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“ Educational Thoughts of John Dewey”

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Great Persons make great contributions and on the account they are remembered for all times. Some are born great, some because great through their workings and greatness is trusted upon some. John Dewey was born in a poor family but he became great on the basis of his works and great deeds. He stands in the front rank of educationists of the world. To him Philosophy is not a passive contemplation but something which solves the problems of life. His approach to problems of life is original and he has offered sound solutions to great problems. John Dewey was a pragmatist and an experimentalist. He was a practical thinker who did not consider Philosophy as passive contemplation. According to Dewey Philosophy could always solve the Problems of life. He defined education as “The continuous reconstruction of experiences.”

Dewey emphasized that education is a necessity of life. Education is life itself, and not a preparation for life. He is a by- product of activities and education is born out of these activities. Education should be such that it may give an opportunity to child to face various problems of actual life. According to John Dewey, education is a Process of living through continuous reconstruction of experiences. Education is by experience, for experience and of experience. Experience is the only source of true knowledge. One experience leads to further experiences. Thus experience is revised or reconstructed. This revising of experience is education. Education constantly reorganized experiences.

John Dewey believed in the theory of free discipline. Dewey believed in the theory of free discipline. Discipline based on punishment or outer control is defective. Hence there should be no imposition of authority. Discipline should be from within. In social discipline, Dewey gave full freedom to the natural impulses of the child. He wanted to direct and discipline the natural impulses of the child through the Co-operative activities of the School.

To Dewey; Ideal school is a place where the child learns through his experience. It is a social institution and reflects society. It is a society in miniature. It is a Socio-Psychological necessity. It is social because it has to provide for the education of the child as a member of the society and psychological because it recognizes what is best for the child. In the words of John Dewey, “The school is simply that form of community life in which all those agencies are concentrated that will be most effective in bringing the child to share in the inherited resources of the race, and to use his own process for social end.”

Education is the process of growth. Growth is the real function of education according to John Dewey. Education should enable the individual to grow to maximum. The words of John Dewey are, ‘growth unlimited and illimitable.’ Is the true objective of education. The end of education is more growth and still more growth. It is the duty of the teacher to facilitate the process of proper growth.

Dewey emphasized learning by doing and learning through participation. Direct experience is the basis of all the techniques of teaching. Dewey advocated self-education, self-learning, play-way technique, children’s interest and motivation. His significant contribution lies in his approach to class- room instruction based on effective learning originality and initiative.

A teacher occupies an important place in the educative process. Dewey assigns a very responsible job to a teacher. A teacher is a friend, a guide and a helper. He has to observe, plan and

encourage pupil's activities, environment and experiences. A teacher must be professionally trained and efficient person who has to lay the foundations of a successful social life. Besides the teacher should have sympathy for the child. In this regard, John Dewey rightly says, "Since the teacher has presumably a great background of experience, there is some presumption of the right of the teacher to make suggestion as to what to do, as there is on the part of head. Carpenter to suggest to apprentices something of what they are to do."

Dewey has given his approach to class-room teaching in his works entitled, "How we think" and "Interest and efforts in Education." Here he contends that the best method of teaching is what which is based on learning by doing, and direct experiences. He remarks that all learning must come as a by-product of actions and never something learned directly for its own sake. Dewey stated that the different subjects of the curriculum should be co-related and they should be presented in an integrated and not in an isolated manner. The psychological reason behind the integration is that the mind of the child is a complete unity and is not divided into water tight compartments. Dewey emphasized on self-education, play way and creative self expressions. Dewey stated that every child learns in his own way, so he emphasis self-education in his methods of teaching. He believed that play naturally attracts the attention of the child. Hence he advocated the importance of play-way methods. He also asserted that every child has got the power of self-expression.

Dewey regards ideal school as child-centered institution where individual differences are properly considered. Education is based on needs interests and potentialities of the child. The child is the central figure in the school. To Dewey, an ideal school is an experimental institution. It is a place where "experiments in life are carried on, read about and told about." It is a place of experimentation both for the teachers and the taught. Class-rooms are treated as laboratories and teachers as demonstrators. According to Dewey, in school, children should be taught at least one vacation. It will help them in earning their livelihood. It should be noted here that vacations should be taught in accordance with the needs of the society. Dewey had a faith in moral education. He advocated that moral education should not be given in the forms of separate lesson but through activities performed jointly with others. The best moral training is that which one receives by having proper relations with others. The greatest impact of Dewey's ideas is seen on the methods of education in more recent times. Dewey emphasized place of motivation and interest in learning, learning by living, learning by doing, learning by experience etc. He asserted the spirit of play way, direct experience of things, construction and use of tools. The most important methods of teaching advocated by Dewey are 'Project Method' and 'Problem Method'. These ideas and methods influenced modern teaching techniques and led to activity methods in schools.

Dewey was really a great educationist and a philosopher who certainly brought about a revolution in the field of education. Modern education has certainly incorporated most of his ideas and feelings even today. He is still a source of inspiration to many.

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