

TERM PAPER

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DECLARATION FORM

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Abstract

India's government schools have a lot of students who are first learners in their families, hence teachers and the school environment are the first two things they interact with to educate themselves. Each child requires a safe and nurturing environment to grow. As stated by the National Early Childhood Care and Education framework young learners strive to be happy, healthy, inquisitive, confident, communicative, creative, caring, open-minded, resilient, sensitive to diversity, respectful, mindful and lifelong learners. Furthermore, they are sensitive to diversity, are communicative, caring and creative in their relationship with people and the environment.

Due to unavailability of materials lot of time children don't get the kind of education which they deserve and teachers in low income or government school are not equipped with the techniques and resources to work on this. It is mostly assumed that materials are utmost important in education.

This project explores different teaching techniques derived from Nai Talim, Tagore and Critical Pedagogy to see if these techniques could be used in resource constrained areas to make the learning more effective and fun.

Topic - Teaching philosophies derived from Nai Talim, Rabindranath Tagore and Critical Pedagogy enhance learning in resource constrained areas?

Introduction -

Mahatma Phule rightly states that Education is a human right. It has the power to make or break a country. The youth of our country will be the ones who will help in changing mindsets and bringing our country forward so it is essential that they are educated with care and are given utmost importance. But even then, children face the consequences of factors which are not completely in their hands and don't get the desired level of education.

Talking about education, why has the material provided always played the biggest role and not the way it is being used to teach? The accessibility of materials will differ from region to region and income to income, how can we provide equal education opportunities across schools and students.

This paper talks about how teaching philosophies derived from Gandhi (Nai Talim), Rabindranath Tagore and Paulo Freire (Critical pedagogy) could play a huge role determining the level and value of education in resource constrained places. Places like villages and towns or even places like slums in the city are actually really constrained in terms of technology and education provided. How can we find ways to use effective education strategies equal across all children so that materialistic things wouldn't become the decision maker?

For quality education we don't need materials, what we need is the passion from teachers and parents to educate the child. If they are equipped with that mindset then education will flow easily for the children. All materialistic things are just addons made for commercial reasons, and in the past, education happened amidst nature in places like Shanti Niketan as mentioned below by Tagore where children studied with nature.

Research -

In the early twentieth century, India had a different social structure where illiteracy, casteism, exploitation was prevalent. Gandhiji wanted to bring radical change in existing society. Majority of people were poor and illiterate. They were from the lowest strata in the hierarchy of the caste system. Major occupation was handicraft. They were involved in various crafts such as spinning, weaving, pottery, leather work, etc. In each of these crafts, there was a monopoly of specific caste groups, who knew the process of production of these crafts. Many of these people belonged to the category of ‘untouchables. To bring social transformation and make education available to all, Gandhiji introduced Nai Talim. (Takwale et al., Nai Talim and Gandhian Approaches to Development)

The phrase Nai Talim is a combination of two words- Nai Means ‘New’ and Talim – a Urdu word-means ‘Education’. In 1937, Gandhiji introduced the concept of Nai Talim in India. He believed in the importance of role of a teacher in the learning process. According to him, teaching-learning process can become fruitful if teacher and learner are at same understanding level. In other words, in teaching-learning process, teacher-learner should learn from each other. They should have mutual understanding. They should respect each other. Nai Talim focuses on development of head, heart and hand. It believes in inseparable relation between work and intelligence. In other words, it insists on learning by doing. Nai Talim aimed at personal development and social development. Gandhiji thought through Nai Talim, youth will be trained to bring revolutionary change in rural India. Such generation will not dependent on anybody but they will be independent and work for welfare of the society. The other side of Nai Talim was to bring a just society where nobody will be oppressed. Everyone will be equal, truly a democratic society.

Nai Talim was based on four principles, namely: Learning in mother tongue along with handicraft work, work should be linked with most useful vocational needs of locality, learning should be linked with vocational work and work should be socially useful and productive needed for living. In short no rote learning but learning by doing with things from the surrounding environment like farming, cooking, stitching, cleaning to understand concepts from different subjects. Any handicraft can give thorough comprehensive knowledge. By involving oneself in craft, one can prepare one's body, and also simultaneously develops intellect. Knowledge and work were considered as two sides of the same coin-work gives knowledge and through fruitful knowledge, work happens. It also believed in giving dignity to labour by teachers and children doing everything together in a school space, there were no helpers to clean. Nai Talim, if implemented correctly, helps in all round development of a person. (Takwale et al., Nai Talim and Gandhian Approaches to Development)

Moral and ethical knowledge is the first point on which Mahatma Gandhi's concept of value education is based. Any education system that lacks these two cannot be termed as good. The reason behind such a thought is that, without morality and without ethics, no student, in real sense, can be considered to be healthy in mental and physical terms, because for it, self-control and good character is essential. A person, who is not a moralist and who does not differentiate between right and wrong, cannot rise to the essential level of a true student. Mahatma Gandhi calls upon all teachers to impart proper education of morality and ethics to students both at school and college levels. In this regard suggesting some guidelines for teachers, he says that it is the duty of teachers to develop high morals and strong character of their students. An ideal teacher should be free from any addiction. He needs to be polite and should set an ideal example of simple living and high thinking. He should also remember that

wasting time is a sin; therefore, he should be aware of his duties towards students and society.

The idea of child labour could also surface while making children self-sufficient. Most of the workforce in the villages are engaged in the unorganized sector, mostly in agricultural related works, where they do not manage to earn even their minimum wages. Nai Talim is highly value based and was a mass campaign. In this approach every person had an equal and open opportunity to develop their innate talents. This was a lifelong process. Gandhian approaches to education include learning for life, learning from life and learning throughout life- linking education with yoga, industry and cooperative working (yoga, udyoga and Sahayoga) (Bhave, 1959, Takwale, Sawant and Deshmukh, 2010). Gandhiji also focused on Adult Education according to him Adult Education is a matter of teaching the art of living.

Nai Talim is not a fixed system, method or curriculum. It is a philosophy of learning and living and not just pedagogy. It is not restricted to any vocation. It is a flexi approach, which can be moulded as per local requirements. It has two main components namely: 1. Holistic development of an individual; and 2. Developing non-violent, just, co-operative and sustainable society.

Rabindranath Tagore argues that the difference between children and adults requires different methods of learning. While adults may read books and while their learning is motivated by a clear purpose, children require indefiniteness and learn mostly unconsciously. According to the “method of nature,” guessing and trying out are preferable to explaining; unconscious learning and sudden surprises are preferable to focused effort; and experiencing and discovering the world first hand is preferable to books. Tagore argues that learning by the

“method of nature” will allow children to develop their creativity and to apply what they have learnt. Tagore uses an analogy to warn educators of the detrimental effects of applying the adult method of learning to children:

To allow the “method of nature” to work, children need freedom. This includes a certain degree of “naughtiness,” which is an expression of children’s curiosity and their growth, and which Tagore not only accepts but even desires. Not having enough freedom and being harshly disciplined and punished, argues Tagore, can have devastating and demoralizing effects on children.

Punishment, for Tagore, is only acceptable, if it is imposed by nature (i.e., falling from a tree) or by oneself. He is convinced that this method is most successful and that he has managed to improve the behaviour of unruly children through the “method of nature and his “freedom cure.” (Thriveni C, February 6, 2018, Rabindranath Tagore’s Philosophy on Indian Education)

Tagore thinks that children’s freedom (which does not mean licence) should allow them to determine what they want to do for a large part of their time. He criticizes most adults for structuring children’s time and activities so much that they have no space to develop their lives and selves individually, to find their own voices, and to express themselves creatively. Throughout his life, Tagore often describes the schools of his time as prisons. In “Parrot’s Training,” Tagore caricatures colonial education, which imprisons and brutally kills the natural impulses of the parrot through mindless discipline.

This satire shows that the main focus of education is directed on the school building, the textbooks, and the authorities, while the child and its needs (and the “method of nature”) are neglected. He also calls schools robot-producing factories that destroy individuality and true learning, are merely focusing on exams, and do not let their students mature. The production

of mass educated robots or marionettes encumbers students' development of their own goals and self-respect and only aspires for worldly success instead of perfection and self-liberation, which makes it easy for the colonial rulers to employ them for their purposes.

“And for that they must be trained, not to be soldiers, not to be clerks in a bank, not to be merchants, but to be the makers of their own world and their own destiny. And for that they must have all their faculties fully developed in the atmosphere of freedom.”

Tagore is convinced that an ideal school should be amidst nature. In Shanti Niketan, lessons take place mostly outside in the shade of trees. For schools in less warm climates, he recommends spending at least one school day completely outside, not counting sports, games, and excursions. He also believes that boarding schools are most advantageous, as they can be far away from cities and therefore permit children to move about more freely. They also allow for more simplicity and for protection from the overburdening stimuli of the modern world (such as too much entertainment, ready-made products, and luxury) and from their parents' narrow aspirations. Tagore cherishes self-chosen simplicity – without idealizing poverty – because he thinks that an excess of material goods can restrict the direct experience of the world, inflate the self, and hamper true maturation.

By protecting children from their parents' narrow aspirations, Tagore means that parents should be careful not to confer their own desires for the material and purposeful to their children and their much simpler needs; either through mollycoddling or through modelling and pushing them towards their own worldly aspirations of turning them into mere “money makers.” He emphasizes how important it is for children to experience nature through their bodies – without having windows, chairs, or shoes in the way –, and to develop creativity and responsibility when they are lacking ready-made products and instruments. He argues: “The real king is he who is able to create his own kingdom.”

He was convinced that students' respectfulness grows when they are free (not: have licence) and treated with patience, sympathy, and respect themselves. Tagore encouraged his students (to an unusual degree for his time) to think critically and to voice their opinions.

Tagore's students were helping to shape the daily life of the ashram and thereby make the ashram rules their own. He believed that only when students take part in creating their school, it can be their nest, instead of remain a mere cage. The ability and enthusiasm to create one's own world was one of Tagore's main educational goals. (Thriveni C, February 6, 2018, Rabindranath Tagore's Philosophy on Indian Education)

Tagore was the first to introduce the experiment of student's self-government in India (cf. swaraj). This included a system of self-punishment, according to which a student court will discuss whether a student is guilty and will then himself determine his punishment.

According to Tagore, gurus are "active in the efforts to achieve the fullness of humanity" and will give their whole selves to their students instead of merely sharing the material as prescribed by the curriculum.

Being a guru is a true calling instead of a job to earn money, and the motivation for it consists in love for children and for the subject, not in love for power. Good teachers, wrote Tagore, activate children's minds instead of helping them to assimilate and collect information, and inspire children through their own self-development. They encourage them to work on the teacher's own original projects and thereby travel together on their journey to more understanding.

“[A] teacher can never truly teach unless he is still learning himself. A lamp can never light another lamp unless it continues to burn its own flame.” (Jooli Sonker, May 2020, Philosophy of education according to Rabindranath Tagore)

Critical Pedagogy is an effective strategy to enhance the critical thinking capability of students and to generate positive behavioral change in students' lives. This is a strategy that enhances student consciousness, understanding, and judgment. It gives students a voice to speak in the classroom. Freire (2001) defined critical pedagogy as a critical approach to education, highlighting the importance of having learners engage actively in their learning process, and being able to find and develop their own opinion and position.

Kaya and Kaya (2017) explain that critical pedagogy is a concept that addressed the problem of education and the education system itself. The purpose of critical pedagogy is to signal how questions of audience voices, power, and evaluation can actively work to construct schools into an environment where teachers and students can question the relationship between theory and practice, critical analysis and common sense, learning and social change (Muhammad Sharif Uddin, Critical Padeogy and its implication in a classroom, p. 182).

Freire (2001) identified critical pedagogy as “a correct way of thinking that goes beyond the ingenious.” It must be produced by the learners in communion with the teacher responsible for their education. Freire argued for learner-centered education, calling for a dialogue between teacher and student and he argued for problem-posing education.

The dialogue-based approach is to engage students in questioning and exchanging ideas, to inquire and to learn. Problem-posing education is designed to engage the student in solving any problem through brainstorming. John Dewey also argued for child-centered education for creating the child as a good citizen. So, the main point of critical pedagogy is to engage students in learning and to make them active learners.

Kaya and Kaya (2017) explain that Freire advocated education for the liberation for the poor and the oppressed through critical pedagogy. Mahmoudi et al. (2014) say that schools should be considered as places for social change and evolution. Schools should not only foster critical thinking among students, but they should also teach how to change the surrounding environments.

Dialogue gives voice to the student, and it is a technique to break the silent nature of the students and the monologue of the teacher. According to Freire (2016) through love, humanity, and faith both teacher and student come to a horizontal relationship and build a mutual trust which helps to bring a logical consequence. Lyle (2008) defines the dialogic approach as a vehicle for increasing pupil engagement at a deep level and raising the quality of classroom interaction. Dialogical approaches that Freire suggested is the most effective method in teaching for enhancing student's critical thinking capability. It creates a two-way communication where the student and teacher take an active part. Shih (2018) says that Freire advocates that teachers and students should have an equal dialogue instead of teachers holding absolute authority. When there is love, humanity, and faith among the interlocutors, good cooperation is formed, which enables the interlocutors to engage in critical analysis. Freire's dialogical approach is not a new technique in teaching. In ancient Athens, Socrates used to teach people through dialogue. (Muhammad Sharif Uddin, December 2019, Critical Pedagogy and its implication in a classroom)

The Socratic method is still the most robust teaching strategy in enhancing critical thinking. In this method, the teacher asks a question to the students but does not provide an answer. The teacher helps the students to find out the accurate answer through critical thinking and inquiry. Dialogical approaches that Freire suggested offer an effective strategy of teaching for enhancing student's critical thinking capability.

Freire's banking concept of education shows how learning is far from a real-life situation. Students only memorize what is transferred by the teacher. This memorization does not bring any tangible learning outcome in the life of a student. Dewey (1902) expressed his observation of how far the curriculum and education are from a child's world. There is no connection between a child's learning and his real-life situation. This kind of learning has a minimal effect on improving students' critical thinking. There is no self-realization and no critical awareness in education which cannot connect the real-life situation. Dewey (1902) said, "There is some gap in kind (as distinct from a degree) between the child's experience and the various form of subject matter that makes up the course of study" (Muhammad Sharif Uddin, December 2019, Critical Pedagogy and its implication in a classroom)

The critical awareness improvement of the students depends on the teacher. The teacher can design lessons based on student capacity. The classroom teacher knows students well and can set up classroom strategy which can enhance students' critical awareness. A free and fair classroom environment and communication are essential for learning, creating a space where the students are not afraid to ask any question. This kind of environment helps the student to be an active learner while the banking concept of education makes the student a passive learner. Freire (2016) compared the banking concept's classroom to an ivory tower which has no connection with students.

Freire introduced the problem-posing strategy to replace the banking concept of education. Problem-posing education is being widely used in Singapore. The country is one of the leading countries for education. The problem-posing strategy helps students to be engaged in orderly thinking, looking for a better solution for any problem. Students first decide on a problem, then do the brainstorming and come to an initial solution. After that, students analyze the first answer and come to a final solution. Through the process, students

achieve skills in higher order thinking, using Bloom's Taxonomy. Freire (2016) classified problem-posing education as a tool for transformation. In problem posing education, people develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world in which they find themselves: they come to see the world not as a static reality but as a reality in process, in transformation. (Sabarish-p, March 2014, Education Philosophy of Paulo Freire)

A classroom teacher who knows the students well should design a lesson plan that helps to engage students in learning activities using the dialogical method. The design should include the classroom strategy on how the students will be engaged in dialogue to find out the solution of the given problem. Student-student or student-teacher dialogue will make a clear and reasonable judgment of the issue. The teacher will play the role of facilitator to support, so that the students reach a valid conclusion. Teacher-guided dialogical approach will help the students to achieve a growth mindset of thinking with openness and reasoning. Connecting the lesson with a real-life situation is also essential to enhance the ability of students to use a reason-seeking approach. In the era of high stakes testing, teachers keep the students busy in the classroom to get a sound report card. Thus, the students think that they study for achieving a better score and do not consider learning as their life-changing lessons. The teachers must keep in mind that learning is not out of life. Thus, the teacher's planning should include a strategy that can connect the content with a real-life situation. The teacher should not consider that knowledge is hidden only in the content of the curriculum. The teacher can use many other resources like the story, drama, and students' cultural presentations. These kinds of resources are supportive for the students, enabling them to be creative and think consciously. Moreover, the teacher can create a classroom community where students can play a different role and have the chance to employ

their knowledge to gather more knowledge. (Muhammad Sharif Uddin, December 2019
Critical Pedagogy and its implication in a classroom)

Conclusion

India's schools have a lot of students who are first learners in their families, hence teachers and the school environment are the first two things they interact with to educate themselves. Each child requires a safe and nurturing environment to grow. As stated by the National Early Childhood Care and Education framework young learners strive to be happy, healthy, inquisitive, confident, communicative, creative, caring, open-minded, resilient, sensitive to diversity, respectful, mindful and lifelong learners. Furthermore, they are sensitive to diversity, are communicative, caring and creative in their relationship with people and the environment.

Effective teaching is the way to bring forward the children of our country who are often unheard. As mentioned above education should be inquiry-based learning which happens within the surrounding setting away from all the materialistic things. Tagore mentions about how colonial education has made everything commercialized, everyone wants to follow the rat race started by the western culture. Holistic learning should be put forward instead of just bookish language.

In crisis we persist published by CEQUE based on true incidents shares about the effective ways teachers in Maharashtra used to teach their children even in difficult times. They adapted different techniques like making make shift classrooms in the village itself, making portable blackboards using village walls, doing phased assessment, making flexible schedules, getting community support and making effective use of WhatsApp. There efforts were set as true examples of how one can teach without the availability of fancy materials.

Hence it is really important for teachers to understand these different ways of pedagogy to make best use of a classroom experience for a child. Children should become good humans, understand themselves and surroundings, respect the place they come from, use what's available to the best, ask questions, learn by doing (experimenting and explorations) and more importantly become lifelong learners.

Excess of material goods can restrict the direct experience of the world in its most raw form, resource constrained areas are spaces where the best kind of education can happen only if the teachers are aware of the techniques and pedagogies.

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