

Values, Education and Jainism

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The quest after values and the attainment thereof constitute the very core of human life. This is so because human life is basically finite and imperfect and man always strives towards overcoming those imperfections and limitations. That is why, consciously or unconsciously, value-concepts, value-discrimination, and value-judgements figure prominently in his life.

There is a necessary connection between educational objectives and value-seeking. Actually, the process of value-realization is basically an educational one. Education must have some objectives, if it is to be effective and of any worth. It necessitates a sort of value-thinking, for it is value-decisions alone which can provide valid and adequate objectives of education.

Value-considerations are heavily involved in all educational objectives. In teaching and learning every problem demands a proper value-consideration. We notice that the more the teacher or educator is aware of the realm of values, so much more, he or she opens the vision, understanding and perspective of the pupil. In all subjects of studies as well as in all problems of life perceptibly or imperceptibly valuational questions are involved. And, therefore, the more unripe the learner so much the more responsible should be the teacher. It is always a serious danger for the youth if the teachers valuational perception is too narrow, as the consequence is a premature forcing into a one-sided, limited or even biased interpretation of life. So we are in need of philosophy of education which could reflect over the field of education. But here one can raise the following questions :

- (i) What is philosophy ?
- (ii) What is education ?
- (iii) In what way can philosophy contribute to education ?

Let these above-mentioned questions be replied first :

(i) *What is Philosophy ?*

Etymologically, philosophy means love of wisdom, but functionally it means both, the seeking of wisdom and the wisdom sought. Philosophy, thus, stands both, for theoretical knowledge of the nature of life and its conditions, and the practical knowledge of principles of conduct for actual guidance of life. It is systematic reflection over the entire reality with a view to fathom its mysteries. Human life is the most important facet of reality and, therefore, it is one of the most important tasks of philosophy to solve the riddles of human life.

Philosophy, undoubtedly, according to some philosophers has its own importance for conceptual clarity, but that is not the end-all and be-all of philosophy. Infact, it is just a preliminary task. Philosophy

has to do something deeper and more serious. It has to address itself to the immanent problems facing the mankind.

Against this background we can formulate three important tasks of philosophy, namely;

- (i) to study the nature and phenomenology of our knowledge, and to formulate the norms and criteria of its truth and validity;
- (ii) to ascertain in the light and by the means of the equipment and instrument so developed, the nature of reality, and
- (iii) finally on the basis of the knowledge so acquired to formulate and develop, for life's guidance, the goals or values and the ways of life.

(ii) What is Education ?

Education is a purposeful, deliberate conscious and systemetic process of modification of the natural development of man. Man is imperfect by nature. His life is a process of development that tends towards something which is more perfect. This results in the modification of his behaviour pattern.

In order that this modification may not fall short of its goal, it must be well engineered. Education, moreover, is a medium through which the society transmits its heritage of past experiences and modifications, systems of values, and the modes of skills of acquiring it.

Thus, all education is a means for the attainment of human life. It is the fruitful utilization of the knowledge attained by the mankind for the enhancement of human-existence.

(iii) In what way Philosophy can contribute to Education ?

If a general philosophy is a systemetic reflection over the entire life to understand its nature then educational philosophy is also a systemetic reflection comprehending the phenomenon of education in its entirety. Every system of education has to base itself on certain ends and policies, and it is the business of philosophy to provide these ends and policies to education. The framing up of the educational ends and policies presuppose value-considerations and value-judgements. The science of education because of its positive nature cannot make normative decisions. Hence, there is the need of a philosophical frame-work.

All the major issues of education are at bottom philosophical. We cannot examine the existing philosophical ideals and policies, or suggest new ones, without considering such general philosophical problems, as

- (i) the nature of good life, to which the education should lead,
- (ii) of man himself, because it is man we are educating,
- (iii) of society, because education is a social process, and
- (iv) of the ultimate structure of reality which all knowledge seeks to penetrate.

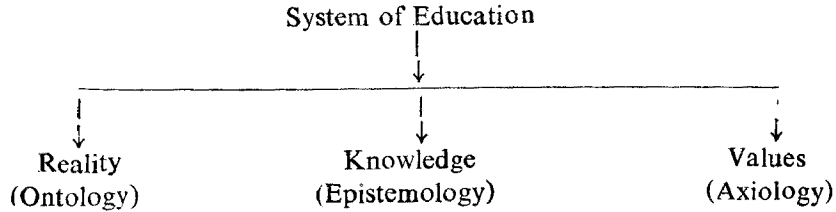
Thus, philosophy is helpful to education in three important ways, viz.,

- (i) in suggesting the ends and means of educational system,
- (ii) in providing the theories of the nature of man, and
- (iii) in examining the rationality of our educational ideals, their consistency, and the part played in them by wishful or unexamined thinking, in testing the logic of our concepts and their adequacy in explaining the facts they seek to explain, and in demonstrating the consistencies among our

theories and indicating the precise range of the theories that are left when the inconsistencies are removed.

Values in Education and Jainism

Every system of education must have its footing on the solid basis of a systematic reflection about the nature of reality, knowledge and values. Of the three foundations of



of education, namely, ontological, epistemic, and axiological, it is the axiological which is the most significant because it is the value which constitutes the very culmination of the process of existence and knowledge. Philosophy is concerned among other things with the other problems of values. That is why, human values become a very significant area of philosophical inquiry. All questions about values are intimately connected with questions of knowledge, and, therefore, of education. A way of looking at values needs to look to education, as well as to philosophy of education.

Like other philosophical systems Jainism can also provide a solid footing for value-system in the scheme of education of today. If it is so, we must know, first, what is Jainism ?

What is Jainism ?

A critical and dispassionate study of Jaina literature enables one to understand the Jaina outlook of life which is sanctioned by Jainism as apparent from an objective and judicious interpretation of fundamentals of Jaina metaphysics and ethics and not the outlook on life which the followers of Jainism generally have today.

Metaphysically speaking, all souls, according to their stage of spiritual progress have a legitimate place on the path of religion.

Secondly, God's place in Jainism is like a 'Spiritual Ideal' and a 'Perfect Being'. To attain the same status by worshipping and cultivating 'His Virtues' is a must.

Thirdly, everyone is the architect of his fortune. Not only monks or religious persons but even a criminal also can attain self-realization at one moment, if he follows the process of Jaina-Sādhnā.

Fourthly, as a social being without any consideration of his spiritual attainment or standard one can enjoy his life as a member of society, but the duties of a house-holder are in miniature those of a monk and he may rise himself steadily to the status of a monk according to the process.

Fifthly, Ahimsā is the most important principle of Jainism. Every living-being has a sanctity and dignity of its own and one has to respect it as one expects one's own dignity to be respected.

Sixthly, life is sacred irrespective of species, caste, colour, creed and nationality etc.

Seventhly, our hearts should be free from baser impulses like anger, pride, hypocrisy, greed, envy and contempt.

Good neighbourhood, truth, respect for others, consistency in words, thoughts and actions, individual kindness, mutual confidence and reciprocal security are essential for good social, moral and political life.

જૈન તત્ત્વ ચિન્તન: આધુનિક સંદર્ભ

Lastly, A study and progressive restraint on yearning for sensual or sex pleasure or for acquisition of property is also an important virtue of Jainism. A religious person is expected to limit his property upto his physical body only. But it does not mean that others are quite free in this respect. They are also expected to have limits on the property owned by them and no weeding out the weak and poor. Thus, an enlightened society can gradually be developed.

Nayavāda and Syādvāda

Jainism has presented two instruments of understanding and expression : one is Nayavāda and the other is Syādvāda. Nayavāda is a particular approach of analysis of a complex question, synthesis of different view-points is an imperative necessity. Every view-point must retain its relative position and this need is fulfilled by Syādvāda. According to Syādvāda, truth is not monopoly of any one individual, religion, or society. Intellectual tolerance is one of the fundamental tenets of Jainism. Ahimsā, truth and toleration were fostered by Jainas for their opponents also.

Value Oriented Education and Jainism

Self-realisation

Self-realisation is a supreme value of life according to Jaina philosophy. So pupil should be made to realise his own self as he is a part and parcel of divinity. Philosophy of Syādvāda is a guarantee that emphasis on individuality will not undermine the general interests and the general welfare of the society. Everyone is the architect of his own fortune. So to achieve the goal of life and education (i.e. self-realisation) one should proceed keeping this in view. The teacher's role is also much essential in this process of self-realisation.

Five Principles of conduct as great values of life

Ahimsā, satya, asteya, brahmacharya and aparigraha are the five principles of conduct which are accepted as the disciplines of education according to Jainism. It is the duty of every teacher and pupil to give importance to these principles in education apart from bookish knowledge. Such an integrated approach in study and training would be valuable not only for the spiritual growth of the individual or pupil but for the general progress and the welfare of humanity also.

Knowledge as a value

Jainism gives immense value to the knowledge (i.e. Samyagjñāna), which is acquired in stages :

- (i) The first stage of knowledge is Mati or the knowledge acquired by the senses.
- (ii) The second stage of knowledge is that of Śruta or the knowledge gained through the scriptures.
- (iii) The third stage is that of Avadhi or the extra sensory knowledge, which is acquired by the soul without the activity of mind or senses.
- (iv) The fourth stage is manahparyaya the knowledge of the ideas or thoughts of others, and
- (v) The final stage of knowledge is the Kevala which connotes the supreme knowledge.

These stages represent the standard of development of self-purification and are more relevant and justified in jaina view of reality than degree oriented stages of knowledge. According to these stages of knowledge an aspirant evaluates his knowledge on the basis of enlightenment not on the basis of degrees. However, the coordination of the two systems (stage oriented system and degree oriented system) can be helpful to solve some value-problems in the educational field to a large extent.

Value of interest

At the first two stages teacher can use lecture-method of teaching according to jaina-system of education. But it must be made interested by giving beautiful illustrations and similies (dṛṣṭāntas) while explaining the complexities of knowledge. Thus the pupils take much interest in their studies and never feel boredom.

Discipline

The idea of self-discipline is infused in the life of pupil through the five principles of conduct. No external force is required for this purpose. Indiscipline, stealing, killing and soon are disvalues according to Jainism.

Universality in Education

We notice that there is no distinction on the basis of caste, colour, creed, etc. in Jainism universal education. Jaina ācāryas always believed in the enlightenment of every individual on the basis of equal opportunity for all.

Secondly, there is no problem of language as a medium of instruction because they use mother tongue for this purpose and no foreign language is used by Jaina ācāryas in teaching activity. So the pupil has not to waste his energy in learning a foreign language only for the sake medium of instruction as we notice in our education-system of today. The camel of English has entered the camp of language and has accupied the whole space.

Value of 'Jap', 'Tap' or 'Vratas'

'Jap', 'Tap' or 'Vratas' are the sources for self-control. There is no provision for corporal punishment. They believe in self-punishment for self-purification by the means of 'Jap', 'tap', etc. as the occasion demands. Thus, we notice that this type of punishment is self-imposed and not imposed by any external authority like teacher or police etc. like today.

Social and moral values in Educational sphere

Mutual affection and respect are regarded the basis of teacher-pupil relationships. Faith, love, freedom, equality, justice modesty, devotion, and soon are the different types of value which lay the foundation of education which is in a way character building. The teacher's duty of teaching is not confined for livelihood only as is the case today, but his mission should be well up in his heart out of sheer love, compassion and feeling of the sacrifice for the sake of learner. On the other hand, pupil must also be an embodiment of modesty and devotion. Thus, Jain a guru believes in personal relation with the pupil (who is always submissive to him). The ācārya must be fit physically, mentally and intellectually for propograting education. Moreover, the guru is expected to be a man of very high moral character.

Three Great Ideals (Samyagdarśana, Samyag jñāna and Samyak cāritra) are great values also

Viewed from this point, "the three jewels" of the right faith, the right knowledge and the right conduct which have been described as the ways of attaining the liberation, put on a different significance. They are not practices nor instruments in the hands of the self; and it is not that the self attains liberation with their

help. The soul secures its emancipation through itself and the 'jewels' are not phenomena, extraneous to it but are a part and parcel of its very nature.

Self-knowledge is the cause of its liberation. In the Nīścaya view, the Samyag darśana is the 'Vitarāga-samyaktva', an innate faith and the natural joyfulness of the pure self is alone to be sought after (Upādeya), the Samyagjñāna is the intensive knowledge of the self and it is in the self, a knowledge which is inseparable from the nature of the self; and the Samyak cāritra is the pure activity of the self and for itself.

Nivṛtti, samiti's, Gupti's and all other moral practices are also interpreted in a similar way.

By the above, it is to be understood that the religious and moral values are always to be backed up the best of motives—not simply utilitarian but purely spiritual. In fact, this must be the foundation of all true religions and true ethics; and may well serve as the basis of value-scheme of any educational system.

The above-mentioned discussion gives a clear and distinct picture of values, education and Jainism. It must be admitted that the process of value-realisation is basically an educational one and we have noticed it in Jainism also. Moreover, it is also quite evident that the value system in Jainism is of immense value in preparing a suitable value scheme for present educational system also, as it requires a drastic change to eradicate the problems like, student unrest, indiscipline, unemployment and admission problems etc. in the sphere of education and hoarding, black marketing and adulteration etc. in the society.

Now, the essay can be summed up in the main points given below :

- (i) The values of life and education are interrelated.
- (ii) There is a need of philosophy of education which may reflect over.
- (iii) Jainism provides a guide-line for preparing a suitable value-scheme for modern educational system.