theoretical teaching of religion must be complemented with actual practice. Along with moral and religious education he has given importance to physical education. With regard to physical education he says, "If our seeking is for a total perfection of the being, the physical part of it cannot be left aside; for the body is the material basis, the body is the instrument which we have to use".

Another Indian idealist Dr. Radhakrishnan, wants to make moral education a compulsory part of education at primary and secondary levels. Without it, he considers, the educational institutions cannot fulfill their objectives of educating the youth of the country. According to him the greatness of a country cannot be measured by its physical civilization but by its moral and spiritual advancement. He also supports religious education. But religious education for him is not the instruction of a particular religion. It is a means for developing spiritual intuition because "the aim of religion is spiritual and not merely a change in metaphysical ideas". Further he suggested inclusion of physical education in the curriculum. In his words, "The body is the means of the expression of the human soul, physical education therefore must be properly given".

### 3.5.2 Role of the Teacher

Idealism believes in the maxim that pupils catch fire from a teacher who is himself a flame. Idealists have high expectations of the teacher. To them the teacher must be ideal in order to serve as an example for the student both intellectually and morally. They believe that the teacher is an important ingredient in the education of the child. The teacher should not only understand the stages of learning but also maintain constant concern about the ultimate purpose of learning. Some idealists emphasize the importance of emulation in learning for which they feel the teacher should be the kind of person we want our children to become. Socrates has been used by idealists not only as prototype of learning but also as a model for emulation. In this connection, Dr. Radhakrishnan opines "The type of education which we may give to our youth, depends on the fact that what type of teachers we get!" According to him the teachers have a special place in the formation of the mind and heart of the youth. Besides knowledge and scholarships, the teacher should have devotion to teaching.

It is the teacher who has to provide the right environment in the school. He must be himself an ideal person in order to exercise wholesome influences on the young ones. It is the teacher's forceful personality, his effective methods, his sense of dedication to the work which encourages the child to perceive him as exemplary. The teacher must also exercise great creative skill in providing opportunities for the pupils' mind to discover, analyse, unify, synthesize and create applications of knowledge to life and behaviour. The teacher should respect the learner and assist the learner to realize the fullness of his or her own personality.

To the idealist "the school is a garden, the educand is a tender plant, and the educator the careful gardener". In the words of Ross, "the educator constitutes the special environmental factor whose function is to lead the child nearer to reality, to guide him towards his utmost possible perfection".

J. Donald Butler has identified some of the desired qualities of the good teacher. According to him the teacher should:

1. personify culture and reality for the student
2. be a specialist in the knowledge of the pupils

3. be a kind of person who commands the respect of the pupil by virtue of what he himself is
4. be a personal friend of the individual student
5. awaken students' desires to learn
6. be a master of art of living
7. be one who capably communicates his subject
8. appreciate the subject he teaches, and
9. aid in the cultural rebirth of generations.

### 3.5.3 Idealism, Interest and Discipline

Interest and discipline are interconnected devices of education. The concept of interest and discipline can be better understood with the help of another concept called effort. By interest we mean the totally positive attraction of the child for the work in his hand, without any conscious or voluntary exertion and also very minimum persistence on the part of the teacher. Effort is the conscious and voluntary exertion by the student for doing the work without any self-interest. By discipline we mean some extraneous action by the teacher to stimulate the pupil to complete the task in hand.

According to Horne, interest and effort cannot be sharply separated. Because interest evokes effort and effort may give rise to interest. Effort is not a substitute to interest, but it supplements interest. It acts as a faithful friend. He says, "Effort is the will to do one's duty". Idealist educators such as Fredrick Froebel, the founder of the kindergarten emphasizes the principle of learner's own self-activity. The learner's own self-activity is related to the learner's interests and willingness to a effort. Students have their own intuitive self-interest, which attracts them to certain acts, events and objects for which they readily put in effort.

As for the discipline, Gentile finds sheer discipline which is separated from the constructive teaching process as undesirable. According to him, discipline should be considered as an end product instead of an input and at the same time is a part of the teaching process and should be in the personality of the teacher. One should achieve discipline through freedom not conversely. But today education has by-passed this concept by beginning with discipline and moving toward freedom. Idealists do not favour rigid discipline. In fact, their theory of discipline is based on their concept of freedom. Freedom does not mean waywardness, it implies responsibility. It should be regulated, guided and restrained freedom. Gandhiji also believes that real freedom comes through self-discipline-discipline that arises spontaneously from the inner spring of life rather than that which is imposed from without. His concept of discipline is a synthesis of both freedom and external control. Idealists believe that human behaviour should have internal control rather than external control. For them authority begins by being external, but should end in becoming internal through habit formation and self-control.

#### Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the those given at the end of the block.

4. Distinguish the role of teacher in idealism from that in naturalism.

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### 3.6 PRAGMATISM AND EDUCATION

Pragmatism is popularly regarded as an indigenous American philosophy. But its roots can be traced to ancient Greek philosophy. The term 'Pragmatism' is derived from the Greek word 'Pragma' which means work. Heractitus and Sophist of ancient Greece are considered to be pragmatic in their approach to life. There were other contemporaries such as Protagoras and Gorgias. The background of pragmatism is associated with the works of Francies Bacon, John Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau and Charless Darwin. But the philosophical elements that give pragmatism a consistency and system as a philosophy in its own right are primarily the contributions of Charles Sanders Pierce, William James and John Dewey though they differ considerably in their methods and conclusions. Pierce's view of pragmatism is oriented towards physics and mathematics and Dewey's towards social science and biology. James's philosophy, on the other hand, is personal and psychological, and is motivated by religious considerations.

Pragmatists reject metaphysics as a legitimate area of philosophical inquiry. Reality, they opine, is determined by an individual's sense experience. Man can know nothing beyond his experience. So questions relating to the ultimate nature of man and the universe simply cannot be answered because these problems transcend one's experience. For example, there is no way for any living being to determine whether there is life after death, because one cannot experience life after death while living. Any conclusion we make about life after death is merely conjecture or guess. They believe that reality is in constant flux. There is nothing in the world which is static, permanent or eternal.

According to pragmatism, knowledge based on experience is true, genuine and worthy of acquisition. Since the phenomena are constantly changing, so knowledge and truth must change accordingly. The knowledge which is helpful in solving present-day problems is most preferred. They emphasize functional knowledge and understanding.

Pragmatism does not believe in standard, permanent and eternal values. According to this philosophy, values derive from the human condition. Because man is a part of the society, so the consequences of his actions are either good or bad according to their results. If the consequences are worthwhile, then the value of the action is proven to be good. Thus values in ethics and aesthetics depend upon the relative circumstances of the situation as it arises. Ultimate values cannot exist. Pragmatism, being a practical and utilitarian school of philosophy, has influenced education to the maximum extent. It considers activity as the basis of all teaching and prefers self-activity in the context of co-operative activity. It creates optimistic men, who are the architects of their own fate by the process of their efforts. They want that education should be according to one's aptitudes and abilities. Individual must be respected and education should be planned to cater to his inclinations and capacities. But individual development must take place in social context. The aim of education, according to pragmatism, is to teach one how to think so that one can adjust to an ever changing society.

In order to produce creative, resourceful and adaptable children we should have conditions in the school which are conducive to the creation of these qualities of mind. The children should not be asked to work according to predetermined goals. They should determine their goals according to their needs and interests and in conformity with the demands of the activities that they have undertaken. For them the teaching-learning process is a social process where the sharing of experiences between the teacher and taught takes place.

#### 3.6.1 Pragmatism and Curriculum

According to pragmatists the main focus of education is not social heritage of the past, but the good life in the present and in the future. The standard of social good is constantly changing, so it should be tested and verified through changing experience. Life does not stand still and there is a constant need for improvement. John Dewey, however, is of the view that acquaintance with the past experience is very important for effective handling of the present as well as the future.

Pragmatists are of the opinion that the curriculum at the school should reflect the society. They have rejected the traditional approach to subject matter curriculum which is associated with formal schooling, where knowledge is separated from child's own interests, needs and experiences and is fragmented or compartmentalized. They emphasize the needs and interests

of the children. This does not mean letting children do anything they want. Interests and needs do not necessarily mean the dictates of whim. Dewey opines that all learning should be particular and contextual to a given time, place and circumstances. For example, history is traditionally taught to the student without considering its relevance to the everyday experience. So what is the use of studying history? Whatever may be the subject matter it should liberate and enrich personal life by furnishing context, background and outlook. Dewey in his book "Democracy and Education" recommended three levels of curricular organization: (1) making and doing; (2) history and geography; and (3) organized sciences.

At the first curricular level, making and doing, should engage students in activities and projects based on their experiences. This idea is similar to that of Mahatma Gandhi who is considered as an idealist, a naturalist as well as a pragmatist. He believes in the principle of learning by doing. There is lot of similarity between the craft-centred activities advocated by him and the project method of Dewey. Though Ravindra Nath Tagore is a naturalist, his views regarding curriculum are pragmatic in nature. To him curriculum is not a number of subjects to be learnt but relevant activities to be undertaken. In the second level curriculum, History and Geography, which Dewey regards as two great educational resources, help in enlarging the scope and significance of the child's temporal and spatial experience from the immediate home and school environments to that of the larger community and the world. Dewey's third stage of curriculum is that of the organized subjects, the various sciences, consisting of bodies of tested knowledge. Pragmatists believe in a broad and diversified curriculum. They endorse a more general education as opposed to narrow specialization. Pragmatic curriculum is composed of both process and content. When we consider what a child learns as fixed and ready made, attention is directed too much upon outcome and too little upon process. Pragmatists focus some attention on process, because ends should not be divorced from means. So they assert that the means used to accomplish something dictate what the actual ends and outcomes really are.

### 3.6.2 Role of the Teacher

Pragmatism neither treats the teacher merely a spectator as naturalist does nor regards him as indispensable as idealism does. According to pragmatism, the teacher is not a dictator or task master but a leader of group activities. The chief function of a pragmatic teacher is to suggest problems to his pupils and to stimulate them to find solutions. Teachers ought not to try and pour information and knowledge into the pupil, because what pupil learns depends upon his own personal needs, interests, and problems. Dewey views the teacher as a resource person who guides rather than directs learning. The teacher's role is primarily that of guiding learners who need advice or assistance. Direction comes from the requirements of solving the particular problem. Educational aims belong to the learner rather than the teacher.

Since pragmatists are concerned with teaching children how to solve problems, they should select real life situations which encourage the problem-solving ability among the children. For a problem to be solved correctly, the learner with the help of teacher's guidance needs to establish a correct procedural sequence to solve a particular problem.

A pragmatist teacher needs to be patient, friendly, enthusiastic and cooperative. Although coercion might force the students to achieve immediate results, it is likely to limit the flexibility needed for the future problem-solving. The teacher's control of the learning situation is ideally indirect rather than direct. Direct control, coercion or external discipline generally fails to enlarge the learners internal disposition and does not in any way contribute to the learner to become a self corrected person.

As a resource person, the pragmatic teacher needs to be non-interfering or what Dewey refers to as 'permissive' and allow students to make errors and to experience the consequences of their actions. In this way, he/she helps the students to become self-directed persons. For Dewey, permissiveness does not mean that children's whims should dictate the curriculum. But rather, the teacher as a mature person should exercise professional judgement and expertise so that the consequences of action do not become dangerous to the students themselves or to their classmates.

The pragmatic teacher should constantly be aware of the motivation factor. Dewey opined that children are naturally motivated and the teacher should capture and use the motivation that is already there. He also pointed out that the teacher should pay respect to the principle

of individual differences and treat them accordingly. A pragmatic teacher wants his pupils to think and act for themselves, to do rather than to know and to originate rather than repeat. The pragmatic teacher is a pragmatist first and a teacher afterwards.

### 3.6.3 Pragmatism and Discipline

Pragmatism does not believe in the traditional maxim "work while you work and play while you play". Rather it advocates a discipline that can be maintained through play as work. According to the pragmatists, it is the mental attitude which converts a work into play and play into work. For example, a foot ball game becomes a work if it is played due to some external pressure and difficult algebraic sum becomes play if it is solved out of zeal. Pragmatism does not believe in external discipline enforced by the superior authority of the teacher. It supplements discipline with greater freedom of activity. They feel that discipline which is based on the principles of child's activities and need is beneficial. They want that the interest of the child should be aroused, sustained and satisfied. The pragmatists believe that the learner's freedom is not anarchy or allowing the child to do anything without considering the consequences. Rather they believe in the purposeful co-operative activities carried on in a free and happy environment. Control comes from the cooperative context of shared activity, which involves working with the fellowmates. In pragmatism there is no place for rewards and punishments as every activity is to be pursued in a social setting where teacher should come down to the level of children, mix with them, and share their interests, and participate in their activities.

#### Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the those given at the end of the block.

5. Compare the nature of discipline in pragmatism from that of idealism.

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## 3.7 COMPARISON OF NATURALISM, IDEALISM AND PRAGMATISM

Naturalism	Pragmatism	Idealism
<b>Fundamental Principles</b>		
1. Nature alone is entire reality, it is ready-made	Reality lies in the process, it is still in making, not ready-made.	Mind and thought are real.
2. The outlook of the naturalist is materialistic.	The outlook of a pragmatist is social.	The outlook of a idealist is spiritual.

3. They do not believe in existence of God.	Pragmatist believes in the existence of God to an extent.	Believe in the existence of God.
4. Ultimate reality is physical.	Ultimate reality is utility.	Ultimate reality is spiritual.
5. Universe is natural creation.	Universe has been created by man.	Universe has been created by God.
6. They do not believe in value, soul, God, religion and divine spirit.	According to them values are changeable and are created by men. It is relative to time, place and circumstance.	Eternal spiritual values never change. Truth, goodness and beauty are eternal values.
7. Physical and natural laws are universal.	Now laws are universal.	Spiritual laws are universal.

### **Educational Principles**

1. Nature is the base. "Follow nature" is the slogan.	Society is the base. Emphasis is on physical and social environment.	Spirituality is the base. Emphasis is on the spiritual and moral environment.
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### **Aims of Education**

1. The aim of education according to naturalism is self-expression.	The aim of education according to pragmatism is dynamic in nature.	The aim of education according to idealism is self-realisation.
2. It emphasizes the autonomous development of the individuality.	It aims at social efficiency.	It aims at spiritual development.
3. Adjustment to environment.	Adjustment with present and to change the presents.	Presentation and enrichment of cultural environment.

### **Curriculum**

1. Emphasis is on sciences.	Emphasis is on practical utilitarian subjects.	Emphasis is on ethics and study of humanities.
2. Curriculum is based on need, ability, aptitude, and on the nature of the child.	Based on the principle of utility, integration and child's natural interests and experience.	Based on moral, spiritual and intellectual values.

### **Discipline**

1. Uncontrolled freedom, discipline through natural consequences.	Restricted freedom and social discipline.	Emphasis on regulated freedom and self-discipline.
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### **Teacher's Role**

1. Teacher role is from behind the scene.	Teacher occupies an important place in education.	Teacher's position is very high. They have high expectations of the teacher.
2. Teacher is not to interfere in the child's activities.	Teacher puts the pupil in the position of a discover or experimenter.	Teacher guides, directs, suggests and controls the situation.

### 3.8 LET US SUM UP

This unit has attempted to introduce to you the philosophical basis of education explaining how the educational system of a nation is influenced by its philosophy and its contribution in the field of education with special reference to the school setting, curriculum, role of the teacher and nature of discipline.

Naturalism, as a philosophy of education advocates maximum freedom for the child and further stresses in freeing the child from the tyranny of rigidity, interference and strict discipline. To naturalists the school should not be regarded as separate from the child's environment. They believe that children's learning should originate from direct sensory experience in their immediate environment rather than with verbalism such as lectures, preaching and books. According to them, childhood is an appropriate, necessary and valuable stage of human growth and development and so the curriculum and instruction should flow accordingly from the child's impulses and instincts.

Idealism as a philosophy of education emphasizes "the exaltation of personality" which is the result of self-realization achieved by spiritual knowledge, self-discipline and guidance of the dignified teacher. It emphasises man's perfection in various facets of life—through physical, intellectual, moral, aesthetic and social.

Pragmatism, as a practical philosophy contributes a lot to the field of education. According to the pragmatists there are no fixed or absolute values. Values are created by man. For them curriculum of the school must not exist apart from the social context. It makes activity as the basis of all teaching and prefers self-learning in the context of co-operative activity. For them the teaching-learning process is the social process where sharing of experience between the teacher and the taught takes place.

### 3.9 UNIT-END ACTIVITIES

1. What is Plato's conception of curriculum? How can its elements be brought into modern curriculum construction?
2. Do you think philosophical basis is inherent in modern Indian education? Discuss with the help of your experiences as a teacher.
3. How important is the study of philosophy of education for a teacher? How does it help to solve the day-to-day problems that the teacher faces in the classroom?
4. Collect material on the life of eminent philosophers, and analyse how their ideas and thoughts have been affected by their circumstances.
5. How much is experience important for the educand and the educator? Is experience the basis of all knowledge and learning?
6. As a teacher, what do you feel would be the optimum philosophical combination in a modern teacher-learning situation?

### 3.10 SUGGESTED READINGS

Seetharamu, A.S.: *Philosophies of Education*.

Dhiman, O.P.: *Foundations of Education*.

Donald Butler, J.: *Four Philosophies and their Practice in Education and Religion*.

Joseph F. Callahan & Leonard H. Clark: *Foundations of Education Planning for Competence*.

Ranjit Sharma, G.: *Trends in Contemporary Indian Philosophy*.

George F. Kneller: *Foundations of Education*.

Uday Shanker : *Philosophy of Education for Modern India*.