

REV-00

## SELF-LEARNING MATERIAL



# MA EDUCATION

**MAE 103: PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION OF EDUCATION**

**w.e.f Academic Session: 2024-25**



**CENTRE FOR DISTANCE AND ONLINE EDUCATION**  
**UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY MEGHALAYA**

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Accredited 'A' Grade by NAAC

Techno City, 9th Mile, Baridua, Ri-Bhoi, Meghalaya, 793101

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## MA Education

MAE 103 – Philosophical Foundation of Education

ACADEMIC SESSION: 2024-25

Credit : 04



**Center for Distance and Online Education**  
**UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**  
**MEGHALAYA**

ACCREDITED 'A' GRADE BY NAAC

Techno City, 9<sup>th</sup> Mile, Bridua, Ri-Bhoi Meghalaya, 793101

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## Course Information

### Course Code MAE 103

### Philosophical Foundations of Education

**Introduction:** The course "**Philosophical Foundations of Education**" for the **MA in Education** explores the critical intersection between philosophy and education. By delving into various philosophical traditions and their implications for educational practices, this course aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how philosophical thought shapes educational theory and practice. Students will engage with both historical and contemporary perspectives to develop a nuanced appreciation of the philosophical underpinnings that influence educational methods, goals, and policies. Through this exploration, students will be equipped to critically analyze and apply philosophical concepts in educational settings.

### Unit 1: Philosophy and Education

This unit introduces the foundational concepts of philosophy and their relevance to education. It examines how philosophical inquiry addresses fundamental questions about the nature and purpose of education, the role of the educator, and the objectives of learning. Students will explore key philosophical perspectives and how these perspectives inform educational theories and practices. By understanding the philosophical dimensions of education, students will gain insight into the ways in which philosophical principles can guide and enhance educational decision-making and practice.

### Unit 2: Western Schools of Philosophy

In this unit, students will delve into the major Western philosophical traditions and their contributions to educational thought. From ancient Greek philosophy to modern Western schools,

this unit covers significant philosophical movements and thinkers, including Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and more contemporary figures. The focus will be on how these philosophical traditions have influenced educational theories and practices in Western contexts. Students will explore the implications of these philosophies for current educational practices and consider how Western philosophical thought continues to shape education today.

### **Unit 3: Vedic Education**

This unit explores the Vedic tradition's contributions to educational philosophy and practice. By examining ancient Vedic texts and educational practices, students will gain an understanding of how education was conceived and implemented in Vedic society. Key themes include the role of education in personal and social development, the methods of teaching and learning, and the goals of education according to Vedic thought. This unit provides a comparative perspective on how Vedic educational principles align with or differ from Western educational philosophies.

### **Unit 4: Educational Thinkers**

The final unit focuses on prominent educational thinkers from various traditions and their impact on educational philosophy. Students will study the works and ideas of influential figures such as John Dewey, Paulo Freire, Maria Montessori, and others. This unit will examine how these thinkers' educational theories and practices have shaped contemporary education. Through analyzing their contributions, students will gain a deeper understanding of the diverse approaches to education and how these approaches address the challenges and opportunities within the field.

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## ***UNIT-I : Relationship between Philosophy and Education & Branches of Philosophy***

### **Unit Structure**

- 1.0 Learning objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Concept of Philosophy
  - 1.2.1 Meaning & definition
  - 1.2.2 Features
  - 1.2.3 Nature
- 1.3 Branches of Philosophy
  - 1.3.1 Metaphysics
  - 1.3.2 Epistemology
  - 1.3.3 Axiology
- 1.4 Concept of Educational philosophy – meaning, nature & objectives of education
  - 1.4.1 Meaning of Educational philosophy

- 1.4.2 Relationship between Education and Philosophy
- 1.7 Scope & functions of Educational Philosophy – Concept
  - 1.7.1 Scope of Educational Philosophy
  - 1.7.2 Role of Educational Philosophy
  - 1.7.3 The Significance and Influence of Educational Philosophy
- 1.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.9 Reference
- 1.10 Further Reading
- 1.11 Answer to check your progress

## **1.12 Model Questions**

## 1.0 Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, we will be able :

- ✓ To define philosophy and explain its key features.
- ✓ To describe the main branches of philosophy: metaphysics, epistemology, and axiology.
- ✓ To differentiate between philosophical education and practical education.
- ✓ To understand the scope and functions of educational philosophy.
- ✓ To explore the relationship between philosophy and education.

## 1.1 Introduction

Every scholarly field, such as history, politics, economics, and the sciences, is grounded in its own philosophical framework and guiding principles. Education, as part of the liberal arts, similarly has a rich tradition of philosophical thought from both Eastern and Western perspectives. It's crucial for postgraduate students in education to be knowledgeable about educational theories and philosophies, as they deeply impact educational practices and planning worldwide. These theories reflect the values that societies and governments aim to instill through education. This unit is designed to introduce you to the philosophy of education.

## 1.2 Concept of Philosophy

Philosophy, in a broad sense, can be seen as a person's collective set of fundamental beliefs and convictions. We hold various notions about physical objects, other people, purpose of life, death, God, morality, beauty, and other such concepts. These ideas, acquired through diverse means, might be imprecise and unclear. Philosophy serves as a guide for living since it tackles essential and widespread issues that shape the path we follow in life. Consequently, we can assert that all aspects of human life are influenced and directed by philosophical considerations.

Philosophers often delve into profound inquiries like: Who are we? Is there a higher power influencing our existence? What is the relationship between nature and humanity? What is the meaning of life? Can our senses accurately reflect the universe's reality? How do we gain knowledge about the world? What is the connection between mind and body?



They also ask: What is happiness? What is virtue? What is the relationship between individuals and society? How can we organize society and the economy to promote the common good? What methods should we use to distinguish truth from falsehood? Can we ever truly understand the essence of our existence?

Philosophy is a contemplation of these questions. It is the study of general and fundamental problems concerning existence, knowledge, truth, beauty, law, justice, validity, mind, and language. Philosophy involves rational and systematic thinking about the overall nature of the world, known as metaphysics or the theory of existence, the justification of belief, known as epistemology or the theory of knowledge, and the conduct of life, known as ethics or the theory of value.

### 1.2.1 Meaning

The term "**philosophy**" comes from two Greek words: "**philos,**" meaning "**love,**" and "**sophia,**" meaning "**wisdom.**" Etymologically, philosophy means the love of wisdom. To love something is to desire it. To many Greeks, a philosopher was someone who desired wisdom. Wisdom goes beyond mere knowledge; one can be knowledgeable without being wise. Wisdom includes knowledge and its application in all circumstances. Therefore, philosophy provides people with the wisdom to understand the universe and their place in it. A philosopher can be seen as a "*friend of wisdom.*"

In his "**Republic,**" Plato stated *that "He who has a taste for every sort of knowledge and who is curious to learn and is never satisfied may be termed a philosopher."* This suggests that a philosopher is interested in all types of knowledge, unlike a physicist focused on physical processes, a historian on past events, a geographer on natural conditions, or a biologist on biological processes. Philosophers possess a multidimensional perspective and interest, always in pursuit of new ideas and knowledge, guided by their growing wisdom. They explore the fundamental principles and ultimate conclusions of all branches of knowledge.

Philosophers belong to various schools of thought, such as idealism, naturalism, pragmatism, existentialism, perennialism, realism, essentialism, and progressivism, each offering different approaches to philosophical inquiry. Philosophies vary across cultures,

places, and times. Thus, individuals with different ideologies and lifestyles tend to have different philosophies. Philosophers seek to understand humanity, nature, and the universe.

Philosophy is a system of beliefs about reality and provides an integrated view of the world. It encompasses an understanding of existence, human nature, and our role in the world. Philosophy is the foundation of knowledge, offering the premises by which we can discover truth and use our minds to support our lives. In conclusion, philosophy is a critical examination of reality, characterized by rational inquiry aimed at discovering truth for the sake of attaining wisdom.

#### ▪ **Definition**

- **Aristipus (435-356 B.C):** *“Philosophy is the ability to feel at ease in any society”.*
- **Aristotle:** *“Philosophy is the science which investigates the nature of being, as it is in itself”.*
- **Brightman:** *“Philosophy may be defined as the attempt to think truly about human experience as a whole and to make our whole experience intelligible”.*
- **Cicero, Marcus Tullius (106-43 B.C):** *“Philosophy is the mother of all arts and the true medicine of mind”.*
- **Dr. Baldev Upadhyaya:** *Methodical training or “Sadhana”.*
- **Dr. Radhakrishnan (1888-1975):** *“Philosophy is a logical inquiry into the nature of reality.”*
- **Kant Immanuel (1724-1804):** *Philosophy as science and criticism of cognition.*
- **Platto:** *“He who has a taste for every sort of knowledge and who is curious to learn and is never satisfied may be termed philosopher”.*
- **Raymant:** *An unceasing effort to discover the general truth that lies behind the particular facts, to discern also the reality that lies behind the appearance.*

### 1.2.2 Features of Philosophy

#### **Personal Beliefs and Views**

Philosophy includes a collection of personal perspectives or beliefs about life and the universe, often held without thorough critical examination. When people talk about "my philosophy," they typically mean their informal, personal stance on a specific topic.

## **Critical Reflection and Analysis**

Philosophy involves critically examining and analyzing deeply held beliefs and ideas. This formal approach requires a true philosophical mindset that is open, critical, and ready to explore all perspectives of an issue.

## **Comprehensive Worldview**

Philosophy seeks to offer a rational and complete perspective of the world, integrating conclusions from various sciences and human experiences. Philosophers aim to understand life as a whole, combining knowledge from different fields into a coherent worldview.

## **Clarification of Language and Concepts**

A key role of philosophy is the logical examination of language and the clarification of terms and concepts. Philosophers use analysis to eliminate confusion and nonsense, providing clarity in both scientific and everyday contexts.

## **Inquiry into Perennial Problems**

Philosophy tackles fundamental and timeless questions about human existence, such as the nature of truth, the distinction between right and wrong, and the purpose of life. Philosophers seek answers to these profound questions, creating theories and systems of thought that shape our understanding of the world.

### **1.2.3 Nature of philosophy**

- Philosophy is an organized exploration of the fundamental nature of the universe.
- It examines core principles and pursues understanding within human experience.
- Philosophy is a vibrant force.
- It serves as a lifestyle.
- It is the most ancient and foundational field of thought.
- It involves a pursuit of truth and reality.
- It investigates questions about life and existence.
- Its methodology is rational.
- It constantly adapts and grows.

- Philosophers strive to comprehend life as a whole.
- Philosophy is linked to societal and life conditions.
- It mirrors its historical and cultural context.
- It is flexible in its methods.
- It seeks holistic knowledge.
- It is the study of knowledge.
- It explores metaphysics beyond the physical realm and its connection to it.
- Techniques include logic, symbolism, reflection, science, and reason.

### *Check your progress*

1. What is the derivative meaning of philosophy?

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2. Write on definition of philosophy.

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3. What are the different branches of philosophical study?

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### **1.3 Fields of Philosophy: Metaphysics, Epistemology and Axiology**

Philosophy addresses the most fundamental challenges faced by humans. Rather than offering definitive answers, philosophy is better understood as an inquiry into questions. It could even be described as the study of questions themselves. According to Van Cleve Morris, the essence lies in posing the “right” questions. By “right,” he refers to questions that are significant and pertinent—those that people genuinely seek answers to and that have a meaningful impact on

their lives and work. The content of philosophy is traditionally organized into three core categories. These categories reflect the broad scope of philosophical inquiry, encompassing the nature of reality, the theory of knowledge, and the study of values, respectively. Each category delves into different aspects of human understanding and existence.

**The categories are as follows:**

### 1.3.1 Metaphysics

Metaphysics explores inquiries about the nature of reality and existence. Common questions in metaphysics include:

- What constitutes reality?
- Does a divine being exist, and if so, can we provide evidence for it? (The problem of evil)
- Are human actions governed by free will, or are they influenced by external forces beyond our control?
- Do minds or souls exist, or are human merely intricate physical entities?
- What is the nature of time?
- What is the purpose of life?
- Is there an existence beyond death?

**Meaning:** Metaphysicians aim to uncover the essential principles of reality, seeking to identify the fundamental truths from which absolute knowledge can be derived. The term "metaphysics" is derived from the Greek words "**meta**" (*meaning "beyond," "upon," or "after"*) and "**physika**" (*meaning "physics"*). It literally denotes "what comes after physics." Aristotle's treatises on "first philosophy," which followed his work on physics, were subsequently labeled as metaphysics by his editor, Andronicus of Rhodes.

At first, questions like "What is real?" may appear overly simplistic. However, consider George Knight's illustration regarding the nature of a floor to understand the deeper implications: What exactly defines the floor you stand on? It seems straightforward—it is flat, solid, smooth, has a particular color, and is composed of materials such as wood or concrete that supports your weight. Yet, if a physicist were to analyze the floor, they might describe it as a structure of

molecules, which are made up of atoms, electrons, protons, and neutrons, and ultimately consist of electric energy. Conversely, a chemist might view the floor differently, identifying it as a mixture of hydrocarbons influenced by environmental factors like heat, cold, and oxidation.

The nature of reality is far more intricate than it may seem. If discerning the reality of something as straightforward as a floor presents challenges, the complexities multiply when exploring the ultimate reality of the universe.

**Metaphysical questions are essential because they underpin all other inquiries. These can be categorized into four primary areas:**

### **Four areas of Metaphysics**

#### ***Cosmology***

Cosmology explores the origin, nature, and evolution of the universe as a coherent system. It investigates questions such as:

- What was the origin and development of the universe?
- Did it come into existence by chance or through deliberate design?
- Does the universe have an inherent purpose?

#### ***Theology***

Theology examines concepts of the divine and religious beliefs. It tackles questions like:

- Is there a deity or God?
- If so, is there a single deity or multiple gods?
- What are the characteristics of God?
- Given that God is all-good and all-powerful, why does evil exist?
- What is the relationship between God and human beings, as well as the world?

#### ***Anthropology***

Anthropology focuses on human beings, posing questions such as:

- What is the connection between mind and body?
- Is the mind more fundamental than the body, or vice versa?
- What is the moral status of humanity—are people inherently good, evil, or neutral?

- To what extent do individuals possess freedom—do they have free will, or are their actions shaped by their environment, inheritance, or a higher power?
- Do humans have souls? If so, what is their nature?

### ***Ontology***

Ontology investigates the nature of existence. Key questions in ontology include:

- Is fundamental reality based in matter or physical energy, or in spirit or spiritual energy?
- Is reality composed of a single element (such as matter or spirit), two elements (such as matter and spirit), or multiple elements?
- Is reality orderly and governed by laws, or is it simply structured by human perception?
- Is reality fixed and unchanging, or is change its primary characteristic?
- Is reality inherently supportive, hostile, or indifferent towards humanity?

These dimensions of metaphysics underscore the intricate and profound nature of the questions philosophers address in their exploration of existence and reality.

## ▪ **Metaphysics and Education**

A cursory examination of historical or modern societies reveals the significant impact of metaphysical elements—cosmological, theological, anthropological, and ontological—on their social, political, economic, and scientific ideologies and practices. Across various cultures, individuals have embraced answers to these foundational questions and conduct their lives based on these underlying assumptions. Metaphysical choices are unavoidable; even opting for inaction reflects a metaphysical stance regarding human nature and purpose. Education, like all human endeavors, operates within a metaphysical framework. The study of ultimate reality, or metaphysics, is vital to any educational concept. It is essential for educational programs in schools, families, or religious institutions to be grounded in reality and factual understanding rather than in illusions or fantasies. Diverse metaphysical viewpoints lead to varying educational methodologies and even distinct educational systems. For instance, Adventists and other Christians allocate significant resources to private educational institutions despite the availability of public schooling, driven by their metaphysical views on reality, the existence of God, God's influence in human affairs, and the concept of humans as divine creations. Fundamentally, people

are motivated by metaphysical beliefs, which have historically been influential enough to inspire sacrifice, and they strive to establish educational settings where these beliefs are imparted to their children.

The anthropological dimension of metaphysics holds particular significance for educators. They interact with young, impressionable individuals, and their perceptions of students' nature and potential form the basis of educational strategies. The goal of education in various philosophies is intimately connected to these perspectives. Philosopher D. Elton Trueblood highlighted this by stating, "Until we understand what man is, we will not understand much else." It is crucial whether a student is viewed as Desmond Morris's "naked ape" or as a divine child. Similarly understanding whether children are inherently evil, fundamentally good, or good but corrupted by sin is crucial. Different anthropological views will lead to different educational practices. Metaphysics is theoretical and examines issues like cause-and-effect relationships. It influences teaching by shaping thoughts about educational objectives, selecting appropriate content, and forming attitudes towards learners' basic nature.

### **Check your progress**

4. Write the meaning of metaphysics?

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5. What are the main areas of metaphysics?

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### **1.3.2 Epistemology**

Epistemology, commonly known as the theory of knowledge, is a branch of philosophy that investigates the nature, extent, and credibility of knowledge. The term "*epistemology*" derives from the Greek words *episteme*, meaning "*knowledge*" or "*understanding*," and *logos*, meaning



*"study" or "discourse."* Essentially, epistemology examines core questions like *"What constitutes truth?"* and *"How do we come to know it?"*

Epistemology encompasses two primary aspects: **the substance of knowledge** (*what we know*) and **the process of knowing** (*how we acquire it*). In the context of education, this parallels curriculum (the material) and pedagogy (the methods). It explores questions related to the dependability of knowledge and the legitimacy of the sources from which we gain information.

One crucial issue in epistemology is whether reality can be known at all. Skepticism, for instance, argues that reliable knowledge is unattainable, suggesting that any pursuit of truth is futile. Another foundational question is whether truths are absolute or relative. Absolute truths are considered universally and eternally valid, whereas relative truths are subject to change over time or circumstance.

Epistemology also examines the sources of human knowledge. Empiricism asserts that knowledge is derived primarily from sensory experience. For example, observing the beauty of a spring day through sight, sound, touch, and smell contributes to our understanding of seasonal changes. However, sensory data have limitations—they can be incomplete or distorted by factors like fatigue or environmental conditions.

Revelation is another source of knowledge, particularly significant in religious contexts, where it involves insights believed to come from a transcendent supernatural realm. Such knowledge is considered absolute and beyond empirical verification, relying instead on faith.

Authority, as a source of knowledge, relies on trusting experts or established traditions. In education, textbooks and teachers often serve as authorities. While authority provides efficient access to knowledge, it also risks perpetuating errors if based on flawed assumptions.

Reason or rationalism emphasizes the role of logical thinking in acquiring knowledge. It asserts that the mind can generate truths that transcend sensory experience. Logical systems, however, must rely on sound premises to avoid internal inconsistency.

Intuition, often described as an immediate sense of certainty or insight, is another source of knowledge. It can lead to innovative breakthroughs but lacks the reliability of empirical or rational methods unless corroborated by them.

Ultimately, no single source of knowledge can provide a comprehensive understanding. Instead, these sources complement each other, each offering insights that contribute to a broader, more nuanced view of reality. In contemporary discourse, empirical knowledge tends to be viewed as foundational due to its emphasis on direct observation and verifiability.

## ▪ **Epistemology and Education**

Epistemology and education go hand in hand because both are fundamentally about knowledge. Epistemology, the study of how we know what we know, profoundly influences education. The educational theories and practices a person adopts are shaped by their epistemological beliefs. These beliefs dictate decisions about what knowledge is important, how it should be taught, and which sources are reliable.

For instance, educators who value revelation as a source of truth, such as Christian teachers, will integrate the Bible into their curriculum significantly. This contrasts sharply with the approaches of educators who do not prioritize religious revelation. Each teacher's philosophical worldview informs how they present every subject, making a strong case for why Adventist youth, for example, might benefit from education in Adventist schools tailored to their specific beliefs.

In essence, epistemology guides educational choices on a daily basis, influencing everything from curriculum design to teaching methods based on what each educator considers valid knowledge.

## ***Check your progress***

6. Define Epistemology.

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7. How does epistemology relate to education?

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### 1.3.3 Axiology

**Meaning:** Axiology, from the Greek words *axios* meaning "value" or "worth" and *logos* meaning "study," is the philosophical inquiry into the nature of value. It addresses essential questions such as: What constitutes value? Where do values originate? How are our values justified? Axiology also explores the connection between values and knowledge, the various kinds of values that exist, and whether some values can be deemed superior to others.

In axiology, values pertain to what individuals or societies regard as desirable or important. Much like metaphysics and epistemology, axiology is fundamental to education. Education inherently involves shaping values, making the classroom a space where educators, through their actions and beliefs, significantly impact students' perspectives.

Axiology divides into two primary areas: Ethics and Aesthetics.

Ethics focuses on the study of moral principles, seeking to establish rational foundations for right conduct. Common ethical questions include:

- What defines good and bad?
- What determines right and wrong?
- What underpins moral principles?
- Are moral principles universal?

Ethics aims to develop theories that direct appropriate behavior based on concepts of goodness and fairness. In contemporary society, where technological progress frequently surpasses ethical development, schools play a major role in teaching ethical principles amidst ongoing cultural discussions.

Aesthetics examines the essence and significance of art and the experience of beauty. It tackles questions such as:

- What defines a work of art?

- How is artistic creativity different from scientific creativity?
- Why artworks deemed valuable?
- What, if anything, do artworks convey?
- What constitutes beauty?
- Does art carry any moral responsibilities or limitations?

This second branch of axiology, investigates the principles behind beauty and artistic creation, spanning from traditional arts to everyday aesthetics found in architecture, media, and design. Aesthetic judgments involve both intellectual understanding and emotional response, offering experiences that transcend rational discourse. In essence, axiology addresses essential aspects of human existence, influencing educational practices and societal norms by examining values in ethics and aesthetics. It highlights the link between philosophical convictions, ethical conduct, and aesthetic values, influencing how people view and interact with their surroundings.

## ▪ **Axiology & Education**

In our current age, marked by widespread turmoil and confusion, various societal issues like wars, conflicts, terrorism, and moral breakdowns underscore the erosion of fundamental human values. Concepts such as personal dignity, traditional values, respect for life, trust among people, and authority figures like parents and teachers are increasingly under threat. Education plays a pivotal role in this context by instilling and transmitting values such as truth, beauty, and goodness across generations through its curriculum.

Culture, defined as the accumulation of values throughout history, finds its expression and preservation through education. Axiology, as the philosophical study of values, brings an important dimension to education by shaping its objectives and ideals. It delineates both universal human values and specific community values, thereby contributing to the cultural identity of societies. Education thus serves to safeguard and transmit these values, ensuring the continuity of cultural heritage.

Furthermore, axiology emphasizes that the practice of values requires both knowledge and experience, engaging education on cognitive and emotional levels. It fosters creativity,

recognizing that personality evolves and values are cultivated through educational processes. Therefore, education not only imparts knowledge but also nurtures the creative potential of individuals and communities, essential for societal progress.

In essence, axiology enriches education by providing a framework for understanding and promoting values, while education, in turn, gives life and meaning to axiological principles. Together, they illuminate the path towards a more informed and ethically grounded society, guiding individuals in navigating complex moral landscapes and fostering meaningful social development.

### **Check your progress**

8. Mention two axiological questions.

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9. Write the name of main areas of axiology.

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## **1.4 Concept of Educational Philosophy**

### **Meaning of Education**

Education is understood in three primary ways: as the acquisition of knowledge, as a field of study, and as a process of personal development. Etymologically, "Education" derives from Latin roots meaning "to bring up" and "to lead out," emphasizing nurturing and drawing out the potential within a child. In Indian context, "siksha" from Sanskrit means discipline and control, aiming to shape behavior and impart knowledge. In general, education includes any intentional and organized attempt to pass on knowledge, skills, and values from one generation to the next. It

serves to develop a person's intellect, character, physical abilities, and social skills. Education can be institutionalized, imparted formally in schools and colleges, or studied as a pedagogical science. Ultimately, education is a social process that aims to shape individuals towards socially desirable behavior through learning, fostering a well-rounded development that integrates physical, social, intellectual, aesthetic, and spiritual dimensions.

In its narrower sense, education refers to formal instruction within schools or institutions, where structured knowledge is imparted to children through deliberate methods aimed at mental development. This form of education is measured by degrees and diplomas, emphasizing the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and behavioral norms deemed essential by society. Educators consciously shape the environment to mold the young generation, preparing them to adapt effectively to their surroundings and contribute positively to society's needs.

Conversely, education in its wider sense encompasses lifelong development and growth of an individual from birth to death. It includes all experiences that influence a person's development, both formal and informal, throughout their life. This broader view sees education not just as the acquisition of knowledge, but as a continuous process of personal and social development, aiming for the holistic cultivation of body, mind, and spirit. Education in this context is seen as essential for social continuity and personal fulfillment, fostering an individual's ability to adapt and thrive in a dynamic world.

#### ▪ **Nature of Education**

Education exhibits various essential characteristics:

**Lifelong Process:** Education spans from birth to death, involving continuous development and learning. It begins even before birth, as seen in instances like Abhimanyu's learning in Mahabharata.

**Bipolar and Tri-polar Process:** John Adams views education as a bipolar process involving teacher and student, while John Dewey adds the social environment as a third pole, highlighting its interactive nature.

**Multipolar and Purposeful:** Today, education extends beyond schools and teachers to encompass informal sources like media and family, aiming purposefully for personal and societal development.

**Continuous and Deliberate:** Education is ongoing and conscious, shaping individuals through deliberate efforts to cultivate their potential.

**Psychological and Sociological:** It involves understanding and fostering individual capacities within social contexts, aiming for balanced development.

**Dynamic and Comprehensive:** Education adapts to societal changes and promotes holistic development across physical, intellectual, and spiritual dimensions.

- **The objectives of education in the 21st century, according to UNESCO, are outlined through foundational principles:**
  - **Learning to Know:** Emphasizes self-directed learning and understanding beyond mere factual knowledge, nurturing scientific awareness and critical thinking.
  - **Learning to Do:** Encourages practical application of knowledge, particularly in the context of vocational and technical skills essential for today's knowledge-based economy.
  - **Learning to Be:** Focuses on holistic self-discovery and personal development, fostering human values and universal dimensions of personality.
  - **Learning to Live Together:** Promotes social responsibility, empathy and cooperation, emphasizing respect for diversity and collective well-being essential for peaceful coexistence.

These pillars reflect a comprehensive approach to education in the modern era, addressing the multifaceted needs of individuals and society alike.

### **Check your progress**

10. What is the broader view of education in its wider sense?

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11. According to UNESCO, what are the pillars that define the goals of education for the 21st century?

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### 1.4.1 Meaning of Educational philosophy

Educational philosophy is the organized exploration of the core nature, objectives, and challenges of education. It entails analyzing and expressing viewpoints on the goals of education, the roles of teachers and students, the essence of knowledge and learning, and the techniques and methods employed in teaching. This field aims to address fundamental inquiries such as the significance of education, what content should be taught, the processes through which learning takes place, and the optimal functioning of educational institutions.

Fundamentally, educational philosophy offers a structure for interpreting and assessing educational methods and policies. It guides decisions about curriculum development, teaching methods, assessment strategies, and the overall organization of educational systems. Educational philosophers explore diverse perspectives and theories, drawing from fields such as ethics, epistemology, metaphysics, sociology, psychology, and political philosophy to inform their analyses and recommendations.

Ultimately, educational philosophy aims to clarify and justify the principles that underpin educational practices, offering insights into how education can best serve individuals, societies, and the broader goals of human flourishing and development.

#### **Studying educational philosophy serves several important objectives:**

- To problem-solving in Education: Educational philosophy helps to address various educational challenges and issues.
- To adaptation to Societal Needs: It aims to align education with the evolving needs of life and society.
- To determine life's Purpose: It explores the aims and purposes of human existence and survival.
- To foster Democratic Citizenship: Educational philosophy aims to cultivate democratic attitudes and behaviors in individuals.



- To enhance Teaching-Learning Processes: It aims to make instruction and learning more impactful and captivating, customized to fit the needs, interests, and abilities of students.
- To choose Philosophical Frameworks: It involves understanding different philosophies and choosing one to guide a meaningful living in a society.
- To broaden knowledge and experience: Delving into educational philosophy enhances comprehension and experience, which can subsequently be integrated into educational practices.
- To encourage holistic growth: It seeks to promote comprehensive personal development in children, equipping them for independence.
- To introduce flexibility in education: Educational philosophy advocates for adaptable educational methods to achieve objectives related to national cohesion, global awareness, and globalization.
- To stimulate social change: It perceives education as a potent mechanism for initiating social, cultural, political, and economic transformations within society.

#### **1.4.2 Relationship between Philosophy and Education**

Philosophy and education are closely connected, with each impacting and enhancing the other. Philosophy offers the foundational principles and core beliefs that guide educational practices, while education puts these principles into action within real-world contexts. Ross describes philosophy as reflective thought, whereas education represents active implementation. Education translates philosophical concepts into practice, addressing key issues such as the necessity of education, the target audience for education, and effective teaching methods. This practical application of philosophical ideas to educational matters is referred to as educational philosophy.

Educational philosophy explores fundamental questions regarding educational objectives, the roles of educators and learners, curriculum development, instructional strategies, and student motivation, among others. It forms the basis for designing and implementing educational systems and practices. A well-developed philosophy of education is anchored in a broader life philosophy, shaping the values and goals that education aims to promote. Consequently, philosophy and education engage in a dynamic interplay, continually shaping and refining each other through the exchange of concepts and practices.

### Views of different thinkers on this:

- **John Dewey:** *“Philosophy is the theory of education in its most general phase”.*
- **Fichte:** *“The art of education will never attain complete clearness without philosophy”.*
- **Spencer:** *“True education is practicable to true philosophers”.*
- **Gentile:** *“Education without philosophy would mean a failure to understand the precise nature of education”.*
- **John Adams:** *“Education is the dynamic side of philosophy.”*

**According to Dewey,** education serves as the arena where philosophical principles are concretized and tested. Conner emphasizes that theory (philosophy) guide practice (education), while practice, in turn, influences and refines theory.

Educational philosophy can be defined as the application of philosophical principles to educational practices, guiding the educational process toward the goals of human life. In essence, it connects a philosophy of life through the framework of education.

**The Reliance of Education on Philosophy:** The relationship between philosophy and education is foundational and symbiotic. Philosophy not only inspires educational theories and practices but also defines the ultimate goals towards which education should strive. As John Dewey expressed, "Education is a laboratory where philosophical distinctions are made concrete and tested." Philosophy embodies wisdom, and education serves as the conduit through which this wisdom is passed down through generations. It encapsulates a systematic framework of thought, which education integrates into its instructional content. Additionally, philosophy influences the lifestyle that education equips individuals to adopt, nurturing the growth of reason and other cognitive abilities.

Philosophy deeply impacts all facets of education, encompassing its objectives, curriculum, techniques, materials, discipline, and the function of teachers. As Gentile observes, "Education devoid of philosophy would miss the fundamental nature of education." Philosophical concepts lay the groundwork for defining both the overarching goals of life and the precise goals of education.

Philosophical principles provide the foundation for determining both the broader aims of life and the specific aims of education. This comprehensive influence ensures that education is not merely a mechanical process but a purposeful endeavor aligned with societal and individual needs. J.S. Ross underscores this by stating that education's scope and depth are fundamentally shaped by philosophical considerations.

Throughout history, prominent philosophers have also been influential educators, integrating their philosophical insights into practical educational reforms. From Socrates and Plato in ancient times to modern figures like John Dewey and Mahatma Gandhi, these thinkers have left a lasting impact on educational practices. For instance, Socrates introduced the Socratic method of questioning, Plato authored "The Republic," a seminal work on education, and Gandhi advocated for Basic Education principles. This historical continuum illustrates how philosophy and education have intertwined to shape the evolution of educational thought and practice across cultures and centuries.

In essence, philosophy provides the foundational principles that define the purpose, methods, and content of education, making it an indispensable component in shaping educational philosophy and practice globally.

**Reliance of Education on philosophy:** Education serves as the dynamic manifestation of philosophical principles. It can be described as the active implementation of philosophical beliefs, translating abstract ideals into practical realities. According to Adams, "Education is the dynamic side of philosophy, the practical means of realizing life's ideals." Philosophy provides the theoretical framework and goals for education, while education operationalizes these goals in practice. They are inherently interconnected; philosophical principles guide educational systems and reforms, such as the development of educational structures like the 10+2+3 system and vocational training, which reflect philosophical perspectives on knowledge and societal needs.

Moreover, education is essential for philosophy to thrive in practical life. It breathes life into philosophical ideas by applying them in educational contexts, shaping individuals and societies according to philosophical values. Conversely, without education, philosophical principles remain theoretical and inert. For instance, the implementation of educational policies and curricula reflects philosophical ideals about the aims and methods of education. This interdependence underscores that while philosophy sets the goals and values,

education provides the means to realize and propagate these principles effectively in society. Thus, philosophy equips us with ideas, and education translates these ideas into actionable practices that shape human development and societal progress.

### *Check your progress*

12. What is educational philosophy?

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13. Who advocate basic education principle?

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## 1.7 Scope & functions of Educational Philosophy

**Concept:** Educational philosophy serves as the foundational framework that underpins the theory, practice, and development of education. It delves deep into philosophical inquiries to address fundamental aspects of human nature, societal values, knowledge acquisition, and their implications on educational endeavors. By exploring diverse philosophical perspectives and integrating insights from various disciplines such as sociology, psychology, and economics, educational philosophy offers critical insights into shaping educational aims, values, and practices. This comprehensive approach not only guides educational planners and administrators but also empowers educators to navigate complex educational landscapes effectively.

### 1.7.1 Scope of Educational Philosophy

**a) Understanding Human Nature, the World, and the Universe:** It explores philosophical perspectives on human nature and its relationship with the world and the universe. This includes integrating insights from various human sciences like biology, sociology, psychology, economics, and anthropology.

**b) Goals and Aspirations of Education:** Educational philosophy rigorously examines and assesses various objectives and ideals of education as presented by philosophers throughout

history. These encompass character formation, holistic human growth, readiness for adult responsibilities, citizenship, the use of leisure time, civic and global engagement, social and national unity, advancement in science and technology, universal access to education, equalizing educational chances, reinforcing democratic values, and developing human resources.

**c) Educational Values:** It examines and systematizes educational values, deriving them from broader philosophical values. This involves evaluating worldviews, beliefs, and their implications for shaping educational goals and practices.

**d) Theory of Knowledge:** Educational philosophy delves into epistemology, addressing the sources, limits, criteria, and means of knowledge relevant to education.

**e) Relationship of Education with National Life:** It provides criteria for understanding the relationship between education and various aspects of national life such as economic systems, political orders, social progress, and cultural reconstructions. This includes considerations of how educational practices and policies intersect with broader societal structures.

### 1.7.2 Role of Educational Philosophy

Educational philosophy plays several key roles in the field of education, including:

#### a) Guiding Educational Elements

**Educational Goals:** It helps shape the objectives of education, methods of instruction, curriculum design, and the roles of both educators and students. By incorporating various philosophical viewpoints (e.g., naturalism’s emphasis on self-expression, idealism’s focus on self-realization, pragmatism’s emphasis on social efficiency), it ensures that education meets societal needs effectively.

**Curriculum Design:** Philosophy aids educators in understanding why different philosophical traditions prioritize certain subjects (e.g., naturalism's preference for science, idealism’s focus on religious studies), thus guiding curriculum development to match the needs, abilities, and interests of students.

**Teaching methods:** It provides insights into the selection of effective teaching approaches (e.g., naturalism’s “learning by doing,” idealism’s “lecture method,” pragmatism’s “experimental method”), enhancing engagement and learning results in the classroom.

**Disciplinary Approaches:** Educational philosophy clarifies varying views on discipline (e.g., idealism’s emphasis on self-control, naturalism’s advocacy for natural freedom and discipline,

pragmatism's focus on social discipline), helping educators adopt appropriate disciplinary methods.

**Roles of Teachers and Students:** It defines the roles and interactions of teachers and students, shaping their responsibilities and relationships within the educational environment.

**Administration:** It guides administrative decisions, promoting democratic values within educational institutions.

#### **b) Integrating Traditions**

**Harmonizing Educational Traditions:** Educational philosophy supports the integration of traditional and modern educational practices, ensuring continuity while adapting to societal shifts.

#### **c) Vision for Educational Advancement**

**Providing Strategic Direction:** It offers educational leaders and planners a forward-looking perspective for achieving educational objectives. This includes aligning professional experiences with theoretical insights to make well-informed decisions in educational settings.

#### **d) Addressing Contemporary Challenges**

**Preparing for Contemporary Challenges:** In a rapidly evolving world shaped by globalization educational philosophy enables individuals to critically address and navigate current issues. It fosters a reflective mindset towards life and society, empowering individuals to navigate and contribute meaningfully to their surroundings.

### **1.7.3 The Significance and Influence of Educational Philosophy**

Educational philosophy serves a diverse array of functions within the realm of education, providing deep insights into human nature, societal principles, and the nature of knowledge. By analyzing and assessing educational goals and ideals from various philosophical perspectives, it establishes a strong basis for designing curricula, implementing teaching strategies, and shaping disciplinary approaches. Moreover, educational philosophy harmonizes old and new traditions, ensuring educational continuity amidst societal changes, while also equipping educators with a forward-looking vision to address modern challenges. Ultimately, it fosters a critical mindset and empowers individuals to navigate and contribute meaningfully in an evolving global society. Thus, educational philosophy remains indispensable in shaping the future of education by integrating philosophical insights into practical educational settings.

### *Check your progress*

14. What is one key role of educational philosophy in education?

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15. What does educational philosophy explore about human nature?

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16. What teaching method is emphasized by pragmatism?

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17. What is one contemporary challenge addressed by educational philosophy?

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## **1.8 Let Us Sum Up**

In this chapter, we explored philosophy as the rational investigation into the nature of reality, aimed at discovering truth to achieve wisdom. Philosophy encompasses metaphysics, which delves into fundamental aspects of existence such as cosmology, theology, anthropology, and ontology. Epistemology examines how we acquire knowledge through empirical observation, revelation, authority, reason, and intuition. Axiology focuses on ethical principles and aesthetics, exploring moral values and the appreciation of beauty in art. Education, viewed as a social process, encompasses the intentional transfer of knowledge, skills, and values from one generation to another, encompassing not only formal schooling but also lifelong learning. Educational philosophy integrates philosophical perspectives to tackle educational challenges, guiding decisions regarding objectives, curriculum design, teaching methods, and the roles of educators. This interplay between philosophy and education is mutually reinforcing: philosophy provides the theoretical groundwork, while education implements these theories into practical strategies that foster personal development and societal advancement.

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## 1.11 Answer to check your Progress



1. The word "philosophy" originates from two Greek words: "philos," meaning "love," and "sophia," meaning "wisdom." Etymologically, philosophy means the love of wisdom.
2. According to Aristotle: "Philosophy is the science which investigates the nature of being, as it is in itself".
3. The branches of philosophy are such as idealism, naturalism, pragmatism, existentialism, perennialism, realism, essentialism, and progressivism etc.
4. Metaphysicians seek the fundamental principles of reality, aiming to discover the foundational truths from which absolute knowledge can be derived.
5. The main areas of metaphysics are Cosmology, Theology, Anthropology and ontology.
6. The term "epistemology" originates from the Greek words episteme, meaning "knowledge, understanding," and logos, meaning "study of."
7. Epistemology covers two main areas: the content of thought (what we know) and thought itself (how we come to know). In educational terms, this corresponds to curriculum (content) and instruction (method).
8. Two examples of axiological questions are - What is good/bad? What is a work of art?
9. The main two areas of axiology is Ethics and Aesthetics.
10. Education in its wider sense encompasses lifelong development and growth of an individual from birth to death. It includes all experiences that influence a person's development, both formal and informal, throughout their life.
11. According to UNESCO, the pillars that define education's goals for the 21st century are - Learning to Know, Learning to Do, Learning to Be, Learning to Live Together.
12. Educational philosophy is the systematic study of the fundamental nature, aims, and problems of education. It seeks to answer fundamental questions such as why education is important, what should be taught, how learning occurs, and how educational institutions should function.
13. Gandhiji advocated the basic education principle.
14. Guiding educational goals, curriculum, and teaching methods.
15. It explores human nature's relationship with the world and the universe.
16. The experimental method.
17. Navigating globalization and societal changes.

## 1.12 Model questions

1. What are the three main branches of philosophy and how do they relate to educational theory?
2. Explain the concept of metaphysics and the areas of it.
3. How does educational philosophy guide curriculum development in schools?
4. How can philosophical principles enhance educational leadership and administration?
5. What are the key differences between empirical and relational sources of knowledge in epistemology?
6. What is the difference between educational philosophy and philosophical education?
7. Explain the branches of philosophy—metaphysics, epistemology, and axiology—and their relevance to education. How do these branches intersect in educational philosophy, and what role do they play in addressing contemporary educational challenges?
8. Discuss the relationship between philosophy and education. How does philosophy provide a theoretical foundation for educational practices, and how does education translate these philosophical principles into practical applications?
9. Critically analyze the role of ethics within axiology in educational philosophy. How does the study of moral values and conduct influence educational goals and practices?
10. Discuss the different sources of knowledge identified in epistemology and their implications for teaching and learning practices. Provide examples to illustrate each source.
11. Discuss the focus of education at 21st century according to UNESCO.
12. Examine the scope and functions of educational philosophy in addressing global educational issues such as inequality, technological advancements, and cultural diversity.

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## ***Unit 2 : Western Schools of Philosophy***

### **Unit Structure**

2.0 Learning Objectives

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Concept of Naturalism

2.2.1 Concepts, Foundations & Core Principles of Naturalism

2.2.2 Naturalism in Education

2.2.3 Critique of Naturalism, Advantages & Disadvantages

2.3 Understanding Idealism – concept, debates & key aspects

2.3.1 Platonic idealism, Religious & Modern Idealism

2.3.3 Implications of Idealism for Education, Advantages & disadvantages of Idealism

2.4 Pragmatism

2.4.1 Types of Pragmatism & Core Principles of Pragmatism

2.4.2 Pragmatism in Education

2.4.3 Critics

## 2.5 Existentialism

### 2.5.1 Metaphysical, Epistemological, Axiological, Fundamental Postulates

### 2.5.2 Aims of Education

### 2.5.3 Limitations and Merits of Existentialism

## 2.6 Let us sum up

## 2.7 Reference

## 2.8 Further reading

## 2.9 Answer to check your progress

## 2.10 Model questions

## 2.0 Learning Objectives

- ✓ To understand Key Concepts and the fundamental principles of Naturalism, Idealism, Pragmatism, Existentialism, and Realism
- ✓ To compare and Contrast Different Philosophies
- ✓ To evaluate Philosophical Contributions on contemporary thought, education, and society, including their practical implications and enduring relevance.
- ✓ To apply Philosophical Ideas from Naturalism, Idealism, Pragmatism, Existentialism, and Realism to real-world scenarios, problems, or educational practices.

## 2.1 Introduction

Western philosophy encompasses diverse schools of thought that profoundly influence our understanding of reality, knowledge acquisition, and human values. This chapter examines Naturalism, Idealism, Pragmatism, Existentialism, and Realism, each offering unique perspectives on these fundamental inquiries. How naturalism emphasizes empirical study, Idealism asserts reality as mental or spiritual, Pragmatism values practical consequences, Existentialism focuses on individual freedom and Realism advocates for objective reality. Exploring these philosophies reveals their impact on education and broader societal frameworks, enriching our grasp of philosophical discourse and its implications.

## 2.2 Naturalism

Naturalism is a philosophical doctrine that separates nature from divinity, prioritizes material over spiritual aspects, and regards immutable laws as paramount. This perspective, also referred to as materialism, holds that the essence of existence is rooted in matter. The mind is considered either a manifestation of matter, a component of it, or a synthesis of both. Naturalistic thought defines life through material and chemical principles, focusing on the relationship between power, speed, and matter as inherently causal. In this view, nature is all-encompassing, with no elements existing before or beyond it.

In the realm of art and literature, naturalism advocates for a realistic portrayal of life, including its less desirable facets. It promotes a factual and unembellished depiction, rejecting spiritual or supernatural interpretations. This approach asserts that scientific understanding is the only reliable source of knowledge, dismissing religious truths derived from revelation. According to naturalism, the universe operates under constant natural laws, and sensory perception is the primary means of gaining true knowledge. Exploration and observation are essential methods for studying and understanding the natural world.

## **Philosophical Foundations and Metaphysical View**

### **Divine concept:**

In naturalism, God is seen as an integral part of nature, yet distinct from it. This concept does not equate God with all of nature or anything beyond it. Instead, God is understood as a specific structure within nature that facilitates the realization of values and serves as their foundational basis.

### **Understanding of Self:**

According to naturalism, the self is an evolving organization of individual experiences. It is viewed as a derivative of nature, not something that emerges from beyond it. Naturalists show little interest in the idea of the human soul, considering humans as a product of nature's evolutionary processes, currently at the peak of development.

### **Theory of Knowledge in naturalism:**

Naturalism emphasizes the importance of scientific knowledge, derived through precise observation, data accumulation, and generalization. It prioritizes empirical and experimental knowledge, asserting that sensory experiences are crucial for learning, as senses are seen as the primary channels to knowledge.

### **Reasoning in naturalism:**

The logic of naturalism is grounded in simple induction. This involves meticulous observation of nature, accurate recording of observations, and careful formulation of general principles based on those observations.

### **Value System in Naturalism:**

Naturalism posits that nature is dynamic and that instincts, drives, and impulses should be expressed rather than suppressed. It rejects the notion of absolute good or evil, arguing that values are shaped by human needs.

**Ethics:**

Ethics within naturalism is hedonistic, though this characterization is nuanced by the belief that the highest good is the pursuit of the most refined and enduring pleasure.

**Aesthetic:**

Naturalistic principles regarding ethical values extend to aesthetic values. These values are rooted in nature and do not rely on external sources for validation. Nature itself provides the standard for beauty.

**Religious perspective:**

In naturalistic religion, the primary goal is for adherents to align with the value-realizing forces within nature and to contribute to the creation of values that are not currently realized.

**Social value:**

Rousseau's naturalism places man firmly within nature rather than society. He viewed humans as products of nature, proposing in his work *Emile* that a child should be kept away from societal influences until adolescence. Rousseau believed that individual freedom is essential to being fully human, and that bondage diminishes one's humanity.

## 2.2.1 Concepts and Foundations

**Physical Naturalism:** This view interprets human activities and experiences through the lens of material objects and natural laws. Essentially, physical naturalism focuses more on external material phenomena than on human consciousness.

**Mechanical Naturalism:** Mechanical naturalism envisions the universe as a vast, lifeless machine shaped by matter and motion. According to this perspective, the operation of this machine does not involve mental or spiritual forces.

**Biological Mechanism:** Biological naturalism, grounded in Darwinian evolution, posits that humans have evolved from simpler forms of life through a gradual development process. Proponents believe that heredity significantly influences individual traits and temperaments.

- **Core Principles of Naturalism**

- The universe is likened to a colossal machine, with humans being both part of this machine and complete machines themselves.

- Life emerges from inanimate matter and is a result of physical and chemical interactions.
- Humans are considered the pinnacle of natural creation due to their inherent nature.
- Current life is viewed as the authentic existence.
- Reality is confined to the external natural world.
- Immutable natural laws account for all events and phenomena in the world.

## 2.2.2 Naturalism in Education

### **Educational Philosophy:**

Naturalism advocates for developing a child according to their inherent nature. This approach contrasts external physical nature with the child's internal nature, emphasizing that education should align external laws with the child's internal impulses and potential for complete natural development.

### **Educational Characteristics:**

#### **Return to Nature:**

Naturalism prioritizes nature among the three key educational factors: nature, humanity, and objects. It promotes the idea that nature is the best teacher for a child, suggesting that education should be conducted in natural environments to foster development.

#### **Education as a Natural Requirement:**

From a naturalistic standpoint, education is seen as an inherent necessity, with educational institutions considered an artificial imposition on nature.

#### **Development of Natural Life:**

Naturalistic education views learning as the development of the natural life. As Monroe describes, education should cultivate an enjoyable, rational, balanced, and useful life.

#### **Child's Freedom:**

Freedom is emphasized as a crucial element in the educational process, allowing children to learn and grow according to their own desires and interests.

#### **Child-Centered Approach:**

Naturalistic education places the child at the center of the process, with the child's nature taking precedence over other aspects such as curriculum, books, and the school environment.



**Teaching Methods:** Naturalism rejects outdated educational systems, advocating for:

- **Learning by Doing:** Emphasis on hands-on activities.
- **Learning by Experience:** Prioritizing personal experiences.
- **Learning through Play:** Using play as a fundamental teaching tool.

Naturalists argue that children should engage in activities they find interesting and enjoyable, similar to Rousseau's concept in Emile. Modern teaching methods inspired by naturalistic principles include:

- Observation Method
- Experimental Method
- Play-Based Method
- Heuristic Method
- Dalton Method
- Montessori Method

These methods promote self-directed learning and are regarded as effective and purposeful.

### **Educational Aims:**

#### **Self-Expression:**

The primary aim is to provide children with opportunities to express and develop their inherent abilities and qualities.

#### **Optimizing Human Efficiency:**

Mechanical naturalism suggests that education should enhance the efficiency and perfection of the human being as a machine.

#### **Preparing for Life's Challenges:**

Biological naturalists view life as a struggle, aiming to prepare individuals to succeed in this competitive environment.

**Fostering Individuality:** T.P. Nunn emphasizes that education should focus on developing each individual's unique traits and personal characteristics.

**Role of the Teacher:** Naturalists prefer that children learn in a natural setting rather than in traditional classrooms with teachers who might impose artificial constraints. In naturalistic education, the child's role is more crucial than the teacher's, and educators should avoid exerting undue authority.

**Approach to Discipline:** Naturalists believe that children should face the consequences of their actions as guided by nature's laws. Interference should be minimal, allowing children the freedom to engage in activities of their choice and learn from their experiences.

## **Curriculum Design**

### **Flexible Curriculum:**

Naturalism rejects rigid curricula, favoring an approach that adapts to the child's development and natural environment. Education should be aligned with the child's psychological stages and development.

### **Emphasis on Sciences:**

While idealists focus on humanities, naturalists emphasize scientific subjects such as Physics, Chemistry, Zoology, and Botany, along with Mathematics and languages.

### **Curricular Focus:**

The curriculum should prioritize science and scientific perspectives, with simplicity and objectivity as guiding principles, and relevant facts as the central aim.

## **School Environment:**

Naturalists criticize rigid and controlled school environments as hindering natural growth. They advocate for a flexible, free, and unrestrictive school setting, allowing children to plan and engage in activities according to their interests and natural tendencies. This approach fosters character development through self-discipline and creative exploration.

## **2.2.3 Critique of Naturalism**

### **Limited and Unsatisfactory Educational Goals:**

Naturalism's approach may lead to a lack of social awareness and community involvement in children. Without a focus on social values and communal responsibilities, children may develop more instinctive and less socially integrated behaviors. Education should socialize children to function effectively within a social environment.

### **Focus on Immediate Needs:**

Naturalism emphasizes addressing the current needs and issues of individuals, often neglecting spiritual values and long-term considerations. This approach prioritizes present concerns over future aspirations and broader ethical considerations.

**Neglect of Books:**

Naturalism suggests that education should be grounded in a child's activities and personal experiences. However, relying solely on activities and experiences may not provide a comprehensive development of the child's personality. Books and structured learning have a role in ensuring holistic development.

**Prioritization of Scientific Subjects:**

Naturalism places a strong emphasis on scientific education, often giving precedence to scientific subjects over humanities in the curriculum. Herbart Spencer, a prominent advocate of naturalism, supports this focus on science, potentially at the expense of broader educational content.

**Minimal Role for Teachers:**

In naturalistic education, teachers are seen primarily as guides and observers rather than active instructors. Their role is limited to supporting and facilitating experiences for the child, without direct intervention or structured teaching.

## Advantages of Naturalism in Education

- a) **Advancement in Understanding Child Psychology:** Naturalism contributes to a deeper understanding of child development and psychology.
- b) **Scientific Approach to Sociology:** It supports a methodical study of society and sociological principles.
- c) **Experience-Centered Curriculum:** Emphasizes learning through experiences, making the curriculum more relevant to real-life situations.
- d) **Innovative Teaching Methods:** Provides valuable input into modern teaching methodologies and practices.
- e) **Opposition to Repressive Discipline:** Advocates for freedom in discipline, opposing punitive approaches.

## Disadvantages of Naturalism in Education

- a) **Excessive Freedom and Focus on Activities:** Children may be given too much freedom, with an overemphasis on activities rather than structured learning.
- b) **Lack of Teacher Involvement:** The reduced role of teachers may limit guidance and direct instruction, affecting the overall educational experience.
- c) **Neglect of Long-Term Needs:** Overemphasis on immediate needs may overlook the importance of addressing future educational and developmental goals.

### Check your progress

1. What is the Central belief of Naturalism regarding the basis of the world?

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2. What is the Naturalism's view on acquiring knowledge?

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3. Mention the main characteristics of naturalistic education?

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## 2.3 Understanding Idealism

**Concept:** Idealism is a philosophical doctrine derived from the Greek word 'idein', which means 'to see'. It posits that reality is rooted in ideas, thoughts, and the mind rather than material objects. Unlike pragmatists, who focus on the world as it is, idealists envision how the world might or should be. In the arts, idealism emphasizes imagination and aims to achieve an idealized conception of beauty, in contrast to aesthetic naturalism and realism. The concept of idealism traces back to Plato, the 3rd-century BC philosopher, who believed in an objective truth represented by the unchanging

world of the ‘Forms’. Plato’s ideas have significantly influenced notions of education and knowledge. According to Plato, true goodness comes from possessing genuine knowledge, a process that requires overcoming sensory limitations through rigorous intellectual and ideological training (Republic Bk VII). Although idealism is less dominant today, it still influences fields such as contemporary religious studies and aspects of moral philosophy.

**Core Principles of Idealism:** Idealism asserts that the fundamental nature of reality is based on mind or ideas. It contends that the so-called external world cannot be separated from consciousness or perception. This philosophy suggests that only mental entities, not physical objects, are truly real and that reality depends on the mind rather than existing independently of it. Some forms of idealism argue that our perception of reality is shaped by our mental processes, asserting that the properties of objects have no existence outside of the minds that perceive them.

### Debates within Idealism

Idealism also grapples with questions about the nature and identity of the mind upon which reality depends. There are different views: some propose an objective mind outside of nature, others argue for a common rationality or the collective mental faculties of society, while some focus on individual human minds. The central tenet of idealism is that ideas and knowledge represent the truest reality. Despite the changing nature of worldly things, ideas and knowledge are seen as enduring. Idealism, sometimes called idea-ism, holds that ideas can transform lives and that nurturing and developing the mind is crucial.

#### 2.3.1 Key Aspects of Idealism

- a) **Platonic Idealism:** This perspective asserts the existence of a perfect realm of forms and ideas, with our world merely reflecting imperfect shadows of that realm. According to this view, only ideas possess true reality.
- b) **Religious Idealism:** This theory proposes that all knowledge arises from perceived phenomena organized into categories, reflecting a divine or spiritual framework.
- c) **Modern Idealism:** In modern idealism, all objects are considered to be identical with some idea, and the ultimate knowledge is viewed as a system of interconnected ideas.

## **(a) Platonic Idealism**

***Overview of Platonic Idealism:*** Plato, a Greek philosopher from the 4th century BCE, was both a student of Socrates and a teacher to Aristotle. Platonic idealism, or Platonism, is an ancient philosophical system established by Plato. Initially, this philosophy was taught at a physical location near Athens called the Academy, and it represented a unified approach to philosophical inquiry. The core of Platonic idealism is Plato's theory of Forms or Ideas, which remains a topic of significant debate in academic philosophy. Plato proposed that the realm of Ideas represents the ultimate reality, with physical reality merely being a shadow or imperfect reflection of this true world. His method of dialectic, as illustrated in the Socratic dialogues, starts with a thesis and involves critical discussion to uncover deeper truths. Plato's notion that the real world is akin to the world of Ideas greatly influenced the development of Western religious thought. Critics argue that Plato's theory might be seen as an abstraction disconnected from the physical world, even though Plato believed that Ideas are fundamentally real and distinct from non-ideal things.

### ***Platonic Idealism and Its Implications:***

According to Platonic idealism, there exists a perfect realm of Forms or Ideas, with our physical world only containing imperfect shadows of this ideal realm. Plato, a follower of the innovative thinker Socrates, documented his ideas in works such as *The Republic* and *Laws*. He emphasized the pursuit of truth, which he considered perfect and eternal, and distinguished the constant world of Ideas from the ever-changing world of matter. Plato's idealism proposed that moving from mere opinion to true knowledge involves critical dialogue or dialectic, where ideas are refined through discussion to approach the truth. For example, a specific tree with missing branches and carvings is a particular instance, whereas the abstract concept of "tree-ness" represents the ideal form we use to recognize various imperfect tree forms.

### ***Influence on Mathematics and Education:***

Platonic idealism has had a lasting impact on mathematics, with the philosophy often underpinning mathematical studies worldwide. This perspective holds mathematics is discovered rather than created, suggesting a fundamental distinction between mathematical and non-mathematical creativity, which could extend to art, music, and literature. Plato admired Pythagoras and the Pythagorean theorem, valuing the idea that the world is constructed from abstract numerical forms. Plato also championed state involvement in education, advocating for a progression from concrete to

abstract thinking and recognizing individual differences. He believed that exceptional individuals should be rewarded for their knowledge and supported equal educational opportunities for both genders. In Plato's ideal society, education was categorized into three classes: workers, soldiers, and rulers. He argued that a wise ruler would be inherently good, as ignorance was the root of evil.

## **(b) Religious Idealism**

### ***Connection between Religion and Idealism:***

Religious idealism intertwines closely with idealist philosophy. Major religious traditions like Judaism and Christianity, which originated from Greek philosophical ideas, reflect this influence. Saint Augustine of Hippo, a prominent figure in the Catholic Church and a key thinker, described the universe as divided into the City of God and the City of Man. The City of God, characterized by truth and goodness, contrasts with the City of Man, ruled by sensory experience. This division parallels Plato's distinction between the realm of Ideas and the world of material things. Religious idealists argue that knowledge is discovered rather than created by humans. Like Plato, Augustine believed that understanding is not transferred directly from teacher to student but is developed through insightful questioning. In this view, individuals are seen as divine creations with souls that need to be nurtured and developed.

### ***Augustine's Integration of Idealism and Christianity:***

Augustine merged Platonist and Neo-Platonist ideas with Christian teachings. He equated the World of Ideas with the City of God and the material world with the City of Man, interpreting the pagan concept of the Good as God and matter as a representation of evil. While Plato emphasized absolute truth grounded in science and reason, Augustine prioritized faith in God, seeing it as a path to true knowledge. He linked the rediscovery of knowledge to the fall of Adam and the divine origin of knowledge. Augustine critiqued worldly knowledge as flawed, asserting that genuine knowledge comes through faith and is guided by the church.

### ***Influence on Education:***

Religious idealism has profoundly impacted American education, as noted by Ozmon & Craver (2008). Early Christians established systematic teaching methods that were consistently applied across schools. Greek and Jewish perspectives on humanity were integral to education, with Christian institutions educating generations under Idealist philosophy. By the Middle Ages, idealism and Judeo-Christian values were deeply embedded in European culture. Augustine's educational

contributions included the theory of different student types, advising teachers to tailor their approach to each student's needs:

- (a) The well-educated student, who needs challenges beyond their current knowledge.
- (b) The uneducated student, requiring patience and repeated explanations.
- (c) The poorly educated student who overestimates their understanding, needing guidance to distinguish between mere words and genuine comprehension.

Augustine also emphasized the importance of responding positively to student questions and introduced a controlled teaching style. This approach ensures thorough understanding by focusing on one topic at a time, anticipating questions, and helping students resolve difficulties. Augustine identified two primary teaching styles:

- (a) The mixed style, which employs elaborate language to highlight the subject's beauty.
- (b) The grand style, which is engaging and heartfelt, aiming to ignite students' enthusiasm.

Augustine's teaching philosophy balanced these approaches with a traditional emphasis on discipline. He supported using punishment as a motivator for learning, believing that inherent tendencies toward evil required corrective measures to guide students' behavior.

### **(c) Modern Idealism**

At the dawn of the modern era during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, idealism began to be closely associated with systematization and subjectivism. Key characteristics of modern idealism include:

#### **(a) Ultimate Reality Beyond the Physical:**

Modern idealism posits that reality encompasses not only the physical universe but also a superior, eternal, non-physical realm often identified as the mind.

#### **(b) Meaning Derived from Transcendence:**

According to modern idealism, physical realities gain their significance from their connection to these transcendent, non-material realities.



**(c) Mind as Distinctive of Human Nature:**

In this view, mind is considered more fundamental than the physical brain, marking a key aspect of human nature.

**(d) Predetermined Purpose of Human Life:**

Human life is believed to have a preordained goal: to evolve to resemble the transcendent mind.

**(e) Purpose Fulfilled Through Intellectual Development:**

The fulfillment of human purpose involves the growth of the intellect, a process known as self-realization.

**(f) Inclusion of Absolute Values in Ultimate Reality:**

Modern idealism asserts that ultimate reality encompasses absolute values that transcend physical existence.

**(g) Knowledge through Reason and Experience:**

Knowledge is attained by applying reason to sensory experiences. The physical world, as a reflection of the transcendent, helps us understand the nature of the transcendent realm.

**(h) Personal Process of Learning:**

Learning is viewed as a personal journey of uncovering one's potential, rather than simply receiving information. It is seen as a process of self-discovery.

The development and recognition of modern idealism were significantly influenced by the ideas of René Descartes, Immanuel Kant, and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel.

### 2.3.2 Idealistic Worldview

An individual with an idealistic perspective believes that the essence of reality is spirit rather than matter. For the idealist, ideas hold more authenticity than physical objects, as material things merely reflect or symbolize ideas. In this view, the world of spirit or ideas (i.e., the immaterial realm) is seen as static and absolute.

## **Idealistic Epistemology**

Idealists hold that since reality is fundamentally spiritual, knowledge arises from the mind's engagement with this reality. Because both the mind and the ideas it perceives are immaterial, the process of gaining knowledge is entirely abstract. Thus, right reasoning is a primary focus for idealists.

## **Idealistic Axiology**

**(a) Ethics in Idealism:** Idealists believe that goodness resides in the ideal, which represents perfection. This ideal is found on an immaterial level—within the perfect concept or notion of something. Consequently, perfect goodness is never found in the material world. Evil, for idealists, is seen as the absence or distortion of the ideal and a violation of eternal law. Since ideals are unchanging (being static and absolute), moral principles related to them are absolute and unyielding. For instance, principles like "Always tell the truth" or "Never lie" reflect this idealism. Truth represents an understanding of ideal reality, whereas a lie distorts it, making truth a constant requirement and lying impermissible.

**(b) Aesthetics in Idealism:** When idealists aim to represent an idea visually or audibly, their focus is on conveying that idea effectively to the audience. They prioritize the general concept of the idea over specific, concrete details. For example, an idealist artist might depict the "perfect" person by omitting imperfections like scars, which are seen as deviations from the ideal form.

### **2.3.3 Implications of Idealism for Education**

**Theory before Practice:** Idealism advocates that education should prioritize conceptual and moral development before practical application. It suggests that teaching should involve abstract subjects such as mathematics and philosophy, focusing on principles before their application. Teachers play a crucial role in guiding learners through the organization and clarification of ideas. Dialogue, as exemplified in Socratic questioning, is essential for guiding students toward accurate understanding. For instance, in a simplified dialogue from "The Republic," Socrates challenges Thrasymachus on the nature of justice, leading him to a contradiction. This method of questioning helps in clarifying and deepening students' comprehension of concepts.

### ***Educational Implications***

- The curriculum places higher value on theoretical subjects over practical ones.
- Learners' pre-existing ideas are established and organized.
- Misconceptions are addressed and challenged.
- Theoretical concepts are presented and then tested.
- Learning is guided through dialogue and questioning rather than rote memorization.
- Understanding concepts is emphasized over memorizing facts.

**Logical Thinking:** Logical thinking is another key legacy of idealism. The dialogical methods of Plato and the rules established by Aristotle emphasize logical reasoning. Aristotle's rules, including deductive reasoning, are foundational for understanding arguments and constructing theorems. For example, Aristotle's syllogism demonstrates how logical inference leads from general premises to specific conclusions. These principles also help identify faulty reasoning and logical fallacies. The modern emphasis on critical thinking and logical skills in education, such as through programs like "Thinking Skills" and "Philosophy for Children," reflects this legacy. Descartes' method of systematic doubt further influences contemporary education by fostering critical, skeptical and independent thinking.

### ***Educational Implications:***

- Schools promote critical thinking and skepticism.
- A range of analytical tools is utilized.
- Both convergent and divergent thinking are encouraged.
- Intellectual freedom and freedom of speech are valued in academic settings.
- Thinking is cultivated as a transferable skill across various contexts.

**Liberal Education:** Aristotle argued that a liberal education, which values knowledge for its own sake, leads to a fulfilling life. This education focuses on theoretical ideas and first principles, aiming to develop the whole person. According to Newman, a liberal education fosters attributes such as freedom, fairness, and wisdom, contrasting with "illiberal" subjects that focus solely on vocational training. Despite challenges, the concept of liberal education has persisted, manifesting in programs like Liberal Studies, which continue to be valued in further and higher education.

### ***Educational Implications***

- Education is valued for its intrinsic worth rather than practical utility.
- A well-rounded curriculum supports intellectual and moral development.
- Certain subjects, such as the arts and humanities, are given higher priority than vocational training.
- A broad range of disciplines and perspectives is introduced.
- Teaching requires personal insight and complexity.
- Debate and discussion are encouraged to foster a rich learning environment.

## ▪ **Principles of Idealism**

**Dual Nature of the World:** Idealism distinguishes between two realms of existence: the spiritual world and the material world. Idealism places greater significance on the spiritual realm, viewing it as the true reality and ultimate truth, while considering the material world as transient and mutable. Horne states, "Idealism posits that the order of the world reflects an eternal and spiritual reality manifested in space and time."

**Primacy of ideals over objects:** Idealists argue that knowledge of the mind and soul is achievable only through ideas. Plato suggested that "Ideas possess ultimate cosmic importance. They represent the essences or archetypes that shape the cosmos. These ideas are eternal and unchanging."

### **Significance of humanity over nature:**

For idealists, humans hold more significance than the natural world because humans can contemplate and experience material objects and phenomena. R.R. Rusk notes, "The spiritual or cultural environment is a creation of humanity, arising from human creative endeavors."

**Belief in Spiritual Values:** Idealists assert that the ultimate goal of life is to attain spiritual values such as truth, beauty, and goodness. These values are seen as timeless and enduring. J.S. Ross asserts, "Goodness, truth, and beauty are viewed as absolutes, each existing independently and entirely desirable in reality."

**Emphasis on Personality Development:** Idealists place significant importance on the individual's "Self" and advocate for the comprehensive development of personality. J.S. Ross describes,

"Idealism highlights the supreme worth of human life, asserting that human personality is of utmost value and represents the noblest creation of God."

**Support for Unity in Diversity:** Idealists support the principle of unity within diversity, believing that an essential unity underlies all diversity. This unifying factor is spiritual in nature, often referred to as universal consciousness or Divinity. Prof. H.N. Horne states, "An idealistic philosophy of education describes humanity discovering itself as an integral part of the universal mind."

### ▪ **Idealism and the Aim of Education**

**Self-Realization and Enhancement of Personality:** Idealism holds that humanity, being God's most remarkable creation, should focus on the enhancement of the human personality, which is equivalent to self-realization. Self-realization involves attaining full knowledge of oneself. J.S. Ross explains, "Idealistic education aims at the exaltation of personality or self-realization, making actual the highest potentials of the self."

**Fostering Spiritual Development:** Idealists emphasized the importance of spiritual values over material gains. According to Rusk, "Education should guide humanity to increasingly engage with the spiritual realm and expand its boundaries."

**Cultivating Truth, Beauty, and Goodness:** Idealists believe that pursuing the highest ideals of truth, beauty, and goodness fosters spiritual development. Education should focus on nurturing these ideals to facilitate moral and spiritual growth, aiming for self-realization.

**Preservation and Transmission of Cultural Heritage:** Humans possess a unique intellect and capacity for knowledge, making their achievements in science, art, and culture invaluable. Education's role is to preserve, develop, and pass on this cultural heritage. Idealism posits that education should acquaint students with cultural treasures so they can conserve, promote, and transmit them to future generations.

**Transformation of Innate Nature into Spiritual Qualities:** Idealists believe that a child's inherent instincts and tendencies should be refined into spiritual qualities and values, representing true personal development.

**Preparation for a Sacred Life:** Idealism holds that education should create conditions conducive to the development of spiritual values. **Froebel aptly** notes, *"The purpose of education is to realize a life that is faithful, pure, inviolate, and thus holy."*

**Development of Intelligence and Rationality:** Idealists view the world as well-ordered and purposeful, and education should help individuals understand this order and unity. Froebel remarks, "Eternal laws govern all things, and this pervasive, self-conscious unity is God. Education should guide individuals to align with nature and unite with God."

**Idealism and Curriculum:** Idealists prioritize thoughts, feelings, ideals, and values in curriculum design, focusing on the holistic expression of humanity. They believe these experiences are derived from both the physical environment and interactions with others.

**Idealism and Teaching Methods:** Idealism does not adhere to a specific teaching method. Historical figures like Socrates used the Question-Answer method, Plato preferred the Discourse method, Aristotle advocated for the Inductive-Deductive method, and Herbert promoted the Instruction method. Butler asserts, "Idealists view themselves as creators and designers of methods rather than followers of a single approach."

**Idealism and the Role of the Teacher:** In Idealism, the teacher plays a crucial and esteemed role. The philosophy views education as involving two key elements: (a) the teacher and (b) the student. An idealist teacher is expected to embody a high level of self-knowledge, self-dynamism, and essential spiritual qualities.

**Idealism and Discipline:** Idealism emphasizes that spiritual development requires discipline. It advocates for sympathetic control over undesirable behaviors while allowing regulated freedom to support spiritual growth.

**Idealism and the School Environment:** In the idealistic view, schools are environments where a child's capacities for logical thinking, reasoning, and evaluation are developed into desirable channels. Schools and their enriching environments are considered essential for imparting high spiritual values and ideas.

### **Advantages of Idealism**

- Idealism has made significant contributions to educational philosophy.
- Idealistic education promotes universal access to education.

- It emphasizes instilling the highest values of truth, beauty, and goodness, which fosters moral character.
- The role of the teacher is given considerable importance.
- Idealism encourages the development of the individual self.
- It respects the individuality of the child and stimulates creative potential.
- Idealistic philosophy has elevated the school to a vital social institution.

### **Disadvantages of Idealism**

- Idealism is often criticized for being abstract and vague, neglecting practical realities.
- It focuses on the ultimate goals of life, sometimes overlooking everyday issues.
- By emphasizing mental activities, idealism may place undue importance on intellectualism.
- Idealism's emphasis on achieving eternal values like truth, beauty, and goodness can be seen as unrealistic.
- The teacher is sometimes given too much emphasis in relation to the student.
- Idealistic teaching methods may rely heavily on memorization and rote learning.
- The focus on humanities in idealistic education may clash with contemporary emphasis on scientific subjects.

### **Check your progress**

4. According to Plato, what is required to achieve true knowledge?

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5. What are the two forms of the world according to idealism?

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6. What is the primary aim of life according to idealists?

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## 2.4 Pragmatism

Pragmatism is a significant philosophical school of education that occupies a middle ground between idealism and materialism, serving as a sort of compromise. Its roots can be traced back to the Sophists of ancient Greece, who believed that human experience is the standard for measuring all things.

The term "**pragmatism**" originates from a Greek word meaning *to act, to create, or to achieve*. This emphasizes action, practice, or activity over mere thought. According to pragmatism, experience is central to understanding reality. Beliefs and ideas are considered true if they prove to be practical and beneficial; otherwise, they are deemed false. Will Durant encapsulates pragmatism as the view that truth is defined by the practical effectiveness of an idea. Consequently, pragmatism is more of a method—specifically, the method of experimentation—rather than a traditional philosophy. In educational practice, pragmatism rejects rigid, predetermined objectives and curricula, considering the past of the pragmatist as irrelevant.

Values in pragmatism are seen as instrumental rather than fixed. They evolve and are not universally applicable across all times and situations. Pragmatism often leans towards individualism and may be perceived as lacking in consistent values or ethics, which can make it appear superficial.

According to pragmatism, truth is defined by what effectively serves one's purposes and enhances life. The validity of theories is judged based on their practical utility. There are no absolute or unchanging ideas; all ideas are relative to the specific contexts in which they arise and are subject to ongoing verification through their outcomes. Since experiences are diverse and constantly evolving, no permanent, universal system of ideas or values can be established. Ideas and values are seen as human creations, not divine or eternal truths.

### Exponents of Pragmatism

1. C.B Pearce, 2. William James, 3 Schiller, 4. John Dewey.

### Definitions of Pragmatism

- ❖ *“Pragmatism offers us a theory of meaning, a theory of truth of knowledge and a theory of reality”- James B. Prett*



- ❖ *“pragmatism is essentially a humanistic philosophy, maintaining that man creates his own values in the course of activity that reality is still in the making and awaits its part of completion from the future, that to an unascertainable extent our truths are man-made products” - J.S.Ross*

## Understanding Pragmatism

Etymologically, "pragmatism" comes from the Greek word 'pragma,' which translates to activity or work performed. Some scholars also believe it is derived from 'pragmatikos,' meaning practicality or usefulness. This ideology places a strong emphasis on the practical applicability and utility of ideas.

### 2.4.1 Types of Pragmatism

#### (1) Humanistic Pragmatism

This perspective holds that the truth of any principle or idea is measured by how well it addresses the needs, desires, and goals of human beings and contributes to human welfare. Essentially, what aligns with human nature is considered true and real. Humanistic pragmatists assert that "what fulfills my purpose, satisfies my desire, and enriches my life is true."

#### (2) Experimental Pragmatism

According to this view, something is deemed true if it can be validated through experimentation. Experimental pragmatists believe that "whatever can be experimentally verified is true; what works is true."

#### (3) Biological Pragmatism

This variant values the ability of humans to adapt to and modify their environment. It is influenced by Darwin's theories of evolution and natural selection, suggesting that organisms struggle to adapt to their surroundings. The less adaptable are phased out, while the most adaptable thrive.

#### ▪ Core Principles of Pragmatism

**Truth is Fluid:** Truth is not static; it changes with time, context, and circumstances. What was considered true yesterday may not hold the same validity today or in the future.

**Truth Defined by Outcomes:** Truth is not a fixed entity but is shaped by its results. New situations require new solutions, meaning truth evolves with changing conditions.

**Problems Drive the Search for Truth:** Human life is like a laboratory where individuals experiment to solve problems. The effectiveness of these experiments is a quest for truth.

**Focus on Social and Democratic Values:** As social beings, humans develop within society. Pragmatism supports social and democratic values, recognizing their role in personal and societal development.

**Rejection of Fixed Ideals and Values:** Ideals and values are not predetermined or constant. They are human creations that evolve with circumstances and times, and pragmatism generally ignores moral and spiritual absolutes.

**Utility as a Key Principle:** Ideas are considered valid if they are useful. If an idea proves to be unhelpful, it is regarded as incorrect.

**Value of Human Capacity:** Human beings have the power to create environments that support their development and societal welfare.

**Focus on the Present and Future:** Pragmatism emphasizes active learning and growth. Ideas and solutions are derived from current activities and future planning.

**Trust in the Present and Future:** The past is seen as irrelevant; individuals must address present and future challenges.

**Rejection of Outdated Traditions:** Old customs and restrictions are dismissed in favor of contemporary realities and the intellectual capacities of humans.

**Embracing Pluralism:** Truth is based on experiences that are verified through practical application. Pragmatism supports a pluralistic approach.

**Reality in Progress:** The world is viewed as an ongoing process of development rather than a finished product. It is constantly evolving.

**Belief in Flexibility:** Everything is subject to change. Pragmatists advocate for adaptability and continuous learning to advance progress.

## 2.4.2 Pragmatism in Education

Education, according to pragmatism, is not merely preparation for the future but is the essence of life itself. Since humans are social creatures, education is inherently tied to social interaction. Schools should be designed to reflect collective activities, providing students with knowledge of social efficiency and interaction.

**Education as Life:** Traditional education is criticized for being static. Pragmatism asserts that true learning occurs through active participation and real-life experiences.

**Education as Growth:** Education should adapt to societal changes and nurture the child's inherent abilities, interests, and aptitudes, helping them create their own values.

**Education as Ongoing Experience:** Emphasis is placed on learning through direct experience rather than rote memorization. This approach transforms the child's behavior and personality.

**Education as a Social Process:** Education should foster desirable social qualities. Interaction with peers and society contributes more to learning than mere textbook knowledge.

**Education as a State Responsibility:** Education is a fundamental right, and the state is responsible for ensuring all children receive an education to prevent national setbacks.

### ▪ Educational Aims of Pragmatism

For pragmatists, education aims to guide children dynamically based on their interests and capabilities. It prepares them to face modern challenges, fostering adaptability and creativity for a better and richer life. Key aims include:

- Reforming and Reconstructing Society
- Enabling Adaptation to Social Changes
- Developing the Child According to Individual Needs
- Creating Social Efficiency
- Instilling Democratic Values
- Providing Equal Educational Opportunities
- Encouraging Experimentation
- Eliminating Social Evils

- Promoting Self-Reliance
- Facilitating Self-Discovery of Truth

## ▪ **Curriculum Design**

The curriculum should reflect the child's interests, experiences, and needs, focusing on child-centered learning. Pragmatists emphasize incorporating subjects related to daily life and activities.

**Child's Abilities and Interests** The curriculum should align with the child's abilities and interests, avoiding imposition.

**Flexibility** The curriculum must adapt to societal changes and should be designed with a long-term vision.

**Practicality** The curriculum should be practical and relevant to the child's needs.

**Social Efficiency** It should foster social efficiency and democratic behavior, preparing students for integration into society.

**Experiential Learning** Encourages hands-on learning and problem-solving through experimentation.

**Life Relevance** Includes subjects that connect directly to the child's life, including vocational and practical subjects.

**Integration Principle** Subjects and activities should be interconnected to enhance understanding and concept formation.

**Teaching Methods** Teaching should align with the child's natural activities, utilizing the following approaches:

**Learning by Doing** Children learn best through action and hands-on activities guided by teachers to develop natural abilities.

**Collective Approach** Group activities foster social skills and cooperation among children.

**Integrated Approach** Subjects are taught in an integrated manner to ensure knowledge is systematic and applicable.

**Individual Approach** Education should cater to each child's unique needs and interests, considering individual differences.

**Purposeful Learning** Children should pursue goals aligned with their interests and experiences, promoting self-directed learning.

- **Role of the Teacher:** Teachers act as mentors and facilitators in the educational process:

**Understanding Students' Interests** Teachers should be attuned to the interests and needs of their students.

**Adapting to Social Changes** Teachers need to be aware of societal changes and adjust their methods accordingly.

**Providing Problem-Solving Opportunities** Teachers present challenges for students to solve, aligning with their interests.

**Fostering Social Interests** Teachers create opportunities to develop social values and habits for societal well-being.

- **Concept of School**

In pragmatism, schools are viewed as experimental environments where children engage in real-life experiences. Schools are mini societies that help children develop social skills and adapt to their interests and abilities.

- **Discipline**

Pragmatism rejects rigid discipline, favoring social discipline that arises from the child's interests and sense of responsibility. Self-discipline is developed in a democratic, supportive environment. Teachers act as supervisors, considering individual differences and promoting a balance between work and play to foster social responsibility and citizenship.

## Advantages

- **Project-Based Learning:** Engaging in various activities helps children solve problems and promotes natural development.
- **Child-Centered Focus:** Emphasizes the child's individuality and self-driven growth.
- **Activity Emphasis:** Prioritizes hands-on learning and active participation.

- **Practical Application of Values:** Prepares children to practice life values effectively.
- **Social and Democratic Education:** Encourages democratic values and social responsibility, contributing to personal and societal development.
- **Revitalization of Education:** Introduces new methods and perspectives, such as New Education and Activity-Centered Curriculum.
- **Progressive Outlook:** Promotes a forward-looking, dynamic approach to education, fostering adaptability and innovation.

## Impact on Modern Education

- **Democratic Values and Social Responsibilities:** Modern education incorporates democratic values and social responsibilities.
- **Activity-Based Teaching:** Emphasis on experiential and self-directed learning methods.
- **Vocational Training:** Increased focus on vocational and professional education.
- **Co-Curricular Activities:** Integration of co-curricular activities in schools.
- **Curriculum Updates:** Regular updates to curriculum to meet societal needs.
- **Promotion of Self-Discipline:** Encourages self-discipline among students.
- **Respect for Democratic Values:** Emphasis on respecting and promoting democratic values.
- **Free and Compulsory Education:** Advocates for universal elementary education.

## Criticisms

- **Challenges of Non-Permanent Truth:** Pragmatism's rejection of permanent truths means that its principles, too, become relative, which can be problematic for society.
- **Materialistic Bias:** Pragmatism's reaction against idealism leads to a materialistic perspective that may overlook spiritual dimensions.
- **Lack of Defined Educational Aims:** The idea that education should be continually evolving can be problematic, as specific aims are necessary for meaningful progress.
- **Overemphasis on Individual Differences:** While individual differences are important, it is challenging

### *Check your progress*

7. What is the main focus of pragmatism in education?

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8. How does pragmatism determine the truth of ideas?

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9. What is the aim of education according to pragmatism?

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10. What should the curriculum emphasize in pragmatist education?

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## 2.5 Understanding Existentialism

Existentialism, a modern philosophical movement from the 19th century, focuses on exploring existence and how individuals perceive their presence in the world. The core idea is that people first exist, and throughout their lives, they work to shape their own essence or identity. The philosophy gained prominence in Europe after the disillusionments of World War II. Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855), a Danish theologian and philosopher, is often recognized as the originator of existentialism. Other prominent figures associated with existentialist thought include Friedrich Nietzsche, Gabriel Marcel, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Karl Jaspers, Nicolai Berdyaev, and Albert Camus.

In American education, such people as Maxine Greene, George Kneeler, and Van Cleve Morris, are well-known existentialists who stress individualism and personal self-fulfillment. American existentialists have focused more on human potential and the quest for personal meaning. Values

clarification is an outgrowth of this movement. Following the bleak period of World War II, the French philosopher, Jean Paul Sartre, suggested that for youth, the existential moment arises when young person realize for the first time that choice is theirs, that they are responsible for themselves. Their question becomes “Who am I and what should I do ? Another group of existentialists, largely European, believes that we must recognize the finiteness of our lives on this small and fragile planet, rather than believing in salvation through God. Our existence is not guaranteed in an after-life so there is tension about life and the certainty of death, of hope or despair. Unlike the more austere European approaches where the universe is seen as meaningless when faced with the certainty of the end of existence.

During the 18th century reason and nature were given more importance, objectivity was very much emphasized, leading to industrial and technological developments and science was given utmost importance. From the scientific viewpoint, man was also regarded as an object. Man became a slave to machines in developing industrial society. Against this situation existentialism emerged as a protest against the society and asserted the supremacy of individuality of man.

It emphasizes individual existence, freedom and choice. It is the view that humans define their own meaning in life, and try to make rational decisions despite existing in an irrational universe. The main identifiable common proposition is that existence precedes essence. By this, existentialism states that man exists and in that existence man defines himself and the world in his own subjectivity, and wanders between choice, freedom, and existential angst.

It is the most individualistic of all modern philosophies. Its overriding concern is with the individual and its primary value is the absolute freedom of the person, who is only what he, makes himself to be, and who is the final and exclusive arbiter of the values he freely determines for himself. Great emphasis is placed on art, on literature, and the humanistic studies, for it is in these areas that man finds himself and discovers what values he will seek to attain.

It holds that society is unnatural and its traditional religious and secular rules are arbitrary and that worldly desire is futile. To the existentialist, human life is no way complete and fully satisfying because of suffering and losses that occur when considering the lack of perfection, power and control one has over his life.

In simpler terms, existentialism is a philosophy concerned with finding self and the meaning of life through free will, choice, and personal responsibility. The belief is that people are searching to find



out who and what they are throughout life as they make choices based on their experiences, beliefs, and outlook. And personal choices become unique without the necessity of an objective form of truth. An existentialist believes that a person should be forced to choose Existentialism – What It Is and Isn't

**Existentialism takes into consideration the underlying concepts:**

- Human free will
- Human nature is chosen through life choices
- A person is best when struggling against their individual nature, fighting for life
- Decisions are not without stress and consequences
- There are things that are not rational
- Personal responsibility and discipline is crucial
- Society is unnatural and its traditional religious and secular rules are arbitrary
- Worldly desire is futile

**Existentialism is broadly defined in a variety of concepts and there can be no one answer as to what it is, yet it does not support any of the following:**

- Wealth, pleasure, or honor makes the good life
- Social values and structure control the individual
- Accept what is and that is enough in life
- Science can and will make everything better
- People are basically good but ruined by society or external forces
- “I want my way, now!” or “It is not my fault!” mentality

There is a wide variety of philosophical, religious, and political ideologies that make up existentialism so there is no universal agreement in an arbitrary set of ideals and beliefs. Politics

vary, but each seeks the most individual freedom for people within a society and be responsible without the help of laws, ethnic rules, or traditions.

### **Chief Exponent of Existentialism**

**Soren Kierkegaard** (1813 – 1855) is regarded as the father of modern existentialism and is the first European Philosopher who bears the existentialist label. In his view, subjectivity and intensity should be priced as the criteria of truth and genuineness. We touch reality in intense moments of existence especially moments of painful decision. These moments are characterized by deep anxiety, and life is known in such moments and cannot be reduced to just system of ideas.

**Friedrich Nietzsche** (1844 – 1900) is regarded as a key figure in the rise of existentialism. According to him Christianity is to be overcome by putting in its place the doctrine of Superman, that is, man surpassing himself.

**Martin Heidegger** (1889 – 1976) in his book *Being and Time*, gave a very impressive analysis of human existence, the prominence of the important themes of existentialism like care, anxiety, guilt and above all death is brought out here.

**Jean – Paul Sarte** stressed that man's existence precedes his essence. "Man is nothing else but what he purposes, he exists only in so far as he realizes himself, he is therefore nothing else but the sum of his actions, nothing else but what his life is."

### **Theoretical Rationale of Existentialism**

Rather than attempt to define existentialism which existentialists themselves maintain is futile it might to be better to determine what the task of philosophy is according to the proponents of this school of thought. First of all, the existentialist does not concern himself with problems concerning the nature, origin, and destiny of the physical universe. The philosopher should not even concern himself with the basic assumptions of the physical or biological sciences.

## 2.5.1 Metaphysical, Epistemological, Axiological, Fundamental Postulates

### (a) Metaphysical Position

#### *Concept of God*

Frederic Nietzsche's statement, "*God is dead*," succinctly expresses the atheistic existentialist's view on the issue of the existence of a supernatural realm. Nietzsche says: Where is God gone? I mean to tell you! We have killed him – you and I! Do we not here the noise of the grave – diggers who are burying God? God is dead! God remains dead! And we have killed! The holiest and the mightiest that the world has hitherto possessed had bled to death under our knife. What are our churches now, if they are not the tombs and monuments of God?

Assume that God exists and is all-powerful & all-knowing & all-good. Then also assume that evil exists in the world. Then God is either responsible for the existence of evil, in which case God is Himself evil & not all-good; or else God is not responsible for the existence of evil & yet knew that it was going to happen & couldn't prevent it—so God is not all-powerful; or else God would have prevented evil but didn't know it was going to happen, and is therefore not all-knowing. So given evil, God is either not all-good, not all-powerful, not all-knowing, or does not exist.

#### *Concept of Self*

*Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself. Such is the first principle of existentialism.*” -

**Jean Paul Sartre.**

The very question of the nature of man is a meaningless one for the existentialist. In both of the sections above it was emphasized that man has no “nature” as such but rather that he must create his own essence. The uniqueness of man comes from his emotions, feelings, perception and thinking. The philosophy of existentialism stresses meaning, only through development of meaning in his life; man can make something of the absurdity which surrounds him. Man is the maker, and, therefore, the master of culture. It is man who imposes a meaning on his universe, although that universe may well function without him. Man cannot be ‘taught’ what the world is about. He must create this for himself.

Man is not alone in the world. He is connected to other men; he communicates with others; therefore, he cannot live in a state of anarchy. Life is seen as a gift, which, in part is a mystery. Man

is free to choose commitments in life, in his choice, he becomes himself. He is the product of his choices. He is, therefore, an individual who is different from other persons.

Second, individual man is not bound to other men by any predetermined notion of brotherhood or by allegiance to a certain group. On the contrary, each man should express his freedom in the creation of his own selfhood, first by “withdrawing from the crowd,” and then by communicating only with those whom he personally chooses. Sartre feels that the entire network of social life is anti-individual. Churches, schools, political parties, and even the family tend to militate against man’s absolute freedom.

### **(b) Epistemological position**

The existentialist approach to knowledge is known as the phenomenological method. The atheistic existentialists inherited this method from Husserl. It was adapted further by Heidegger and Sartre to suit their philosophy of “will and action,” especially as it concerns the individual... The phenomenological method consists in the expression of the experiences of consciousness through the media of ordinary language. Existentialists have given little attention to inductive reasoning. Science, they believe, has been one of the major dehumanizing forces in the modern world.

In opposition to this cold impersonal approach to knowledge, the existentialist argues that true knowledge is “choosing, actions, living, and dying.”

### **(c) Axiological position**

#### **Existential ethics**

Kierkegaard reacted to this way of thinking by saying that it was up to the individual to find his or her own moral perfection and his or her own way there. “I must find the truth that is the truth for me... the idea for which I can live or die” he wrote.

#### **Authenticity & human freedom**

Existentialists have a special connotation of the Authentic man According to the existentialists, becoming authentic allows one to determine how things are to count towards one’s situation and how one is to act in relation to them.

Generally the existentialists consider authentic individuals to take responsibility for determining and choosing possibilities and not to simply become a determined product of a cultural moment. One can choose one's own identity and possibilities rather than have these dictated by the crowd.

According to existential ethics the highest good for humans is "becoming an individual or "authenticity" = psychological coherence + integrity = not merely being alive but having a real life by being true to yourself.

In authenticity & human freedom the failure to choose in this way, or the failure to take full responsibility for one's choices, is "inauthenticity" = psychic incoherence + lack of integrity. Accordingly, the worst thing of all is inauthenticity & unfreedom, so it is morally impermissible.

The very essence of good is choosing. It seems them, that man never chooses evil. A man "becomes a man" when he makes choice. When he makes choices he creates his own values. When he creates his own values, he creates his own being or essence.

### **Aesthetics**

Another distinctive feature of the aesthetical views of existentialists lies in their use of the art forms, especially literature, drama, and painting, as media for communicating philosophical doctrines.

### **(d) Fundamental Postulates**

**Permanence and Change:** The existentialists, deny the preeminence of essence. They reject the notion that there is a predetermined nature for every human being. Man is not born with a rational soul which "forms the matter," the body. Man has no essence at birth; he must create his own essence. And with Darwin, the existentialist would concur that no living beings will remain the same – all are in the process of changing. Consequently, existentialism is to be classified as one of the philosophies of change.

**Existence precedes essence:** Existentialism is a revolt against any kind of determinism and an affirmation of the free nature of man. They affirm that existence is prior to essence that man is fundamentally free to create his essences. As Black ham writes, "There is no creator of man. Man discovered himself. His existence came first; he now is in the process of determining his essence. Man first is, and then he defines himself."

**Freedom is identical with existence:** Man, then, does not possess free will as a part of his essential nature, but rather he exists in a state of absolute freedom. None of the environmental or hereditary forces are considered strong enough to impair man's freedom. The most important characteristic to existentialist freedom, then, is that it is absolute. It does not consist, as some traditional philosopher's hold, in the freedom to choose among alternative goods. Man has no guideposts by which to make his choice. He must simply make choices and this choice will determine his being. He is completely responsible for his own decisions and the effects they will have upon himself and others.

**Reason:** Existentialism asserts that people actually make decisions based on the meaning to them rather than rationally. Kierkegaard saw strong rationality as a mechanism human's use, their fear of being in the world: "If I can believe that I am rational and everyone else is rational then I have nothing to fear and no reason to feel anxious about being."

**The Absurd:** The concept of the Absurd arises when an individual's desire for order encounters the inherent disorder of the world. This idea suggests that life has no inherent meaning beyond what we ascribe to it. This inherent meaninglessness also includes the perceived unfairness of the world. Contrary to the belief that "bad things don't happen to good people," the world operates without moral judgment—good and bad people alike are subject to random events. In an absurd world, anything can occur at any moment, and a tragic incident might force someone into a direct encounter with the Absurd.

**Facticity:** Sartre describes facticity in *Being and Nothingness* as the "in-itself," which represents aspects of existence that are fixed and external to human freedom. This is best understood in relation to one's past: while one's past contributes to who one is, it does not solely define one's current existence. To view oneself as only one's past ignores the present and future, whereas to regard the past merely as a former state detaches it from the present self. Denying one's concrete past or facticity leads to an inauthentic way of living. Essentially, one's projections must acknowledge their facticity.

**Alienation:** Feelings of alienation may arise when an individual realizes that their sense of meaning comes from others or society, rather than from their own self. This sense of alienation can lead to personal and collective instability, reflecting a detachment from one's core sense of meaning, value,

and purpose. Such alienation involves a disconnect from the fundamental reasons and roots of our humanity.

**Angst**-Angst, sometimes called dread, anxiety or even anguish is a term that is common to many existentialist thinkers. It is generally held to be a negative feeling arising from the experience of human freedom and responsibility. The archetypal example is the experience one has when standing on a cliff where one not only fears falling off it, but also dreads the possibility of throwing oneself off. In this experience that “nothing is holding me back”, one senses the lack of anything that predetermines one to either throw oneself off or to stand still, and one experiences one’s own freedom. It is generally held to be the experience of human freedom and responsibility... It is this condition of absolute freedom in which man finds himself and the responsibility entailed by it that creates the condition in man called anguish. The realization of this responsibility causes existential anguish.

**Abandonment**- By abandonment, the existentialist means that since God does not exist, man is left to his own devices in creating himself and the kind of world in which he will live. There are no a priori values according to which he can make his decisions; there are no transcendental codes of behavior; there is no moral law in “nature” to be discovered and followed by man. Men are abandoned to his own decision – he must do what he wills; he must create his own essence.

**Despair**- Despair is another condition resulting from absolute freedom. Sartre describes this condition in these words. “It [despair] merely means that we limit ourselves to a radiance upon that which is within our wills, or within the sum of the probabilities which render our action possible.” Thus, when one makes a decision to act, he never can be sure what the result will be for him or others. Man must decide and act without hope.

**Despair**- In existentialism, it is generally defined as a loss of hope. More specifically, it is a loss of hope in reaction to a breakdown in one or more of the defining qualities of one’s self or identity. If a person is invested in being a particular thing, such as a bus driver or an upstanding citizen, and then finds his being-thing compromised, he would normally be found in state of despair — a hopeless state. For example, a singer who loses the ability to sing may despair if she has nothing else to fall back on—nothing to rely on for her identity. She finds herself unable to be what defined her being.

**Existential Crises**- The phenomenon of anxiety – as an important characteristic of the existential crisis – is regarded as a rarity and has been described as “the manifestation of freedom in the face of

self -experiencing anxiety individuates, hence ‘death’ as an issue readily lends itself to this crisis because only oneself can die one’s own death”.

### **Authenticity**

Many noted existentialist writers consider the theme of authentic existence important. Authentic existence involves the idea that one has to “create oneself” and then live in accordance with this self. What is meant by authenticity is that in acting, one should act as oneself, not as “one” acts or as “one’s genes” or any other essence requires. The authentic act is one that is in accordance with one’s freedom. Of course, as a condition of freedom is facticity, this includes one’s facticity, but not to the degree that this facticity can in any way determine one’s choices (in the sense that one could then blame one’s background for making the choice one made). The role of facticity in relation to authenticity involves letting one’s actual values come into play when one makes a choice (instead of, like Kierkegaard’s Aesthete, “choosing” randomly), so that one also takes responsibility for the act instead of choosing either-or without allowing the options to have different values.

### ***Check your progress***

11. Who is considered the founder of existentialism?

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12. What is the central proposition of existentialism?

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13. Which philosopher declared "God is dead"?

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## 2.5.2 Aims of Education

Existentialists have been quite consistent in their recommendation of educational aims which are in harmony with their philosophic views... Existentialism is concerned principally with liberal education, freeing man from his isolation and his anonymity, freeing his mind from the confusions that prevent him from seeing his situations and his powers.

Prior to starting this general objective for education, Harper had pointed up that the existentialist wants to educate the “whole child,” not just one side. This “whole-child” concept has been utilized by others, among them the instrumentalists. But the existentialist proposes a more individualistic notion, that is, the “unfolding of the individual as a whole in the situation in which he finds himself. The existentialist emphasizes those situations such as tragedy, guilt, suffering, and, death which happen to the individual rather than the group. Nietzsche voices the same view against “the general all genuine aims for education” in which the individual is lost sight of as an individual.

According to existentialist, education should make a man subjective and should make him conscious for his individuality or ‘self’. Being self-conscious he will recognize his ‘self’ and he will get an understanding of his ‘being’. Individuality lies on self-realization, a motivating force, from an existential perspective; a sense of self-identity is gained by how an individual relates to and values his or her relations. The purpose of education is to build character, to optimize potential and creativity and to enhance the quality of life through knowledge, and then from an existentialist perspective bureaucratization needs to be replaced by humanization.

Education is that which helps an individual to realize the best that he is capable of. In doing so education must help the individual to realize the ‘fact city’ (contingency) of his existence to face the categories of this fact city – dread, anguish, anxiety and fear – resolutely and courageously and finally prepare him to meet death with pleasure.

Education for happiness is a dangerous doctrine because there can be no happiness without pain and no ecstasy without suffering.” Therefore, existentialists would welcome an education, which throws open to children human suffering, misery, anguish and the dreadful responsibilities of adult life.

Every individual is unique. Education must develop in him this uniqueness. It must cater to individual differences Education must make pupil aware of the infinite possibilities of his freedom and the responsibilities he must bear in life.

The most important aim in education is the becoming of a human person as one who lives and makes decisions about what he will do and be. “Knowing” in the sense of knowing oneself, social relationship, and biological development, is all the parts of becoming. Human existence and the value related to it is the primary factory in education.

Education should train men to make better choices and also give the man the idea that since his choices are never perfect, the consequences cannot be predicted.

The ultimate aim of education is to make man conscious of his destination, to give understanding of his ‘being’ and ultimately lead him to his heavenly abode. So, it is clear that the existentialism accepts the principle of liberal education.

In short, the objective of education is to enable every individual to develop his unique qualities, to harness his potentialities and cultivate his individualities. It means the implication of existentialist formulations for child rearing education and counseling practices are many. Since existentialists behold human life as unique and emerging a child is to be recognized as a full person and not simple as an in complete adult. The practices by which the child is socialized varied from culture to culture.

- **Curriculum**

To the extent that the staff rather than the students influence the curriculum, the humanities are commonly given tremendous emphasis. They are explored as a means of providing students with vicarious experiences that will help unleash their own creativity and self-expression. For example, rather than emphasizing historical events, existentialists focus upon the actions of historical individuals, each of whom provides possible models for the students’ own behavior. In contrast to the humanities, math and the natural sciences may be deemphasized, presumably because their subject matter would be considered “cold,” “dry,” “objective,” and therefore less fruitful to self-awareness. Moreover, vocational education is regarded more as a means of teaching students about themselves and their potential than of earning a livelihood. In teaching art, existentialism encourages individual creativity and imagination more than copying and imitating established models.

Although many existentialist educators provide some curricular structure, existentialism, more than other educational philosophies, affords students great latitude in their choice of subject matter. In an existentialist curriculum, students are given a wide variety of options from which to choose.

Existence of individuals must constitute the “core of studies” both in and out of school. It is worth noting, however, they do not demand that history, science, mathematics, and the like be thrown out of the curriculum. Their criticism is leveled at the impersonal, cold, and dry as dust approach to subject matter found in the schools. It is safe to assume, then that both traditional and modern subject matter would be found in the existentialist schools. But subject matter would not be learned “for its own sake”. The views that one should teach subject matter for its own sake, or for training the pupil’s intellect, or for adjusting the student to his environment are foreign to existentialist thought.

There is one feature of the existentialist curriculum which should differentiate it sharply from most existing elementary, secondary, and college programs. Most of these programs are devoid of content designed to offer the student the opportunity to express his individuality in moral and artistic ways. The existentialist has made extensive use of the art forms as the media for conveying their beliefs about philosophical matters. It certainly would be in harmony with this emphasizing on values to provide the broadest possible curricular offerings in the value-laden area. Early in the elementary school, the child should be given the opportunity to express himself in any art form from which he chooses. Also, the school program should afford myriads of opportunities, for the young pupil to make his own decisions in ethical matter. If this emphasis is continued throughout the secondary and college programs, then the student will be truly “educated to freedom.”

It seems, then, as suggested above, that the existentialist is not so much concerned with the actual courses or subjects in a curriculum as he is with what the teacher and) the pupil does with them. The exercise of existential freedom within a curriculum is more important than the curriculum. George Kneller takes each area of the curriculum, history, science, citizenship, music, art, dramatics, poetry, biography, and shows how the “existential approach” can be applied to each one. In each instance the student “lives” the subject or, better, becomes personally involved in the life of the material under consideration.

The central place is given to ‘humanities’, poetry, drama, music, art, novels etc. as they exert the human impact in revealing man’s inherent guilt, sin, suffering, tragedy, death, hate and love. Humanities have spiritual power. Art and Literature, they say should be taught, as they represent a priori (cause effect) power of human nature. Through these the students profit from the ideas and judgment of others. History should be taught in order to help the students to change the course of history and to mould future.

Scientific subjects and mathematics should be included in the curriculum but they should not be given more stress, as they deal with objective knowledge. 'Self-knowledge precedes universal knowledge.

In short, they don't believe in formal curriculum consisting of set of body of studies to be pursued but a curriculum, which features the reverberator effect upon heart, and mind of passionate good reading and then personal contact. The curriculum should be chosen, sorted out and owned by the learner.

- **Instructional Methodology**

Existentialist methods focus on the individual. Learning is self-paced, self-directed and includes a great deal of individual contact with the teacher, who relates to each student openly and honestly. In reality, the way in which subject matter is handled seems to be more important to the existentialist than the subject matter itself. To recognize the 'individual differences' and wish to have diverse curricula suiting the needs, abilities and aptitudes of the individual existentialist methods focus on the individual. Learning is self-paced, self-directed, and includes a great deal of individual contact with the teacher, who relates to each student openly and honestly.

Perhaps the most significant assumption or underlying belief regarding educational methodology is that any teaching method must place the responsibility for choosing what to learn and actually learning it upon the individual. This assumption is entirely in harmony with the existentialist's insistence upon the absolute freedom of the individual. Obviously, an self-respecting existentialist would employ the traditional lecture-recite-assign-test method. He would reject with equal zeal the problem-solving method of instrumentalism because of its social emphasis. Any method which fosters group thinking or group action would be alien to the existentialist,

Then, the only criterion for method is that the teacher show by his example that education is a concentration on personal freedom – one which encourages the student to accept the facts and beliefs which have relevance for him. Nietzsche states this position very vigorously in criticizing the traditional method (historic-scholastic method) of teaching the mother tongue: The historical method has become so universal in our time, that the living body of language is sacrificed for the sake of anatomical study .... The historical method may certainly be a considerable easier and more comfortable one for the teacher. It also seems to be compatible with a much lower grade of ability

and, general, with a smaller display of energy and will on his part. But we shall find that this observation holds well in every department of pedagogical life. .

Similarly, a science should be considered a personal, human activity in which the student relives the great moment of discovery in the history of science. It should not be taught as an exercise in laboratory technique nor as a cold lifeless body of content to be mastered. The existential way to teach science is to have the students live it. This approach to teaching proposed by Kneller seems to be the same as that which Nietzsche implied in his criticism of traditional methods

Existentialists favor the Socratic Approach to teaching, “The existentialist favors the Socratic method, not so much because it involves ‘induction’ or the collection and analysis of all available evidence, nor because of its complementary process of ‘definition’, whereby general values are reached from particular instances; but chiefly because it is a method that tests the inner-life-as a stethoscope sounds the heart.” Socratic ‘Problem Method’ should be accepted if the problem originates in the life of the one who has to work out the solutions. But it is unacceptable if the problem is derived from the needs of the society. Like Socrates, ‘personal reading’ should be stressed.

They reject the group method, because in-group dynamic, the superiority of the group decision over individual decision is prominent. There is a danger of losing unique individualism and free choice. Methods of teaching must develop the creative abilities in children. The world and man reveal themselves by their undertakings.

- **Teacher**

The teacher’s role is to help students define their own essence by exposing them to various paths they may take in life and creating an environment in which they may freely choose their own preferred way. Since feeling is not divorced from reason in decision making, the existentialist demands the education of the whole person, not just the mind.

There are five characteristics of this ideal that are formulated by this existential framework. These include becoming more authentic, more spiritual, having a critical attitude, having a clear sense of personal identity and a developing empathetic awareness towards others.

Teachers are potentially able to offer a very valuable ‘other horizon’ which is able to assess qualitatively the understandings of students. Teachers can be most influential in the educational

development of students' spirituality if, through their interaction, 'crises' can be created. Teachers can be the learner's 'best enemy'), able to 'wound' most provokingly. This is somewhat like playing the 'devil's advocate' in order to test and to clarify the understandings of others.

In order to exercise one's freedom in an authentic manner it is also necessary that the teacher develop a critical attitude. Having a critical indicates that persons appreciate that they have a certain degree of unquestioned meanings that constitute how they make sense of, and give value and purpose to life. It is recognized that the teacher be necessarily a life-long learner...

The teacher's characteristic of being 'open' to possibilities includes a willingness to allow others to re-evaluate those aspects of one's understandings that can be articulated. If one chooses to 'close' oneself off from the criticisms of others, one is no longer teacher. Having 'openness' in this regard allows one to come to an understanding of self and others.

The teacher should become aware of how s/he relates to the entire curriculum. One is understood to be 'in' truth by critically examining and reflecting upon all which one understands. Therefore, the traditionally accepted meanings attached to various issues should be "touched with a hammer" both to 'sound them out' and to examine how the learner is attuned to them. Understanding, creating and choosing one's personal identity – who one is and what one stands for – is a desirable characteristic of a teacher. Personal identity may reference historical, sociological, religious and biological frameworks,

An important characteristic of a teacher is that they have the ability to make judgments with regards to what is worthwhile and valuable in them and in others. This should be demonstrated by an empathetic awareness for others whom they are in-the-world-with...

Existentialists do not wish the teacher to be social minded umpire or provider of free social activity or a model personality to be limited, by the students. He must himself be a free personality, engaged in such relations and projects with individual students that they get the idea that they are too are free personalities. He may indirectly influence them about his values but he should impose his cherished values on them, test his values become the code of conduct for the students, who may begin to accept them without thought. Instead of expecting them to imitate he should help them to be 'original' and 'authentic'.

His effort should be that students' mind should have autonomous functioning so that they become free, charitable and self-moving. The role of teacher is very important because he is the creator of such as educational situation in which the student can establish contact with his self by becoming conscious of his self and can achieve self-realization.

The teacher must build positive relationships between himself and his students. He should avoid applying labels to children (such as 'lazy', 'slow learner' etc.) for individuals may indeed come to think of themselves this way. The teacher is also changing and growing as he guides the pupil in his discovery of self.

- **Student**

The question "who should be educated?" would appear to be a rather simple one for the existentialist. One might expect him to answer to anyone who so desires should be given all the education he wants. This response is probably correct as far as education in general is concerned, since the broad meaning of education includes more than schooling. In other words a person can educate himself in many ways such as by reading, by working, and perhaps, most important, by living – by willing and acting.

However, some existentialists have been quite clear in advocating a culture and education for the elite. Nietzsche was very outspoken in his scorn of "equality of opportunity" for all the children of all the people. The education of the masses cannot, therefore, be our aim; but rather the education of a few picked men for great and lasting works..... What is called the "education of the masses" cannot be accomplished except with difficulty; and even if a system of universal compulsory education be applied, they can only be realized outwardly: those individuals of lower levels where, generally speaking, the masses come into contact with culture – all these levels can scarcely be reached by direct means....In this context Nietzsche was not speaking only of college or university education but of the lower levels, elementary and secondary. He felt the public education, which attempted to educate the masses, was bound to fall short of the aim of true education simply because the masses were involved.

The existentialists want to give full freedom to the child. But the child should know the nature of his 'self' and recognize his being and convert imperfection into perfection. They do not want the child to become selfish, autocratic and irresponsible. Freedom is needed only for natural development. Education should be provided according to the child's powers and the needs. The relation of the

child with his 'self' should be strengthened rather than severed. The child has to make 'choices' and decisions.

Child thrives better when relieved from intense competition, harsh discipline, and fear of failure. Thus each child can grow to understand his own needs and values and take charge of the experiences for changing him. In this way self-evaluation is the beginning and end of the learning process, as learning proceeds, child is freely growing, fearless, understanding individual. Primary emphasis must always be on the child, as learner and not on the learning programmed. Child needs positive evaluation, not labels.

- **School**

Given the importance of individuality in shaping and applying educational methods, it is clear that traditional educational institutions—such as family, church, and state—cannot claim the primary right to educate. The existentialist perspective asserts that the individual, embodying absolute freedom, is solely responsible for creating their own essence or identity. Thus, existentialism does not allow any external agency to usurp this fundamental right and responsibility.

Schools should foster an environment where individuals can develop healthily. Any subject or extracurricular activity, including athletics and music, can present existential challenges for teaching and personal development. The primary goals of school activities should be to encourage self-discipline and self-evaluation.

Mass teaching and testing are not endorsed. The school schedule should be flexible and adaptable. Democratic values should permeate the school environment, promoting a democracy where individuality is celebrated and differences are respected. The school should emphasize self-governance, student involvement in decision-making, and the encouragement of a free and open atmosphere.

To counteract mechanization and personalization, schools should avoid over-reliance on computerized timetables and programmed instruction, which can diminish personal interactions between teachers and students. Such impersonality can hinder the development of the child's personality. Schools should prioritize concern and respect for each individual student.

Nietzsche criticized public education for eroding individual freedom and responsibility, replacing them with state-enforced conformity. He argued that public schools, often controlled by the state or



church, overstep their role. Nietzsche observed, “But who will persuade me that today’s (public) schools have an absolute right to their existence? ... I am not convinced that the school, in itself, is necessarily a good thing. It is, at best, a benevolent, well-meaning concentration camp. It denies the very emancipation and enfranchisement of youth that it claims to promote.... Deny, if you can, the dreadful similarity between the mass education of children in a school and the mass production of goods in a factory.”

Atheistic existentialists further reject the involvement of the church in education, viewing it as an imposition on individual freedom. This misuse of education must be resisted by existentialists.

Similarly, the family should not be regarded as the primary educational agency. The authoritarian nature of many families can suppress the individuality of young people. Parental contribution to a child's biology does not entitle them to dictate the child’s future identity.

Therefore, the conclusion is that the individual is the primary “agency” of their own education. The roles of family, church, and state should be supportive, creating an environment that enables the individual to shape their own essence. These institutions should assist in “freeing the individual” from the constraints of organized society, allowing them to choose and act according to their own wishes.

### *Check your progress*

14. What is the focus of existentialist education?

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15. Which subject areas do existentialists prefer in education?

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16. What type of teaching method do existentialists favor?

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17. How do existentialists view the uniqueness of individuals in education?

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18. What role does the teacher play in existentialist education?

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### 2.5.3 Limitations and Merits of Existentialism

**Limitations:** After examining existentialist philosophy, one might question how educational goals, curricula, and methods can rely on individual choice and freedom. Such an approach might be unfeasible and could lead to disorder.

**Challenges in Individual Attention:** Ensuring that each teacher develops a deep, individualized understanding of every student's personality would demand significant time and effort.

**Ambiguity of Key Concepts:** The ideas of 'Being,' 'meaning,' and 'Person' are often vague and unclear. Building an educational program becomes challenging when the terminology used to describe educational objectives is imprecise.

**Arbitrary Manipulation of Behavior:** Educational standards and practices that impose arbitrary controls on children's behaviors conflict with the principle of free choice.

**Questionable Educational Practices:** Many teaching methods, testing procedures, and bureaucratic systems for classifying students may be questioned for their validity.

**Existential Encounters in Learning:** Teachers who facilitate existential experiences for students help them create meaning in a world lacking objective significance, finding reasons for existence in a society with diminishing opportunities.

**Conflict with Traditional Beliefs:** Atheistic existentialism conflicts with traditional metaphysical beliefs due to its rejection of external forces and essential characteristics in humans. The radical subjectivity of existentialist views on epistemology, ethics, and aesthetics does not align with traditional or many modern perspectives.

**Neglect of Social Realities:** Existentialism's focus on individual living might appeal to those seeking solitude or pioneering experiences but offers little for people living in complex, industrial, urban environments. Existentialist proposals often overlook the social responsibilities individuals have in large, interconnected societies.

**Dismissal of Scientific Knowledge:** Existentialism's general theory of knowledge often disregards the importance of scientific understanding. In an age dominated by science, a comprehensive philosophy of life cannot afford to minimize the significance of scientific knowledge.

**Inadequate Educational Theory:** Existentialism, in its current form, lacks a solid foundation for educational theory. This might be due to the fact that many existentialists have not thoroughly explored the educational implications of their philosophical principles.

**Absence of Social Theory:** Existentialist philosophy does not incorporate a social theory as found in other philosophical systems. Existentialists are sometimes seen as 'antisocial,' lacking a theory of society, although they do advocate treating others as ends in themselves rather than means.

**Educational Focus on Socialization:** Schools often aim to socialize individuals to fit societal roles rather than fostering individual excellence. If existentialism can help balance the individual and societal expectations, it would contribute positively to education.

**Criticism of Existential Development:** Some critics argue that existentialism's view of development reflects a neurotic and self-centered philosophy focused on pain and anguish.

### **Merits:**

In contrast, proponents of existentialism see it as a crucial approach for human survival. Its optimism, focus on action, and emphasis on freedom, responsibility, and choice make it appealing to educators exploring new perspectives.

**Focus on Authenticity:** Existentialism directs attention to the genuine or authentic self, emphasizing the responsibility and freedom of individual choices. It examines and addresses human weaknesses, limitations, and conflicts.

**Beyond Reason:** Unlike idealists who explain human behavior through reason, existentialists trace the origins of human issues and anticipate that individuals will overcome a sense of meaninglessness in life.

**Encouragement of Transcendence:** Existentialism aims for human transcendence, encouraging individuals to rise above mediocrity and become more authentic.

**Emphasis on Individual Existence:** Existentialism focuses on human existence and individual qualities rather than abstract notions of nature and the world. Education, therefore, should aim to enhance and enrich an individual's mind, ensuring they are respected in their own eyes and by others, and helping them to fully realize their humanity.

## 2.6 Let us sum up

In conclusion, this chapter has explored four major schools of Western philosophy—Naturalism, Idealism, Pragmatism, and Existentialism—each offering unique perspectives on education. Naturalism emphasizes scientific inquiry and adaptation to the natural world, while Idealism focuses on cultivating intellectual and moral virtues through the pursuit of ideas and values. Pragmatism advocates for practical, experience-based learning that is relevant to students' lives, and Existentialism prioritizes individuality, personal freedom, and self-awareness in education. These philosophical frameworks provide valuable insights into educational aims, methods, and content, contributing to a deeper understanding of how education can foster human development and prepare individuals to navigate diverse challenges in society.

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## 2.9 Answer to check your progress

1. Matter is the basis of the world.
2. Through the sensory perception.
3. Emphasis on child's nature, freedom, experiential learning.
4. According to Plato, achieving true knowledge requires overcoming prejudice and ignorance through rigorous mental and ideological training, as most people are chained to the world of the senses.

5. Spiritual world and material world.
6. To achieve spiritual values such as truth, beauty, and goodness.
7. Action, practice, and experience.
8. By their practical efficiency and workability.
9. To provide dynamic direction and guidance according to a child's interests and abilities.
10. Child-centered activities, flexibility, usefulness, and social efficiency.
11. Soren Kierkegaard
12. Existence precedes essence.
13. Friedrich Nietzsche
14. Individual freedom and personal choice.
15. Humanities and philosophy.
16. Dialogue and self-directed learning.
17. They emphasize the uniqueness of each individual.
18. A facilitator who helps students discover their own paths.

## **2.10 Model questions**

- 1) How does the Naturalist perspective influence the design of educational environments and learning experiences to align with the principles of scientific inquiry and empirical evidence?
- 2) Explore the role of the teacher as a moral and intellectual guide in Idealism. How does the Idealist view on the nature of knowledge shape curriculum development and instructional methodologies in fostering intellectual growth and moral development among students?
- 3) Analyze how the pragmatic approach to education reconciles the tension between theoretical knowledge and practical application.

- 4) Compare and contrast the educational philosophies of Naturalism, Idealism, Pragmatism, and Existentialism.
- 5) How can educators integrate elements from multiple philosophies to create a comprehensive curriculum that addresses diverse student needs and promotes holistic development?
- 6) Evaluate the influence of Pragmatism and Existentialism on educational policies and reforms.
- 7) Discuss the ethical implications of adopting Naturalism, Idealism, Pragmatism, and Existentialism in educational practice. How do these philosophies address issues such as social justice, equity, and inclusivity in education?
- 8) Evaluate the adaptability of Naturalism, Idealism, Pragmatism, and Existentialism across different cultural and socio-economic contexts.

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## ***UNIT-3 : Vedanta Philosophy and Its Educational Contribution***

### **Unit Structure**

#### **3.0 Learning Objectives**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

#### **3.2 Concepts of Vedic Philosophy – meaning & Features**

#### **3.3 Schools of Indian Philosophy & its educational contribution –**

- i. Nyaya**
- ii. Vaisheshika**
- iii. Sankhya**
- iv. Yoga**
- v. Mimamsa**
- vi. Vedanta**

#### **3.4 Educational system of Vedic period**

##### **3.4.1 Gurukul**

##### **3.4.1 Curriculum in Vedic education**

##### **3.4.3 Method of Teaching**



**3.5 Let us sum up**

**3.6 Reference**

**3.7 Further Reading**

**3.8 Answer to check your progress**

**3.9 Model Questions**

### 3.0 Learning Objectives

- ✓ To understand the Foundations of Vedanta Philosophy
- ✓ To analyze the Contributions of Vedanta to Education
- ✓ To differentiate Between Various Schools of Indian Philosophy
- ✓ To explore the Structure of Vedic Education
- ✓ To understand the key texts of Vedanta
- ✓ To evaluate the Enduring Impact of Vedic and Vedanta Philosophy

### 3.1 Introduction

The education system in ancient India was profoundly influenced by its philosophical traditions, notably Vedanta. Derived from the Vedas and Upanishads, Vedanta is a cornerstone of Indian philosophy, emphasizing the interconnectedness of all life and the pursuit of spiritual knowledge. This holistic worldview sought to integrate all aspects of existence into a unified whole, with the concept of 'samsara,' or the continuous cycle of life, being central across different philosophical schools.

Indian philosophical traditions are known for their interconnectedness, with each branch critically engaging with the others. This chapter delves into the Vedanta philosophy, exploring its principles and significant contributions to education. We will examine how the Vedantic emphasis on self-realization, ethical living, and the pursuit of truth shaped the educational practices of ancient India. Additionally, we will discuss the distinctive features of the Vedic education system and its enduring impact on contemporary educational thought.

### 3.2 Concepts of Vedic Philosophy

**Meaning:** Vedic philosophy is the foundational thought system of ancient Indo-Aryan literature, encompassing the Vedic **Samhitas, Brahmanas, and Aranyakas** (Upanishads). It focuses on hymns and teachings that praise the Supreme Being and explain the universe's order across celestial, intermediate, and terrestrial realms. This philosophy prioritizes the pursuit of ultimate

truth through ascetic practices and meditation, aiming for spiritual liberation. Unlike modern science, which centers on material knowledge, Vedic philosophy emphasizes eternal wisdom and spiritual progress. It structures education into four life stages, each dedicated to mastering different aspects of Vedic knowledge, with the Upanishads providing key insights into the Absolute Truth and spiritual enlightenment.

Vedic philosophy is foundational to Indian thought, originating from the earliest works of the Indo-Aryans, including the Vedic Samhitas, Brahmanas, and Aranyakas (Upanishads). As noted by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in *\*The Discovery of India\**, "The Rig-Veda, the first Veda, is probably the earliest book humanity possesses." The four Vedas—Rigveda, Samaveda, Yajurveda, and Atharvaveda—are divisions of a singular principal Veda, with the Rigveda being the oldest and the Atharvaveda the latest. Scholars recognize the Vedic age as spanning from approximately 1500 BC to 600 BC, marked by significant spiritual and intellectual development.

Vedic hymns praise the Supreme Being, the source of creation and maintainer of cosmic order. The Rigveda honors a pantheon of 33 deities, categorized into celestial (dyuloka), intermediate (antariksha), and terrestrial (bhuloka) realms. These hymns reflect the pursuit of ultimate truth and realization through ascetic practices known as tapas, emphasizing the interconnectedness of all existence.

The term '**Veda**' translates to '**knowledge**.' While contemporary terms like 'science' align with authoritative knowledge essential for progress, for ancient Indians, 'Veda' encompassed broader inquiries into eternal truths. Their understanding of progress centered on spiritual awareness and liberation from the transient and often painful material world.

Vedic education is structured into four degrees of knowledge, corresponding to the ashrams of **Brahmanical culture**: Brahmacharya (student life), **Grihastha** (householder life), **Vanaprastha** (retirement), and **Sannyasa** (renunciation). The first degree involves the study of Samhitas, collections of hymns. The second degree requires mastery of the Brahmanas, which teach rituals fulfilling duties to family, society, and the Supreme Lord. The third degree focuses on the Aranyakas, preparing retired householders for complete renunciation. The final degree involves the Upanishads, which present the philosophy of Absolute Truth and guide those seeking liberation. These texts, often referred to as forest treatises, help individuals understand deeper realities of life.

Literally, '**Upanishad**' means "*that which destroys ignorance and brings us near to God.*" There are said to be 108 Upanishads, originating from various Vedic schools at different times. Earlier Upanishads, such as the Brihadaranyaka and Chandogya, are prose works that often take the form of dialogues, offering insights into profound philosophical inquiries about reality, the self (atman), and ultimate reality (Brahman). These texts encourage introspection and dialogue, synthesizing metaphysical ideas and spiritual wisdom.

Through its comprehensive framework, Vedic philosophy illuminates the intricate relationship between knowledge, spirituality, and education, continuing to influence contemporary thought and practices. Its timeless principles invite individuals to explore existence and seek ultimate liberation.

## Features of Vedic Philosophy

- 1. Holistic Knowledge:** Vedic philosophy emphasizes a comprehensive understanding of knowledge that encompasses both spiritual and material realms, prioritizing eternal truths over temporal concerns.
- 2. Cosmological Framework:** It presents a structured view of the universe, with a pantheon of deities representing various aspects of existence, highlighting the interconnectedness of all beings and the maintenance of cosmic order.
- 3. Spiritual Liberation:** Central to Vedic thought is the pursuit of moksha (liberation), achieved through self-realization and the cultivation of spiritual awareness, moving beyond the cycle of birth and death.
- 4. Educational Structure:** Vedic philosophy outlines a systematic approach to education through the four ashrams (stages of life), guiding individuals in their spiritual and practical duties at different life phases.
- 5. Philosophical Inquiry:** The Upanishads, as the culmination of Vedic thought, encourage deep philosophical exploration of concepts such as the nature of the self (atman) and the ultimate reality (Brahman), often employing dialogue and metaphor to convey profound insights.

**From the above discussion we can conclude the nature of Vedic Philosophy as follows —**

- Rooted in the Vedas, which include Rigveda, Samaveda, Yajurveda, and Atharvaveda, encapsulating hymns, rituals, and philosophical insights.
- Emphasizes the integration of spiritual and empirical knowledge, viewing true understanding as encompassing both.
- Celebrates a pantheon of deities representing various aspects of existence and maintains a cosmology that recognizes the interconnectedness of all beings.
- Prioritizes spiritual awareness and the pursuit of ultimate truths over materialistic concerns, emphasizing liberation (moksha) from the cycle of birth and death.
- Organizes learning around the four ashrams (Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vanaprastha, Sannyasa), reflecting different life stages and corresponding educational focuses.
- Advocates for living in harmony with natural and social orders, encouraging duties and responsibilities toward family, society, and the Supreme Being.
- Values meditation and asceticism (tapas) as essential for achieving higher states of consciousness and spiritual realization.
- Explores profound questions regarding the nature of the self (atman) and ultimate reality (Brahman), particularly in the Upanishads.
- Continues to shape Indian thought, ethics, and educational practices, impacting contemporary spirituality and philosophy.
- Offers insights into navigating life's complexities, encouraging individuals to seek personal and universal truths.

### ***Check your progress***

1. What is the foundational thought system of ancient Indo-Aryan literature?

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2. What is the meaning of the term 'Veda'?

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3. What do the Vedic hymns praise?

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4. How many Upanishads are traditionally said to exist?

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5. Which life stage involves the study of Samhitas?

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### **3.3 Different Schools of Vedic Philosophy & Their Educational Contribution:**

Vedic philosophy is renowned for its diversity, encompassing various thought systems that explore fundamental questions about existence, knowledge, and ethics. Vedic schools of philosophy can be classified into six main categories. they are as follows —

**1. Nyaya Philosophy:** Nyaya philosophy, founded by Gautama Aksapada, embodies a realistic approach within Indian philosophy. It prioritizes the conditions necessary for correct thinking and the means to achieve true knowledge of reality. At its core, Nyaya asserts that Brahma is the creator of the universe and that the soul is immortal. According to this philosophy, the soul does not perish with physical death; rather, it transitions into a different state of consciousness.

**Nyaya philosophy can be understood through four fundamental dimensions:**

**a) Theory of Knowledge:** Central to Nyaya is its epistemology, which identifies four sources of knowledge: perception, inference, comparison, and testimony. This framework encourages critical thinking, fostering analytical skills essential for education. By emphasizing logical reasoning, Nyaya promotes an intellectual environment where students are encouraged to question and validate their understanding of the world.

**b) Theory of the Physical World:** Nyaya outlines that the physical universe is composed of fundamental elements—earth, water, fire, and air. All physical entities are viewed as composites of these elements. This understanding promotes an appreciation for the natural world and can be integrated into scientific education, highlighting the relationship between philosophical inquiry and empirical observation.

**c) Theory of the Individual Self and Liberation:** According to Nyaya, the self is a unique, indestructible substance that engages in various experiences, including desires, aversions, and feelings of pleasure and pain. The philosophy asserts that true knowledge is essential for liberation (moksha), which is attained through the practices of Sravana (listening), Manana (reflection), and Nidhidyasana (meditation and realization). These practices foster self-awareness and personal growth, providing students with tools for introspection and deepening their understanding of the self.

**d) Theory of God:** Nyaya posits the necessity of God for the liberation of the self, establishing God as eternal and infinite—the basis for creation, sustenance, and destruction. This theological dimension invites discussions on ethics and morality within educational contexts, encouraging students to explore their beliefs and understand the implications of their actions.

Through its emphasis on logical reasoning, critical analysis, and self-inquiry, Nyaya philosophy profoundly impacts education. It encourages students to engage deeply with complex concepts, fostering a holistic approach to learning that integrates intellectual rigor with spiritual exploration.

**Educational Implications of Nyaya Philosophy:** Nyaya philosophy significantly contributes to education by emphasizing the acquisition of knowledge about reality through various sources, known as pramanas. This foundational idea underscores that education should cultivate logical thinking and reasoning skills. The ultimate aim of education, according to Nyaya, is liberation (moksha), encouraging a focus on both intellectual abilities and spiritual growth. The curriculum

advocated by Nyaya includes the study of Vedas, theology, and language for a well-rounded education.

Imparting knowledge involves diverse methods such as perception, inference, Upamana (comparison), and Sabda (testimony). Additionally, practices like recitation, lectures, logical analysis, and meditation enhance the learning experience. By integrating these approaches, Nyaya philosophy fosters an environment where students can engage deeply with content, sharpen analytical skills, and explore profound philosophical questions, ultimately guiding them toward personal and intellectual liberation.

**2. Vaisheshika:** Vaisheshika philosophy, founded by sage Kanada, shares similarities with Nyaya philosophy, particularly in its goal — the liberation of the individual self. Both identify ignorance as the root cause of suffering and assert that liberation is achieved through understanding reality.

However, notable differences exist. Nyaya recognizes four sources of knowledge—perception, inference, comparison, and testimony—while Vaisheshika accepts only two: perception and inference. Additionally, Nyaya encompasses sixteen categories of reality (padarthas), whereas Vaisheshika identifies seven.

**The seven categories in Vaisheshika include:**

- a) Dravya (Substance): Fundamental entities.
- b) Guna (Quality): Attributes of substances.
- c) Karma (Action): Activities associated with substances.
- d) Samanya (Generality): Common features shared by different substances.
- e) Visesa (Particularity): Distinctive traits that differentiate substances.
- f) Samanvaya (Relation to Inherence): Inherent relationships among substances.
- g) Abhava (Non-existence): The concept of absence.

**Vaisheshika** posits that the world forms from the aggregation of countless eternal atoms, which are continuously combined and disintegrated by an unseen force known as adrishta. The



philosophy categorizes the fundamental elements into four types of atoms: earth, water, fire, and air, providing an early formulation of atomic theory.

- **Educational Implications of Vaisheshika Philosophy:**

Vaisheshika philosophy aims for the liberation of the individual self, similar to Nyaya philosophy. The curriculum should focus on the various types of padarthas, encompassing both bhava (existence) and abhava (non-existence). A critical aspect of education is imparting knowledge about the conception of the world, particularly regarding the four fundamental atoms: **earth, water, fire, and air.**

Education should also foster the development of qualities (gunas) and actions (karma). Teachers guide students in acquiring knowledge about worldly substances and their relationships. Instruction should involve diverse methods, including observation, perception, imitation, logical inference, lectures, discussions, and recitation, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of reality as proposed by Vaisheshika philosophy.

**3. Samkhya:** Sankhya philosophy, attributed to sage Kapila, is a significant system in Indian thought, often studied after Nyaya. The term "Sankhya" implies numerical knowledge, but it is also understood as "samyog-jnana," or perfect knowledge. This philosophy is fundamentally dualistic, asserting that nothing can arise from nothing, and recognizes the realities of **Purusha (the conscious self) and Prakriti (the known objects).**

According to Sankhya, Purusha and Prakriti are foundational elements of creation. Prakriti consists of three gunas: sattva (goodness), rajas (passion), and tamas (darkness). Purusha is viewed as the conscious and eternal element that interacts with Prakriti.

Sankhya offers five arguments for the existence of Prakriti. First, since all objects are limited and depend on other factors, an unlimited and independent cause must exist, which is Prakriti. Second, all objects exhibit characteristics of producing pleasure, pain, or indifference, indicating a causal element embodying these traits—Prakriti. Third, the potential for transformation observed in objects necessitates a cause with the same potential, encapsulated in Prakriti. Fourth, the processes of evolution and dissolution show that effects arise from causes, eventually leading to the primal cause, identified as Prakriti. Finally, the idea of infinite regression in causality necessitates a first cause, which Sankhya identifies as Prakriti, the ultimate primordial nature.

The earliest text associated with this system, the Sankhya-karika, notably does not mention God, leading proponents to conclude that early Sankhya philosophy does not recognize a divine being. This absence aligns with the view that the universe operates on a system of cause and effect that does not require a divine cause, as God is considered eternal and immutable.

- **Educational Implications of Samkhya Philosophy:**

Sankhya philosophy plays a crucial role in education, emphasizing the understanding of Prakriti and the realization of self-knowledge to liberate the soul from the body. Education should focus on training individuals to harness their natural potential, aligned with the causation theory of Prakriti. The initial evolute of Prakriti is "mahat," or intellect, representing the union of Purusha and Prakriti. This intellect is considered the finest aspect of human existence, and education aims to cultivate it.

In addition to intellectual development, education under Sankhya should foster physical and moral growth, contributing to the formation of a well-rounded personality. It is essential for education to promote the right balance of gunas—**sattva, rajas, and tamas**—through a carefully designed curriculum.

The curriculum should include knowledge about the evolution of the universe, the roles of Purusha and Prakriti, and the development of gunas. Instruction should be delivered through three primary modes of knowledge: perception, inference, and shabda (verbal testimony). Sankhya posits a unique understanding of perception (pratyaksha) as a source of valid knowledge, viewing it as unmistakable cognition illuminated by the self through reflection in buddhi.

Teachers play a vital role by guiding students in acquiring true knowledge and distinguishing between the real self and the non-real self. This educational framework promotes a comprehensive approach to personal development, aligned with the philosophical tenets of Sankhya.

**4. Yoga:** Yoga philosophy provides a framework for connecting individual consciousness with supreme consciousness. The term "*Yoga*" derives from the root "*YUJ*," meaning to join. It emphasizes the restraint of mental activities and the union of the individual soul with the supreme soul. Various schools of Yoga exist, including Bhakti Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Karma Yoga, and

Kundalini Yoga. The Patanjali Yoga system, systematized by sage Patanjali, is one of the six systems of Vedic philosophy.

The Yoga system aligns with Sankhya philosophy while incorporating elements from Vedanta. Although both philosophies share foundational concepts, Yoga asserts a more orthodox stance by acknowledging the existence of a supreme being (Ishvara).

In Yoga, the mind is described through five stages based on clarity: disturbed, stupefied, restless, one-pointed, and well-controlled. The first three stages represent impediments caused by the predominance of **rajas** and **tamas**, while the latter two reflect calmness, with the one-pointed mind dominated by **sattva**. Achieving success in Yoga requires a one-pointed and well-controlled mind, free from worldly desires.

Mental modifications are categorized into five types: valid cognition, sleep, and memory, with valid cognition arising from perception, inference, and authoritative testimony. False cognition is considered ignorance (avidya).

Yoga comprises eight components: (1) *Yamas (restraints)*, (2) *Niyamas (observances)*, (3) *Asana (postures)*, (4) *Pranayama (breath control)*, (5) *Pratyahara (sense withdrawal)*, (6) *Dharana (concentration)*, (7) *Dhyana (meditation)*, and (8) *Samadhi (spiritual absorption)*.

Educational Implications of Yoga Philosophy: Yoga philosophy offers significant implications for education, emphasizing character and personality development. It focuses on training the sensory organs and faculties of the mind, with meditation as a means to achieve liberation, viewed as the ultimate goal. Education should prioritize attaining a well-controlled mental state, achievable primarily through the practice of Yoga. The curriculum should incorporate Yoga principles and practical exercises such as Pranayama and meditation. Additionally, teachers should serve as ideal role models, embodying Yoga values, enabling students to emulate them in their pursuit of perfection and liberation.

**5. Mimamsa:** Mimamsa is a system of Vedic interpretation, focusing on critical commentary regarding the Brahmanas, which contain the ritual portions of the Vedas. The central issue in **Purva Mimamsa** is ritual practice, systematically outlined by **Jaimini**, who established rules for interpretation. Performing actions prescribed in the Vedas serves as the means (sadhana) for attaining heaven.

**Karma Mimamsa** emphasizes a practical approach through karma yoga, underscoring that individuals are masters of their own destinies, free to experience the consequences of their actions.

Mimamsa stresses the significance of understanding nature and identifying valid knowledge sources, including perception, inference, comparison, testimony, postulation, and non-perception. The philosophy posits that the soul is eternal, infinite, and indestructible, remaining unaffected by death. It recognizes the soul's bondage and capacity for liberation while asserting that the world consists of material objects.

**Educational Implications of Mimamsa Philosophy:** The educational implications of Mimamsa philosophy emphasize the transformative role of education in achieving spiritual liberation. True education transcends mere knowledge acquisition; it aims to free the soul from worldly pleasure and pain, leading to a state of cessation or moksha.

The core objective of education is to cultivate a sense of duty (dharma) among students, encouraging them to engage in responsibilities without attachment to immediate results. This principle highlights the importance of including Vedic knowledge in the curriculum, particularly rituals dedicated to various deities, which serve as practical applications of philosophical teachings.

Mimamsa outlines a pedagogical approach involving methods such as imitation (**anukarana**), listening (**sravana**), reflection (**manana**), and deep contemplation (**nidhidhyana**). These techniques foster a holistic learning experience, encouraging active engagement with the material and the development of an understanding of spiritual and ethical responsibilities.

In this framework, the teacher's role is pivotal. Educators guide students not only in theoretical knowledge but also in the practical execution of rituals, serving as exemplars of duty and spiritual practice. This mentorship is crucial for instilling commitment to rituals and principles, ultimately steering students toward self-realization and liberation.

### **Check your progress**

6. Who founded Nyaya philosophy?

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7. What are the four fundamental elements in the theory of the physical world according to Nyaya?

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8. Who founded Vaisheshika philosophy?

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9. What is the unseen force in Vaisheshika philosophy called?

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10. What are the three gunas in Samkhya philosophy?

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**6. Vedanta:** Vedanta philosophy derives from the Upanishads, considered the concluding portions of the Vedas and often referred to as "**the end of the Veda.**" The term "Vedanta" signifies the essence of these sacred texts, focusing on the nature of reality and the self. The Upanishads, meaning that which destroys ignorance and brings one closer to God, serve as guides for understanding ultimate truths.

Vedanta emphasizes principles set forth in the Upanishads, particularly regarding Brahman, the absolute reality. The Brahma Sutras, written by Sri Vyasa, systematically explain these doctrines and address contradictions within the texts. These sutras are part of the Prasthanya Traya, the three authoritative scriptures of Hinduism, alongside the Upanishads and the Bhagavad-Gita.

Central to Vedanta is the belief in Brahman as the ultimate source of all creation, embodying pure existence, consciousness, and bliss—termed Sat-Chid-Ananda. Brahman pervades all elements and resides within the hearts of individuals, representing the highest truth and unity of existence.

Key commentators on Vedanta, including Sri Sankaracharya, Ramanuja, and Madhava, have offered diverse interpretations, enriching the philosophical landscape.

**Educational Implications of Vedanta Philosophy:** The educational implications of Vedanta philosophy emphasize the liberation of the individual and the realization of the true self as the ultimate goal of education. Self-realization is viewed as a pathway to attaining Brahman, the absolute reality. Key objectives include character formation, spiritual enlightenment, and holistic personality development.

To achieve these aims, students learn two types of knowledge: paravidya, relating to the connection between God and the self, and aparavidya, encompassing subjects like the Vedas, Vedangas, rituals, astronomy, Itihas, Puranas, and ethics.

Education was conducted in Gurukul ashrams, where the student-teacher relationship was vital. Teaching methods focused on Shravana (listening), Manana (reflecting), and Nidhidhyana (meditating). The emphasis was on individualistic and oral learning, with the guru regarded as the supreme authority and ideal role model.

During the Vedic period, education was regarded as the source of knowledge that illuminates the true paths of life. It was considered a means of liberation. This concept is affirmed by the Rigveda, which states, "If anyone is greater than others, it does not mean that he possesses extra bodily organs, but rather he is great because his intellect and mind have become enlightened and completed by real education."

These schools of Vedic Philosophy enrich the landscape of Indian philosophy, offering various methodologies and ethical frameworks. Their perspectives provide valuable educational principles that promote critical thinking, ethical conduct, and holistic development, fostering an inclusive approach to education that nurtures intellectual and personal growth

### **3.4 Educational system of the Vedic period:**

In the Vedic period, knowledge was divided into two distinct categories: 'paravidya' and 'aparavidya'. Paravidya is the knowledge that aims to liberate the soul from the cycle of life and death. It is concerned with the spiritual and ultimate truths. On the other hand, aparavidya focuses

on the practical aspects of life, aiming to attain joy and success in social living. Vedanta defines education as the "enfoldment of perfection already present in man," referring to paravidya. Attaining perfection means achieving freedom of the soul from all ignorance, as highlighted by the Upanishad's observation, "Savdya Ya Vimuktaya," meaning "Education is that which liberates."

### **Aims of Education:**

The ultimate aim of education in the Vedic system was the realization of true knowledge and the achievement of the absolute. It was believed that the realization of Brahma or the absolute is not possible through material knowledge, which was seen as polluting the soul and obscuring its true form. The primary aims included:

- Self-control
- Self-reliance
- Formation of character
- Individual development
- Knowledge of social and civic life
- Preservation of culture

### **3.4.1 Gurukul Ashram**

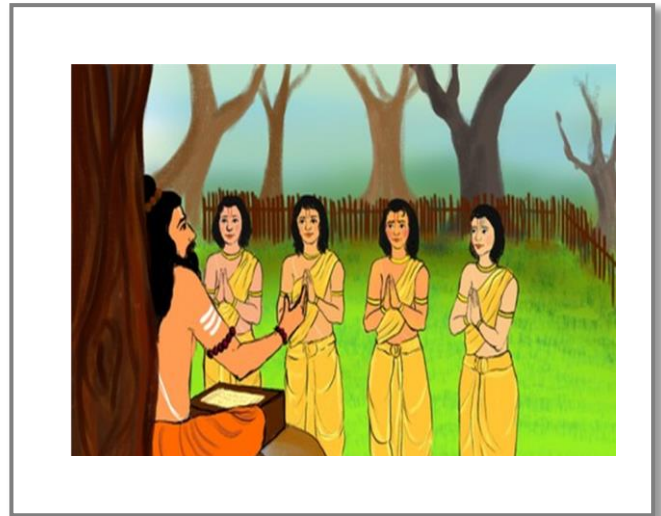
Education during the Vedic period was imparted in Gurukul Ashrams. A Gurukul is a type of ancient Vedic school where students lived and studied under the care of a guru. Students, known as gurukulwasees, engaged in various services like cleaning, washing clothes, and collecting wood and water. This system of education is considered the oldest on earth, existing since the dawn of the Vedic civilization. In Gurukul Ashrams, students learned self-development in all possible areas, such as householder life and professional life. The life of the gurukulas was managed according to a strict religious code of conduct, which included an eight-fold code of conduct:

- a) Restraint of bad tendencies in passions, thought, and action
- b) Cultivation of right emotions and habits
- c) Physical exercise

- d) Breath control
- e) Withdrawal of attention from undesirable objects
- f) Fixation of mind on selected objects
- g) Continued contemplation of the said objects
- h) Total absorption of the mind in the said objects

### The Ideal of Guru:

The teacher, or guru, was regarded as equal to the absolute or Brahma. A guru was expected to possess the highest moral and spiritual qualifications, be well-versed in sacred lore, and dwell in Brahmanishtha. The guru's role was to illuminate the inner being of pupils with spiritual enlightenment, as "a blind leading another blind" was deemed ineffective. According to Adi Sankara in Vivek Chudamani, it is by the blessings of the



Almighty that we have the great opportunities to be born as humans, seek Satya Tatwa (realization of the real), and have an ideal guru. Typically, gurus did not receive fees from students, but at the end of their studies, students offered a traditional gesture of respect and thanks called gurudakshina.

**Upanayan Ritual:** The study of Vedas began just after the upanayan ritual, considered a rebirth in the form of a brahmachari. Upanayan means bringing the student near the guru, signifying the start of the student's spiritual life.

**Literal Meaning:** The term "Upanayan" is derived from the Sanskrit roots "upa," meaning "near," and "nayan," meaning "leading" or "bringing." Thus, Upanayan signifies "bringing the



student near" to the guru, both physically and spiritually. This closeness is essential for the transmission of knowledge and values.

**Spiritual Rebirth:** Upanayan is often referred to as a second birth (Dviija) for the initiate. The first birth is physical, given by the biological parents, and the second is spiritual, given by the guru. This rebirth emphasizes the beginning of a life of learning, discipline, and spiritual quest.

### **Ceremonial Aspects:**

**Sacred Thread (Yajnopavita):** The initiate is adorned with a sacred thread made of three strands, symbolizing various aspects such as purity, responsibility, and commitment to the threefold duties towards God, parents, and the teacher. The thread is worn over the left shoulder and across the right hip.

**Mantras and Vows:** During the ceremony, the initiate is taught the Gayatri Mantra, a powerful Vedic chant invoking the divine light to illuminate the mind. The student also takes vows to uphold truth, maintain discipline, and live a life of celibacy and dedication to learning.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

**Brahmachari:** After the Upanayan ritual, the student is referred to as a Brahmachari, which means one who follows Brahmacharya, a lifestyle characterized by celibacy, simplicity, and focus on studies and spiritual practice. The Brahmachari adheres to strict dietary and ethical codes, emphasizing self-restraint and moral conduct.

**Guru-Disciple Relationship:** The relationship between the guru (teacher) and the disciple is central to the educational process. The disciple lives with the guru, participating in daily chores and learning through direct instruction, observation, and practice. The guru is not only a teacher but also a spiritual guide and role model, embodying the values and knowledge the student aspires to attain.

### **Educational Journey**

**Commencement of Vedic Studies:** Post-Upanayan, the student begins rigorous study of the Vedas and other branches of knowledge. This includes memorization, recitation, and

interpretation of sacred texts, as well as learning various sciences and arts integral to the Vedic curriculum.

**Life in the Gurukul:** The student resides in the Gurukul (teacher's abode), where education is holistic, encompassing intellectual, physical, and spiritual training. Daily routines include studying scriptures, participating in rituals, engaging in physical activities, and performing service (seva) for the guru and the community.

### Symbolic Elements

**Kusha Grass:** During the ceremony, the initiate often sits on a mat of Kusha grass, symbolizing purity and readiness to receive sacred knowledge.

**Offerings:** Rituals include offerings (Homa) to the fire god Agni, signifying purification and the aspirant's dedication to the path of righteousness and learning.

**Social Integration:** The Upanayan ceremony is also a social event, attended by family and community members, who bless the student and acknowledge the beginning of their educational journey. It reinforces the communal support for the student's development.

**Continuity of Tradition:** This ritual underscores the continuity of cultural and spiritual traditions, ensuring that the knowledge and values of the Vedic heritage are passed down through generations.

### 3.4.2 Curriculum in Vedic Education:

The Vedic curriculum was not limited to religious studies. The entire system of education was based on 14 pramanas, including the 4 Vedas, 6 Vedangas, Mimamsa, Puranas, Nyaya Shastras, and Darshan Shastras. Students were also taught grammar, logic, and various other subjects such as Shiksha, Kalpa, Vyakaran, Jyotis, Chhand, and Nirukt.

#### The four Vedas:

- **Rigveda:** The oldest Veda, consisting of hymns dedicated to various deities. It served as a primary source of knowledge about early Vedic religion, rituals, and philosophy.

- **Samaveda:** Known for its melodic chants and hymns, the Samaveda played a crucial role in rituals and ceremonies.
- **Yajurveda:** Containing prose mantras used in ritual sacrifices, the Yajurveda provided practical guidance for conducting rituals.
- **Atharvaveda:** This Veda included hymns, spells, and incantations for daily life, health, and well-being, reflecting practical aspects of Vedic life.

### The six Vedangas:

- **Shiksha (Phonetics):** The study of pronunciation and phonetics ensured the correct articulation of Vedic hymns and mantras, crucial for their efficacy.
- **Kalpa (Rituals):** This discipline focused on the procedures and guidelines for performing Vedic rituals, essential for religious and social ceremonies.
- **Vyakarana (Grammar):** Grammar was studied to understand and correctly interpret the Vedic texts, ensuring their precise transmission and comprehension.
- **Nirukta (Etymology):** The study of word origins and meanings helped in understanding the deeper significance of Vedic text.
- **Chhandas (Meter):** This involved the study of Vedic meters, crucial for the correct chanting of hymns and maintaining their rhythm and structure.
- **Jyotisha (Astronomy):** Astronomy and astrology were essential for determining auspicious times for rituals and understanding the cosmic order.

### Mimamsa

- **Purva Mimamsa:** Focused on the interpretation of Vedic rituals and duties, providing a philosophical basis for religious practices.
- **Uttara Mimamsa (Vedanta):** Concerned with the metaphysical aspects of the Vedas, particularly the nature of reality and the self.
- **Puranas:** These were collections of ancient stories, legends, and histories that provided moral and ethical teachings, as well as a historical perspective on Vedic culture and traditions.
- **Nyaya Shastras:** The study of logic and reasoning, essential for developing critical thinking and analytical skills. Nyaya provided a systematic framework for argumentation and debate.
- **Darshan Shastras:** Philosophical texts that explored various schools of Indian philosophy, including Sankhya, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Mimamsa, and Vedanta. These texts encouraged deep philosophical inquiry and understanding.

### **Additional Subjects:**

- **Grammar and Logic:** Beyond Vyakarana, grammar and logic were emphasized to develop linguistic proficiency and rational thinking.
- **Shiksha:** Detailed phonetics ensured the correct pronunciation and intonation of the Vedic hymns.
- **Kalpa:** Practical instructions for rituals, making religious practices precise and meaningful.
- **Vyakaran:** Advanced grammatical studies to refine language skills and textual interpretation.
- **Jyotis:** Astronomy not only for ritual timings but also for understanding celestial phenomena.
- **Chhand:** The study of meters ensured that hymns were recited with the correct rhythmic patterns.
- **Nirukt:** Understanding the etymology of words for deeper insights into the Vedic texts.

The Vedic curriculum aimed at producing well-rounded individuals proficient in religious, philosophical, linguistic, and scientific disciplines. This broad-based education system nurtured intellectual, moral, and spiritual development, preparing students to contribute meaningfully to society and achieve personal growth.

### **3.4.3 Methods of Teaching:**

The Vedic system of education relied heavily on verbal transmission of knowledge. The primary methods were:

#### **Shravan (listening)**

Shravan refers to the act of listening attentively to the teachings of the guru. It is the first and most fundamental step in the Vedic educational process, emphasizing the oral transmission of knowledge.

**Role in Learning:** The students, or shishyas, listened to the recitation of Vedic hymns, scriptures, and other texts. The importance of Shravan lies in its ability to help students absorb the precise words, sounds, and intonations of the texts, which were considered sacred and powerful.

**Memorization and Repetition:** Listening was often accompanied by repetition and memorization. Students recited the texts back to the guru, ensuring they had accurately captured the knowledge. This method was essential in an era when written texts were rare, and oral tradition was the primary means of preserving and transmitting knowledge.

### **Manana (meditation and thinking)**

Manana involves the process of reflection and contemplation on the knowledge gained through Shravan. It is a critical step that goes beyond mere memorization, encouraging students to think deeply about the teachings they have received.

**Role of learning:** Through Manana, students engaged in analytical thinking, questioning, and internal debate to understand the deeper meanings and implications of the teachings. This reflective practice helped them to clear doubts, solidify their understanding, and integrate the knowledge into their own intellectual framework.

**Critical Thinking and Insight:** Manana fostered critical thinking skills and intellectual insight. By reflecting on the teachings, students learned to apply logical reasoning and discernment, which were crucial for grasping the philosophical and metaphysical concepts of the Vedic texts.

### **Nidhidhyasan (realization and experience)**

Nidhidhyasan is the process of internalizing and realizing the knowledge through direct experience and profound meditation. It represents the culmination of the learning process, where the theoretical knowledge is transformed into experiential wisdom.

**Role in Learning:** Students engaged in deep meditation and practical application of the teachings to achieve a direct and personal experience of the truths contained in the Vedic texts. This method aimed to transcend intellectual understanding, leading to spiritual awakening and self-realization.

**Integration and Embodiment:** Through Nidhidhyasan, knowledge became a part of the student's being. It involved not just knowing about the truths intellectually but experiencing and embodying them in daily life. This holistic integration ensured that the teachings influenced the student's thoughts, actions, and overall way of living.

This triadic method of education aimed at the development of the whole person—intellectually, morally, and spiritually. It fostered not only cognitive skills but also ethical conduct and spiritual growth, aligning with the Vedic ideal of holistic education.

### **Duration of Study:**

The typical duration of study in the Vedic period was 12 years, starting after the upanayan ritual. However, there was no uniform rule for the duration of study, and some students stayed at the guru's ashram for longer periods.

### **Teacher-Student Relationship:**

The teacher-student relationship in the Vedic period was cordial and filial. The teacher was regarded as the spiritual father of the pupil, with numerous extra-academic duties, such as guiding students on what to cultivate and avoid and advising them on various matters. Students held their teachers in deep reverence and were always ready to execute any command with humility.

### **Samavartan or Valedictory Function:**

After completing 12 years of education at the guru's ashram, students participated in a ceremony called samavartan, similar to modern convocation. During this ceremony, the guru gave final instructions and advice on how to lead a life.

Samavartan derives from the Sanskrit words "sam" (together) and "avartan" (return). It signified the return of students from their Gurukul ashram to their families and communities after completing their education. This ceremony was akin to a modern-day convocation, where students received final instructions and blessings from their guru. of a householder, take care of society and the nation, and serve humanity.

After spending typically twelve years in the Gurukul under the guidance of their guru, students attained a comprehensive education encompassing Vedic scriptures, philosophy, rituals, ethics, arts, and practical skills. Samavartan marked the culmination of their academic journey, indicating they were now ready to apply their knowledge in practical life.

During Samavartan, the guru delivered concluding teachings and advice to the students. This included practical guidance on how to lead a fulfilling life as householders (grahasthas), emphasizing duties towards family, society, and nation. The guru imparted moral and ethical principles, urging students to uphold values such as righteousness (dharma), compassion, and integrity in all their endeavors.

Samavartan was a joyous occasion for both students and their families. It celebrated their academic achievements, spiritual growth, and readiness to embark on the next phase of life. It also strengthened the bond between the guru and students, reflecting the deep respect and gratitude students held towards their mentors.

### *Check your progress*

11. What is the ultimate goal of education in Vedanta philosophy?

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12. What are the two types of knowledge emphasized in Vedic education?

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13. What is the final ceremony called after completing education in the Vedic system?

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## **3.5 Let Us Sum Up**

In summary, Vedanta philosophy profoundly shaped ancient Indian education by emphasizing self-realization, ethical living, and the pursuit of truth. The Vedic education system, structured around the four life stages (ashrams), provided a comprehensive framework for spiritual and

practical knowledge, aiming for liberation and self-awareness. The diverse school of Vedic philosophy, including Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Samkhya, Yoga, Mimamsa, and Vedanta, enriched education with unique perspectives, fostering critical thinking, ethical conduct, and spiritual growth through logical reasoning, meditation and ritual practices. Education in the Vedic period was viewed as a path to ultimate liberation and self-realization, exemplified by the holistic Gurukul system where students lived with their gurus, learning both academic knowledge and practical life skills under a strict moral and spiritual guidance. Overall, Vedanta's emphasis on interconnectedness, ethical living, and eternal truths continues to influence contemporary educational thought, highlighting the enduring wisdom of ancient Indian traditions in nurturing well-rounded individuals.

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### 3.8 Answers to Check your Progress

1. Vedic philosophy
2. Knowledge
3. The Supreme Being
4. 108
5. Brahmacharya (student life)
6. Gautama Aksapada
7. Earth, water, fire, and air.
8. Sage Kanada
9. Adrishta.
10. Sattva, rajas, and tamas
11. Liberation of the individual and realization of the true self
12. Paravidya and aparavidya.
13. Samavartan

### 3.9 Model questions

1. Discuss the primary aims of education during the Vedic period, highlighting how these aims contribute to the overall development of an individual.

2. Analyze the significance and impact of the Gurukul system within the Vedic educational framework.
3. Discuss the importance of the samavartan ceremony and the final instructions given by the guru to the students.
4. Explore the concept of Brahman in Vedanta philosophy and its educational implications for the pursuit of self-realization.
5. Compare and contrast the educational philosophies of Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Samkhya, Yoga, Mimamsa, and Vedanta.
6. Explain the concept of the Upanayan ritual and its significance in the educational journey of a Vedic student.
7. Evaluate the role of meditation and self-control in Yoga philosophy and their significance in character and personality development in education.
8. Describe the curriculum and teaching methods of the Vedic education system, emphasizing the balance between spiritual and practical knowledge. How were these methods designed to achieve the ultimate aims of education in the Vedic period?
9. What role did the Vedas and Upanishads play in shaping the educational philosophy and curriculum in ancient India?
10. Analyze the eight components of Yoga philosophy as outlined by Patanjali. Discuss how each component contributes to the holistic development of an individual and its implications for modern educational practices.

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## ***Unit 4 : Contribution of Indian Educational thinkers to Educational Philosophy***

### **Unit Structure**

4.0 Learning Objectives

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Indian Thinkers & their contribution – Swami Vivekananda

4.3 Rabindranath Tagore

4.4 Mahatma Gandhi

4.5 Shri Aurobindo

4.6 Swami Dayananda

4.3 Let us sum up

4.4 Reference

4.5 Further Reading

4.6 Answer to check your progress

4.7 Model Questions

## 4.0 Learning Objectives

- ✓ To understand the Educational Philosophy of Key Indian Thinkers
- ✓ To analyze the Contributions of Each Thinker
- ✓ To compare and Contrast Different Philosophies
- ✓ To evaluate the Impact on Modern Education
- ✓ To apply Philosophical Principles to Contemporary Issues

## 4.1 Introduction

The landscape of Indian educational philosophy has been profoundly shaped by the contributions of several eminent thinkers whose ideas continue to resonate in contemporary educational practices. This unit delves into the educational philosophies of five such luminaries: Swami Vivekananda, Shri Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi, and Dayananda Saraswati. Each of these visionary leaders offered unique perspectives on education, deeply rooted in their broader philosophical and spiritual beliefs. Through this unit, we will explore their educational contributions in detail, analyzing how their philosophies have influenced and continue to shape modern Indian education.

## 4.2 Swami Vivekananda

Vivekananda was not only a social reformer but also a prominent educator, a renowned Vedantist and a patriotic prophet of India. He was born in Calcutta on January 12, 1863. His father, Vishwanath Datta, was a prosperous lawyer with diverse interests, while his mother, Bhuvaneshwari Devi, was known for her deep devotion, strong character, and other virtues. As a gifted child, Narendra excelled in music, gymnastics, and academics. By the time he graduated from Calcutta University, he had gained extensive knowledge in various fields, particularly Western philosophy and history. Possessing a natural inclination towards yoga, he practiced meditation from a young age

and was briefly involved with the Brahma Movement. His impact on the revival of modern India is both unique and significant. Viewing education as a crucial tool for social change, his ideas on educational philosophy are highly influential. He described education as "the manifestation of the perfection that is already within man."

According to him education is a continuous process; it should cover all aspects of life - physical, material, intellectual, emotional, moral, and spiritual. His attitude towards modernization is that the masses should be educated before anything else is done. He wanted to remove from India four major evils, via; 1) priest-craft, 2) poverty 3) ignorance 4) tyranny of the wise. He tried to make the people of India understand that political and social strength should have their foundations on cultural strength. He has a true vision of philosophy of education in India in its cultural context.

His educational thought has very great significance today because modern education has lost much of its connection with the values of human life. Therefore, he suggested that education should not be for stuffing some facts into the brain, but should aim at reforming the human mind. True education to him, was not for the carrier, but for the contribution to the nation. The great religious saint and social reformer died in 1902 when he was just 39 years. He is no more but he will be remembered for ever on this earth. His missions and his preaching are will continue inspiring the coming generations.

- **Principal features of Swami Vivekananda's philosophy**

1. God resides in every human heart.
2. The best worship of God is service to mankind.
3. Ethics and morality should be the real basis of life.
4. Love and renunciation should permeate the universe.
5. Religion means self-realisation through self-control.

- **Meaning of Education**

Vivekananda said: *"The education which does not help the common mass of people to equip themselves for the struggle of life, which does not bring out strength of character, a spirit of*

*philanthropy, and the courage of a lion – is it worth the name? Real education is that which enables one to stand on one's own legs. Education must provide 'life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas'.* The ideal of this type of education would be to produce an integrated person.

#### **4.2.1 VIVEKANANDA'S PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION**

##### **1. Knowledge resides within the Individual**

Knowledge is inherent within the individual himself. The individual finds out this knowledge by experiencing it within himself. Perfection is inherent in everyone. It is the function of education to lead one to perfection. Therefore, education should be made available to all.

##### **2. The Child furthers its own Development**

Swami Vivekananda says that it is wrong to think that we promote the development of a child. In fact, he furthers his development himself. He says, "Everyone develops according to his own nature. When the time comes everyone will come to know this truth. Do you think you can educate a child? The child will educate himself, your job is to provide the necessary opportunity to him and remove the obstacles in his path. He will educate himself on his own. A plant grows itself, does the gardener grow it? He just provides the necessary environment to it, it is the plant itself that does its own growing." Thus Swami Vivekananda advocates the principle of self-education.

##### **3. Education according to the Nature and need of the Child**

In order to make education useful, it must be according to the nature and need of the child. It is not the teacher, or the parents who will determine his needs and nature. His education should be patterned on the lines of these tendencies. The teacher has to visualize God in the soul of each child. Each child should be considered as manifestation of God. In fact, we have to serve God. Therefore we have to serve each child.

##### **4. The ability of Concentration is the Essence of Education**

For the acquisition of knowledge, concentration or attention is very necessary. For the success in life also, this power is very helpful. Everyone does not have the same power of concentration. With the

help of this power one can acquire useful knowledge and arrange it in mind for use whenever necessary.

- **AIMS OF EDUCATION**

The ultimate aim of all education and all training, according to Swami Vivekananda, is man-making and also he recommends the following major aims of education.

### **1. Creation of Self-Confidence and Self-Realization**

Man has an immortal soul which is the treasure –house of infinite power. Man should, therefore, have full confidence in himself and strive to reach the highest goal of his life, self- confidence leads to self - realization. In Swamiji’s own words: “Faith in us and faith in God – this is the secret of greatness.” Education of the right type should aim at removing the veil ignorance from our mind and make us understand that what actually we are.

### **2. Formation of Character**

Character is the aggregate of a Man’s tendencies, the sum –total of the bent of his mind. We are what our thoughts have made us. It is, therefore, that education should aim at sublimating the evil tendencies of our mind. Swamiji said, “We want that education, by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, intellect is expanded and by which one can stand on one’s own feet.” Education must build up character and manifest our real nature.

“If you really want to judge the character of man, look not at his great performances; watch a man do his most common actions. Those are indeed the things which will tell you the real character of the great man.” ‘Intellectuality’ is not the highest good. ‘Morality’ and ‘spirituality’ are the things for which we strive’.”

“Our women may not be highly educated, but they are more virtuous.” He does not regard a person as truly educated merely for passing exams or giving impressive speeches. The foundation of any system, whether social or political, is the moral character of its people. A nation’s greatness and goodness are not determined by its legislation or Parliament, but by the character and integrity of its citizens.

### **3. Development of Personality**

Personality refers to the impression one leaves on others. According to Vivekananda, a person's character is more important than their intellect or ability to speak well. He believed that personality constitutes two-thirds of what defines a person, while intellect and speech account for the remaining third. Therefore, the ultimate goal of education and training should be to develop this kind of personality.

#### **4. Service of Mind**

Another significant objective of education is to serve the divine within each individual. We should see and worship the divine in the sick, the poor, the distressed, the ignorant, and the oppressed. As Swamiji stated, "If you wish to find God, serve humanity." He was deeply troubled by the widespread poverty among his fellow countrymen and advocated for education that would help individuals become self-reliant and meet their basic needs.

#### **5. Promotion of Universal Brotherhood**

Swami Vivekananda's compassion for humanity transcended geographical boundaries. He continuously advocated for harmony and good relations among nations. He believed that education should gradually promote the concept of universal brotherhood by dismantling barriers of separation and inequality. He emphasized that every individual and every being, regardless of their condition or status, shares the same all-encompassing and omniscient soul. The variation lies not in the soul itself but in its manifestation. Education should stimulate this universal sense in everyone and extend it globally.

#### **6. Practical Aspects of Life**

Swami Vivekananda emphasized that education should not overlook practical aspects of life. For education to make individuals self-sufficient and contribute to national prosperity, it must go beyond mere theoretical principles. As he put it, "It is not enough to merely hear about great principles; they must be applied in practice." He highlighted the importance of practical education in fields like agriculture and other useful skills.

#### **7. Physical and Mental Development**

Another aim of education, according to Swamiji, is to ensure that students grow into fearless, physically robust, and self-reliant citizens capable of contributing to national progress. He also



stressed the need for education to focus on mental development, enabling students to achieve economic independence rather than relying on others.

### **8. Moral and Spiritual Development**

Swami Vivekananda asserted that a nation's greatness is not solely determined by its political system but by the moral and spiritual qualities of its people. Education should foster this greatness through the moral and spiritual growth of its citizens.

### **9. Unity in Diversity**

The true goal of education, as Vivekananda saw it, is to cultivate the ability to perceive and realize unity within diversity. He claimed that the physical and spiritual realms are ultimately one; their apparent separation is an illusion (Maya). Education should develop this understanding of unity amidst diversity.

### **10. Religious Development**

Swamiji believed that individuals should explore and nurture the religious essence within themselves to discover the ultimate truth. He advocated for the training of emotions and feelings to purify and elevate one's life. This development in obedience, social service, and adherence to the teachings of great spiritual leaders should be encouraged through education.

#### **• Role of Teachers**

Swami Vivekananda envisioned a teacher as someone who embodies renunciation, sets a strong example, shows love and empathy for students, and tailors instruction to their needs and interests. A good teacher should contribute to the spiritual growth of their students. On the other hand, students should be eager to learn, practice celibacy, control their senses, and follow the ideals set by their teacher.

#### **Teacher Qualities:**

- The teacher should be virtuous.
- The teacher should understand the essence of scriptures.
- The teacher should be motivated by love for the students.
- The teacher should see themselves as guiding the student's inner potential rather than being the sole source of knowledge.

## Curriculum

Swami Vivekananda believed that the primary goal of education is spiritual growth, but he also supported the inclusion of subjects that promote material well-being and physical health. He recommended a curriculum that includes Religious Studies, Philosophy, Upanishads, and the teachings of saints for spiritual advancement, as well as Languages, Geography, Science, Political Science, Economics, Psychology, Art, Agriculture, Technical subjects, and Physical Education for material and physical development.

## Methods of Education

Vivekananda advocated for ancient spiritual methods of teaching where the Guru and disciples live closely together. Key aspects of these methods include:

- Controlling the mind through Yoga.
- Developing the mind through concentration and meditation.
- Gaining knowledge through lectures, discussions, self-experience, and creative activities.
- Emulating the qualities of the teacher for better understanding.
- Providing individual guidance to steer students on the right path.

## Teaching-Learning Principles

**Self-teaching:** “No one is taught by another. Each person must teach themselves. A child educates itself.”

**The example of the teacher:** “Words and thoughts contribute only one-third; the person contributes two-thirds.”

**Positive reinforcement:** “Offer positive ideas. Negative ones weaken people. Kind words and encouragement lead to improvement.”

**Concentration:** “The power of concentration is the key to unlocking the treasure-house of knowledge.”

**Qualities of the learner:** “Purity, a genuine thirst for knowledge, and perseverance are essential.”

### **4.2.3 Bases of Modern Education**

Vivekananda criticized modern education for focusing too much on practical skills (“learning to do”) rather than personal development (“learning to be”). He believed education should address the needs of the human mind and be grounded in universal principles of morality and ethics. His educational philosophy aimed to teach ideals of synthesis, tolerance, and universal harmony, reconciling the claims of both spirit and matter.

#### **Importance of Yoga in Education**

Swami Vivekananda stressed the significance of concentration and meditation in education. He believed that all knowledge is contained within the human mind and can be accessed through these practices. In yoga, as in general education, five elements are crucial: the teacher, the student, the objective, the subject, and the method.

#### **Transmission of Knowledge**

Vivekananda viewed teaching as a process of exchange, where the teacher imparts knowledge and the student receives it. Effective teaching involves motivating students, developing their scientific mindset, fostering secular values, and encouraging civic responsibility.

#### **Learning through Activity**

Vivekananda advocated for learning through activities, such as dance and drama, and emphasized inter-school and inter-collegiate competitions. These activities teach students to prioritize the collective interests of society over personal gain.

#### **The Ideal of Womanhood in India**

Vivekananda called for educational reforms to make women more ambitious and elevate their status. He believed that the lack of opportunities for women was contrary to India's ancient ideals.

### **Relevance of Swami Vivekananda’s Ideas in Modern Education**

#### **Value Education**

Swami Vivekananda's ideas suggest that education encompasses all aspects of society, not just formal schooling. Education should reflect and uphold the values of the culture, serving as a tool for behavior modification and preserving social values.

### **Peace Education**

Vivekananda's vision for education involved reforming humanity to allow for the inner development of personality and a conscious understanding of societal conditions. Education should aim to save humanity from its current issues by fostering spiritual growth and enhancing individual value.

### **Environmental Education**

Environmental education should be practical, interdisciplinary, and focused on building values that contribute to public well-being and the survival of humanity. It should encourage learners to take initiative and manage their environment wisely.

### **Citizenship Education**

Citizenship education should aim to prepare individuals to be active, responsible participants in a democratic society. It should promote awareness of rights, respect for democratic ideals, and a commitment to societal welfare.

### **Other Contributions in Brief**

Vivekananda emphasized the development of character through education.

- He supported mass education, including adult and free compulsory education, regardless of caste or creed, and saw neglecting the masses as a major national sin.
- He advocated for a humanistic approach to education.
- He challenged educated individuals to address the plight of the poor, stating that neglecting them was a betrayal.
- He viewed women's education as vital for national regeneration.
- He endorsed the teaching of Western learning.
- He highlighted the importance of social service and advocated for assimilation and tolerance in religious education.

- The Ramakrishna Mission, founded by Swami Vivekananda, continues to run educational institutions, spiritual centers, hospitals, and engages in various social activities.
- Swami Vivekananda’s educational philosophy can be summarized in his own words: “We want education that forms character, strengthens the mind, expands the intellect, and enables one to stand on one’s own feet.”

### *Check your progress*

1. What did Swami Vivekananda define as the true purpose of education?

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2. According to Vivekananda, what is the best worship of God?

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3. What did Swami Vivekananda view as two-thirds of what makes a real person?

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4. What did Swami Vivekananda believe should be the aim of education?

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## 4.3 Rabindranath Tagore: An Overview

Rabindranath Tagore, a prominent contemporary Indian philosopher of education, is celebrated for his humanist approach, which is holistic rather than materialistic. His philosophy of Cosmopolitan Humanism shapes his educational theory. Born on May 6, 1861, in Calcutta, Tagore hailed from a family known for progressive views. Although he went to England in 1877 to study law, he soon returned to India. Tagore gained international fame when his book *Gitanjali*

earned him the Nobel Prize in 1913. On December 22, 1921, he founded Visva-Bharati, an international university aimed at fostering understanding between Eastern and Western cultures. Tagore's influence extended across artistic, cultural, educational, intellectual, political, and social domains. He was a distinguished artist, educator, poet, patriot, philosopher, and social reformer.

### **Tagore's Life Philosophy**

- Humanism: Tagore believed God resides with the everyday worker, emphasizing human connection.
- Naturalism: He felt those disconnected from nature live in a metaphorical prison.
- Spiritualism: He advocated for spiritual unity among people.
- Individualism: Tagore supported the right of every person to shape their own life.
- Universalism: He aimed to break cultural barriers, promoting a synthesis of global cultures.
- Internationalism: Tagore's vision was to integrate Eastern and Western ideas, embodied by Visva-Bharati.

#### **4.3.1 Educational Philosophy of Tagore**

##### **Sources of Information:**

Tagore's educational views are found in his writings, primarily in Bengali essays such as:

- Shiksha Herpher (Our Education and Its Incongruities)
- Shiksha Samasya (The Problem of Education)
- Abaran (Culture or Covering)
- Tapovan (Forest Colony)
- Dharmashiksha (Religious Education)
- Hindu Visvavidyalya (Hindu University)
- Strishiksha (Women Education)
- Shiksha Bahan (The Vehicle of Education)
- My School

- Shiksar Milan (The Meeting of Cultures)
- A Poet's School
- Shiksar Vikiran (Diffusion of Education)
- Ashramer Shiksha (Education in Ashram)
- Bodher Sadhana (Education of the Feeling)
- Several convocation addresses

#### **Influences on Tagore's Educational Philosophy:**

- Home Environment
- School Environment
- Love for Nature
- Extensive Travels

#### **Tagore's Educational Aims:**

- Self-Realization: Spiritual awareness is central to humanism, focusing on personal growth.
- Intellectual Development: Encourages imagination and creative thinking, allowing children to learn in their own way.
- Physical Development: Emphasizes a healthy body through yoga, sports, and physical activities.
- Love for Humanities: Promotes global understanding and universal brotherhood.
- Freedom: Education should foster freedom and individual development, not impose restrictions.
- Co-relation of Objects: Emphasizes harmony among God, man, and nature.
- Mother Tongue: Advocates for education in one's native language for self-expression.
- Moral & Spiritual Development: Focuses on moral education and selfless activities.
- Social Development: Believes in equality and service to humanity, fostering social connections.

- Curriculum: Tagore's curriculum included spiritual, creative, aesthetic, and vocational elements, offering subjects like crafts, music, and fine arts from the outset.

### Teaching Methods:

- Criticized rote learning and exams
- Encouraged active and creative learning
- Advocated for learning through play and movement
- Stressed understanding children's unique gifts
- **Discipline and Freedom:** Believed in guiding children without strict rules, fostering natural growth.
- **Ideal School:** An ideal school is akin to an ashram, where spiritual growth is prioritized.
- **Role of the Teacher:** Teachers should inspire through love and continual learning, as Tagore emphasized that teaching is about lighting the student's path.
- **Religious Education:** Religion should be lived, not just taught, with moral and spiritual lessons integrated into everyday life.

According to Tagore, *“Real training consists not in foisting moral teachings but in making religion and morality an integral part of life.”*

- **An ideal school**

**Tagore attempted to make his school at Bolpur as an ideal institution. According to him an ideal school should have the following characteristics:**

1. The school should be situated in natural surroundings. There should prevail the atmosphere of nature's own beauty with her varied gifts of colour and dance, flowers and fruits, with the joy of her mornings and the peace of her starry nights.
2. It should cultivate love of nature among the students.



3. It should provide spiritual training to students.
4. It should educate children by providing an environment of freedom.
5. It should impart education in the mother-tongue of the students.
6. It should provide an environment after the fashion of ancient 'tapovans'-forest schools about which he had read so much in the Upanishads.
7. It should be a community school where there is no distinction of caste and creed.
8. It should teach crafts like sewing, book-binding, weaving, carpentry etc.
9. It should include drawing, art and music as an integral part of the curriculum.
10. It should provide students adequate opportunities for choosing their hobbies and occupations.
11. It should be a self-governing institution-has a dairy farm, post office, hospital and workshop. Students hold their own courts.
12. It should provide for close personal contact with the teacher. The number of students in classes should be very small.
13. It should have a well-equipped library.
14. It should provide for manual labor.

#### **4.3.2 Educational Institute started by Tagore**

Following institutions were started by Tagore to carry out his experiments in education:

1. Sisu Bhawan (Nursery School)
2. Path Bhawan (School Section-Matriculation Examination)
3. Siksha Bhawan (Higher Secondary)
4. Vidya Bhawan (College of Undergraduate and Post-Graduate Studies and Research)
5. Vinya Bhawan (Teachers' Training College)
6. Kala Bhawan (College of Fine Arts and Crafts)
7. Sangit Bhawan (College of Dance)
8. Sriniketan (Department of Rural Reconstruction)
9. Siksha Satra (Rural High School)
10. Silpa Sadan (College of Industrial Training)
11. Cheena Bhawan (School of Languages, e.g., Chinese, Tibetan etc.) By and large, all formed part of Visvabharati University.

## VISVABHARATI: A Global University

The name Visvabharati is derived from two Sanskrit words: 'Visva,' meaning world, and 'Bharati,' meaning cultures. Therefore, Visvabharati signifies world culture. The university's motto is "Yatra Visvam Bhavatyekam," meaning where the world comes together.

### ▪ Key Aspects of Visvabharati

**Universal Human Ideals:** It aims to present the ideal of human universality.

**Emotional Connections:** The institution emphasizes direct emotional interaction between students, teachers, and nature.

**Integration with Nature:** A unique feature is the education of students in close connection with the natural environment.

**Intellectual and Economic Hub:** It serves as a center for both intellectual and economic life in India.

**East-West Understanding:** Conceived as a core of an international university, fostering mutual understanding between Eastern and Western cultures.

**Development of Visvabharati:** In 1863, Rabindranath Tagore's father founded an ashram at Bolpur, known as Shantiniketan (Abode of Peace), intended for truth seekers. Tagore began an experimental school there in 1901, which evolved into Visvabharati in 1921.

### ▪ Tagore's Educational Contributions

- **Founding Institutions:** Established several educational centers at Shantiniketan.
- **Creation of Visvabharati:** Founded this international university.
- **Practical Implementation:** Realized his educational ideals in a practical and constructive manner.
- **Challenging Traditional Schools:** Highlighted the uninspiring environment of conventional education.

- Fusion of Ideals: Merged ancient Indian educational ideals with Western arts and sciences.
- Freedom in Education: Emphasized the importance of a free environment in schools.

### *Check your progress*

5. Who founded the Visvabharati and when was it established?

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6. What was Tagore's primary aim in starting his school at Bolpur?

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7. Which book by Rabindranath Tagore won the Nobel Prize in 1913?

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8. What is the motto of Visvabharati University?

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## 4.4 Mahatma Gandhi

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi is widely known as ‘Gandhiji’ as a sign of respect, ‘Bapu’ out of affection, ‘Mahatma’ for his saintly character, and ‘Father of the Nation’ for his role in India's independence from British rule. Born on October 2, 1869, in Porbandar, a small state in the Kathiawar Agency of British India, his father was the Diwan (Prime Minister) of Porbandar, and his mother was Putlibai. He was influenced by Jain traditions during his upbringing. At 18, he went to London to study law. After returning to India, he began practicing law in Bombay but later abandoned it to fully dedicate himself to serving the people. He implemented the principles of ‘Satyagraha’ and ‘Ahimsa.’

## Gandhi's Educational Innovations

1. South African Influence: Gandhi's philosophy of life, including his educational ideas, developed in South Africa. His educational work at the Tolstoy Farm in Transvaal was crucial in shaping a new education system for the masses. There, he took charge of educating his sons and other children. The curriculum included eight hours of vocational training and two hours of academic learning. The main educational methods were 'learning by doing' and 'learning through cooperation.'
2. Gandhiji came to India in 1914. Thereafter though he was deeply involved in the freedom struggle. He continued his educational experiments for a short time at Shantiniketan, then at Sabarmati Ashram and finally at Sewagram Ashram established by him. Sewagram Ashram is located 16km from Wardha. This place has a great significance as Gandhiji not only formulated his scheme of Basic Education but also fought the battle for freedom from here.

## Gandhiji writings on Education

Important publications on education and having bearing on education are:

- I. **My experiments with truth.**
- II. **Basic Education**
- III. **Towards Need Education**
- IV. **True Education**
- V. **to the students**
- VI. **Task before Indian students**
- VII. **India of My Dreams**
- VIII. **Medium of Instruction**
- IX. **Task force India**

Gandhiji also wrote extensively on education in *'Harijan'*-a paper founded by him.

#### 4.4.1 Principal features of Gandhiji's philosophy of life

Gandhiji's philosophy of life has a deep spiritual basis and the two pillars of his thoughts were obviously satya and ahimsa – truth and nonviolence – a happy combination of, karmayoga and gyanyoga :

- **Realization of God:** Mahatma Gandhi believed in 'Ekeswarabad' and thought that only through the medium of God, the manifestation of truth, love, life and knowledge if possible. He said, "God pervades everything. God is life, Truth and Light".
- **Truth and Non-violence:** Gandhi emphasized that non-violence is the sole path to life's ultimate goal. Truth and non-violence are inseparable, much like two sides of a coin. 'Satyagraha' signifies adherence to truth through love and purity.
- **Service to Humanity:** Gandhi believed that serving others is essential to perceiving the divine in creation.
- **Self-discipline and Purity:** Gandhi valued ideals of purity, sacrifice, and service, maintaining high standards in personal conduct.
- **Morality and Truth:** He asserted that true religion and morality are intertwined and inseparable.
- **Vision of Ram Rajya:** Gandhi envisioned a society based on justice, peace, and welfare, where fulfillment is achieved through spiritual and societal harmony.
- **Truth and Non-violence:** Gandhi emphasized that non-violence is the sole path to life's ultimate goal. Truth and non-violence are inseparable, much like two sides of a coin. 'Satyagraha' signifies adherence to truth through love and purity.
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- **Self-discipline and Purity:** Gandhi valued ideals of purity, sacrifice, and service, maintaining high standards in personal conduct.
- **Morality and Truth:** He asserted that true religion and morality are intertwined and inseparable.
- **Vision of Ram Rajya:** Gandhi envisioned a society based on justice, peace, and welfare, where fulfillment is achieved through spiritual and societal harmony.

**Gandhi's Educational Philosophy:** Gandhi described education as developing the best in body, mind, and spirit. It should harmoniously cultivate every aspect of a person. Education focusing only on one aspect undermines its true purpose.

### **Objective of Education**

Education aims to create balanced individuals and a harmonious society without divides, ensuring basic rights and freedom for all.

**Education and Character:** Gandhi stated that education without character lacks value, just as character without purity does.

**Learning and Earning:** Students should simultaneously learn and work to gain practical skills.

**Craft-based Learning:** Education should focus on crafts like weaving and spinning to achieve economic independence.

**Self-sufficiency in Education:** Education should cover school expenses through craft-based production.

**Value of Labor:** Students should develop a love for manual work.

**Language of Instruction:** Instruction should be in the mother tongue to maintain cultural connection.

**Discipline:** True freedom comes from humility and self-control, with discipline emerging from within.

**Women's Education:** Gandhi emphasized educating women as crucial for national progress, advocating co-education and home science for girls.

**Role of Teachers:** Teachers should be role models, greatly influencing student success. Quality education requires dedicated teachers.

**Curriculum:** Gandhi saw education as preparation for life, promoting self-reliance. His educational approach included:

- a. Activity-based learning, integrating crafts like weaving and agriculture.
- b. Teaching other subjects in context with students' lives, including languages, history, and social sciences.
- c. Encouraging spiritual growth through music and arts.
- d. Instilling moral values like honesty and simplicity.
- e. Promoting physical health and self-defense through exercise.
- f. Offering home science education for girls.

**Teaching Approach:** Gandhi's system blended social sciences, psychology, and activity principles, akin to John Dewey's educational ideas. Features include:

- a. Free, compulsory education for ages 7-14.
- b. Mother tongue as the medium, excluding English at this level.
- c. Craft-centered learning suited to students' abilities.
- d. Focus on learning through activity.
- e. Developing both individual and group skills.
- f. Combining education with earning opportunities.

**Basic Education Philosophy:** True education fosters holistic development in body, mind, and spirit. It aims for self-sufficiency and aligns with Indian culture, guiding children toward suitable future professions.

Gandhi sought social reform through truth and non-violence, aiming for a spiritually fulfilling society.

**Basic Education Proposals:**

- Universal, compulsory education for ages 7-14.

- Instruction in the child's mother tongue.
- Craft-based education reflecting local needs.
- Crafts like spinning and agriculture integrated into education.
- Economic benefits from craft-based education.
- Teaching social and scientific aspects of crafts.
- Integrating all subjects with the chosen craft.

**Basic Education Curriculum:** The 1937 Wardha conference outlined education for ages 7-14, with emphasis on:

- Core craft subjects like weaving and agriculture.
- Mother tongue instruction.
- Mathematics and integrated social sciences.
- Arts and physical education.
- General science, including practical studies.
- Home science.
- Hindi for non-native speakers.

### **Benefits of Basic Education**

- Supports rapid educational expansion with minimal public funding.
- Enhances national development with a financial focus.
- Encourages practical skills and future career choices.
- Centers on child creativity and labor dignity.
- Connects education with real-life crafts and environments.
- Reflects India's cultural heritage.
- Promotes holistic development.
- Fosters social, moral, and democratic values.

### **Utility of the Plan**

- Introduces free universal education.
- Connects education with economic reform.
- Aims for a classless, equitable society.



- Builds national unity and ideal citizenship.

### Reasons for Failure

- Lack of leadership responsibility and government support.
- Misalignment of crafts with societal needs.
- Insufficient funding and trained teachers.

#### 4.4.2 Gandhi as an Educational Thinker

**Idealism:** Emphasizing truth, non-violence, and character development reflects his idealistic views.

**Naturalism:** Advocating for mother-tongue instruction and child freedom shows his naturalist approach.

**Pragmatism:** Gandhi's experimental methods in education demonstrate his pragmatic outlook.

#### Modern Relevance:

- Education linked to societal needs through 'learning while earning' remains relevant, as seen in current curricula focusing on practical work.
- Mother-tongue education is widely accepted.
- Emphasizing labor dignity addresses today's need for spirituality in a materialistic world.

#### Check your progress

9. What educational experiment did Gandhiji conduct at Tolstoy Farm in South Africa?

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10. According to Gandhiji, what is the ultimate objective of education?

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11. What craft did Gandhiji suggest should be the center of learning in schools?

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12. Identify a reason why Gandhi's Basic Education Plan was unsuccessful.

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## 4.5 CONTRIBUTION OF SRI AUROBINDO TO EDUCATION

### Sri Aurobindo's Contributions to Education

Sri Aurobindo was born on August 15, 1872, in a cultured family in Calcutta. At age 7, he traveled to England, residing there for 14 years and studying at Cambridge. By 18, he passed the Indian Civil Service entrance exam. Besides English, he mastered Latin, Greek, and learned French, German, and Spanish. Returning to India in 1893, he became a professor of English at Baroda College, Gujarat, and learned Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, and Sanskrit. He joined the Indian National Congress and emerged as a dynamic freedom fighter. Dissatisfied with the moderates, he launched the Bengali daily Yugantar and the English daily Bande Mataram to express his revolutionary ideas. The British deemed him highly dangerous. Imprisoned for the Alipore Bomb case in 1908, he embraced yoga and spiritual studies, profoundly transforming him. He spent his remaining years in Pondicherry, establishing an Ashram focused on education and social activities. He initiated the international city experiment "Auroville" to foster human unity.

### Key Philosophical Concepts

- Divine Potential: Every person harbors divine potential.
- Self-Development: The goal is to nurture and harness this divinity.
- Spiritual Discipline: Attainable through yoga, not as withdrawal, but as a practice amidst daily life.

- **Yoga for All:** Engages ordinary individuals, integrating honesty and self-control into daily activities.

Sri Aurobindo's understanding of the mind is unique. He sees the mind as the primary tool of expression in humans, distinct from the brain. It's not a static entity but a dynamic process. This function manifests through complex mental activities like emotions, attention, and memory. He identifies various levels of the mind in his writings.

### **Levels of Consciousness According to Aurobindo**

- a) **Basic Mind:** This level consists of three core components:
  - **Reflective Mind:** Deals with concepts and understanding, involving questioning and logical analysis.
  - **Active Mind:** Concentrates on implementing ideas and exerting effort to achieve objectives.
  - **Expressive Mind:** Manages the articulation and realization of ideas and actions in practical terms.
  
- b) **Advanced Mind:** This state denotes a higher level of mental activity, characterized by more sophisticated thought patterns and deeper insights beyond regular reasoning.
- c) **Enlightened Mind:** At this stage, the mind attains a state of enhanced clarity and profound understanding, offering a greater depth of wisdom.
- d) **Intuitive Consciousness:** This level enables direct, instinctive awareness of truth and insights that surpass logical reasoning, providing an immediate sense of understanding.
- e) **Universal Mind:** This consciousness plane provides a broader, holistic perspective, integrating and surpassing individual thoughts and constraints.
- f) **Supra-Mind:** The ultimate state of awareness, the Supra-Mind links knowledge with ignorance, both creating and maintaining the universe. Reaching this level transforms an individual into a Gnostic being, bridging ordinary human consciousness with divine perception.

## 4.5.2 Integral Education

According to Sri Aurobindo, genuine education encompasses more than just spiritual growth; it also includes rational, vital, and physical dimensions. This approach is known as integral education. Sri Aurobindo's close associate, the Mother, elaborated on this concept by stating that education must address five key areas of human activity: physical, vital, mental, psychic, and spiritual. This holistic education is thorough, interrelated, and continues throughout life. Aurobindo's educational philosophy is integral in two significant ways. Firstly, it integrates all five aspects of human development. Secondly, it aims not only at individual growth but also at the advancement of the nation and humanity as a whole. The ultimate goal of education is the evolution of all humanity. This process involves the principle of unity in diversity, where unity supports and enhances the evolution of diversity.

### The Integral School

The primary goal of education is to shape individuals into well-rounded beings. It encourages educators to focus on developing individuals first as humans, then as citizens, and finally as unique individuals. This process of moral responsibility and allegiance starts from the broadest scope and narrows down to the individual level. Much of today's value confusion stems from reversing this order. Integral education, which unfolds naturally and effectively without undue strain, is seen as complete education. Key elements of integral education include:

- **Enhancing Mental and Physical Capacities:** Strengthening both intellectual and physical dimensions.
- **Fostering Five Principal Aspects:** Developing the physical, vital, mental, psychic, and spiritual dimensions in harmony.
- **Cultivating Four Aspects of Truth:** Focusing on love, knowledge, power, and beauty.
- **Nurturing the Vehicles of Truth:** Utilizing the psychic for love, the mind for knowledge, the vital for power, and the physical body for the expression of beauty.

Sri Aurobindo emphasizes the fundamental principles of individuality, commonality, and essentiality, which correspond to the individual learner, society, and humanity, respectively. He asserts that integral education must foster the development of all three elements in tandem. This is the core aim of educational institutions. In his lectures at Baroda College, Aurobindo highlighted that educational institutions should engage students through both academic and social

experiences. A school cannot operate in isolation; its teachings must be applied in the wider societal context.

An integral school requires four distinct types of spaces to support various activities:

- Silence Rooms: For reflection and inner calm.
- Collaboration Rooms: For group work and cooperative learning.
- Consultation Rooms: For guidance and discussions.
- Lecture Rooms: For instructional and theoretical learning.

These facilities enable a range of activities, including reflection, teamwork, discussions, and lectures. The school will thus facilitate play, exploration, creativity, and the holistic development of students' physical, mental, and spiritual faculties. Overall, the integral school aims to offer comprehensive development opportunities. The educational objectives, curriculum, and teaching methods are all designed in alignment with these principles of integral education.

### **Objectives of Education According to Integral Philosophy**

**i. Soul's Perfection:** The primary goal of education is to nurture the evolving soul, helping it to develop its best qualities and achieve excellence for a noble purpose.

**ii. Inner Self Realization:** Education should facilitate the discovery of one's inner self, which is part of the broader universal consciousness. It should guide individuals to form appropriate relationships both with themselves and with others in their nation and the global society.

**iii. Physical Growth:** Physical development is a crucial aim of education. It is incorrect to assume that physical strength equates to mental weakness. Without adequate physical growth, other forms of development are not possible.

**iv. Moral Development:** Moral and emotional growth is essential for overall human progress. The key components of moral development include emotions, habitual impressions, and nature. Therefore, educators must embody high ideals that children can aspire to and emulate to achieve higher developmental stages.

**v. Sensory Development:** Education should focus on refining the senses. According to this view, the senses can be fully developed only when the mind, consciousness, and nerves are purified.

**vi. Consciousness Expansion:** A significant aim of education is the enhancement of consciousness. This involves developing four levels: (i) Chitta (subconscious), (ii) Manas (thinking mind), (iii) Intelligence, and (iv) Knowledge. Educators should foster the harmonious growth of these levels to support the development of a refined conscience.

**vii. Individual and Collective Harmony:** Unlike many socio-political theories that emphasize either the individual or the collective, Aurobindo's approach seeks to harmonize both. His educational philosophy is inherently international, promoting mutual respect and understanding between nations and individuals. According to The Mother, for world organizations to be effective, they must be built on collaborative goodwill. This approach aims to address and resolve human issues with insights derived from higher knowledge.

**viii. Value Cultivation:** The current human crisis stems from a clash of values, with traditional values being questioned and new values not yet firmly established. Character development is deeply linked to values. Aurobindo's philosophy places supreme importance on harmony, with other values including spirituality, divinity, evolution, ascent, and transformation. Sincerity is the fundamental value that supports all other aspects of growth.

Sri Aurobindo Ghosh advocated for an environment where children can fully develop their inherent abilities. He recommended incorporating subjects and activities aligned with the child's interests into the curriculum.

### **Integral curriculum**

**i. Education as a Way of Life:** Education extends beyond a narrow syllabus and textbooks. It encompasses all aspects of life.

**ii. Comprehensive Content:** The curriculum should cover topics that enhance both mental and spiritual growth.

**iii. Purposeful Learning:** The curriculum serves as a tool for achieving the broader goal of developing a well-rounded personality, rather than being an end in itself.

**iv. Inclusion of Leisure Activities:** The curriculum should include opportunities for leisure and recreational activities.

**v. Adaptability to Individual Needs:** Flexibility in the curriculum is essential to accommodate the diverse needs of each child.

**vi. Engaging Subjects:** The subjects included should inspire and motivate students.

**vii. Encouraging Creativity:** The curriculum should promote creativity and involve constructive activities, ensuring it remains engaging and relevant.

**Based on these principles, Aurobindo recommended including the following subjects in the curriculum:**

**1. Primary stage:** Mother Tongue, English, National History, Art, Painting, General Science, Social Studies, and Arithmetic.

**2. Secondary stage:** Mother tongue, English, French, Arithmetic, Art, Chemistry, Physics, Botany, Social Studies, Physiology, Health Education.

**3. University Stage:** Indian and western philosophy, History of Civilization, English, Literature, French, Sociology, Psychology, History of Science, Chemistry, Physics, Botany, International relations and integration.

**4. Vocational Education:** Arts, painting, photography, sewing, sculptural, drawing, type, shorthand, collage industries, carpentry, nursing, mechanical and electrical engineering, Indian and European music, and dramatization.

### 4.5.3 Teaching Methods

Sri Aurobindo emphasized the following principles for effective teaching:

- a) **Affection and Empathy for the Child:** Cultivate a caring and understanding relationship with each student.
- b) **Instruction in the Native Language:** Use the mother tongue as the medium of teaching.
- c) **Interest-Based Education:** Tailor the learning experience to align with the child's interests.
- d) **Learning through Personal Experience:** Encourage education that arises from the student's own experiences.

- e) **Emphasis on Practical Engagement:** Prioritize learning through hands-on activities.
- f) **Collaborative Learning:** Foster cooperation between teacher and students in the educational process.
- g) **Development According to the Child's Nature:** Recognize and nurture the inherent divinity and potential within each child.
- h) **Child's Freedom:** Provide a free environment that allows students to explore and learn independently.

### Teaching and Learning Principles

**i. Fundamental Teaching Principle:** Knowledge cannot be directly imparted; instead, it must be discovered by the learner. The teacher acts as a facilitator and guide, helping students uncover the knowledge that is already within them, rather than dictating information.

**ii. Respecting the Child's Growth:** It is crucial to respect the natural development of the child's mind. Imposing a shape or direction upon the child that contradicts their innate nature or divine essence is harmful. According to Aurobindo, altering a child's inherent nature or dharma can cause lasting damage.

**iii. Teaching Approach:** Education should progress from the familiar to the unfamiliar, aligning with the child's inherent nature. Aurobindo asserts that an individual's character is shaped by their past experiences, heredity, and environment. Thus, the educational approach should integrate the past, present, and future to form a comprehensive national education system.

### Key Principles of Learning

- (i) Focus:** Concentration is essential for effective learning.
- (ii) Consistent Practice:** Steady and natural practice, or 'Abhyasa,' is fundamental for mastering learning tasks.

### The Role of the Teacher

Sri Aurobindo attributes a crucial role to the teacher, though not as central as in traditional Indian systems. The teacher acts as a philosopher and guide rather than an authority figure with absolute control. Instead of imposing their views or demanding unquestioning obedience, the teacher's role



is to direct the student's focus towards their own inner divinity. The true teacher, according to Aurobindo, is the inner self or divine essence within the student, while the external teacher helps awaken this inner guidance. Aurobindo likens the teacher to a gardener, nurturing the growth of the student rather than dictating it. He emphasizes a deep, inner connection between the teacher and the student.

### **The essential qualities for an effective teacher:**

- To be a good teacher, one must embody the virtues of a saint and a hero.
- Proficiency in yoga is crucial for a teacher to be effective.
- A teacher should maintain absolute discipline and possess a cohesive personality.
- The teacher must have a correct attitude to instill a similar attitude in their students.
- Without perfect calm, enduring patience, and honesty, a teacher will struggle to succeed.
- It is important for a teacher to transcend ego, control their mind, and gain insight into human nature.
- The most critical attribute of a teacher is their attitude rather than mere knowledge.
- A teacher should evolve and grow alongside their students.
- As The Mother asserts, respect for a teacher is earned through their own respectability.

### **System of National Education**

Sri Aurobindo advocated strongly for a national system of education due to the flaws he identified in the existing educational framework, which he believed was denationalizing, degrading, and diminishing the mind, soul, and character.

### **Features of the National System of Education:**

Aurobindo highlighted several essential aspects:

- **Integration of Human and Spiritual Values:** Human and spiritual values should complement and support each other.
- **National Identity in Education:** Simply labeling a system as 'national' does not make it truly national.
- **Incorporation of Modern Knowledge:** Education should adequately address contemporary knowledge and scientific advancements.

- **Holistic Understanding of Science:** True education involves connecting scientific knowledge to the capabilities of the human mind and spirit.
- **Balanced Global Perspective:** There should be a well-rounded understanding of both national and international aspects of universal humanity.

**Moral Education:** This should be approached through:

- **Role Modeling:** Teachers and leaders should set personal examples.
- **Inspirational Reading:** Studying books with high moral examples.
- **Positive Associations:** Engaging in good company or ‘Satsanga.’
- **Gentle Guidance:** Providing suggestions rather than commands or impositions.

**Discipline:** Should be based on Chitta Shuddhi, or the purification of mental and moral habits. This involves discerning between right and wrong impressions and nurturing the right ones in the mind. Aurobindo advised against being arbitrary, despotic, impatient, or ill-tempered as a teacher.

**Physical Education:** Aiming for perfection includes physical development as an integral component. Without physical fitness, fulfilling one's duties or ‘Dharma’ is challenging. A healthy body supports a healthy mind, as reflected in the Sanskrit phrase, ‘Shariram khalu dharmasadhanam’ (the body is the means of fulfilling Dharma).

## Sri Aurobindo's Contributions to Education

**The Ashram School:** Established in 1943 initially for the children of Sri Aurobindo’s followers, the school gradually evolved from a Primary School into a comprehensive High School. It accommodates both resident and day students.

**The International Centre of Education:** The centre's goals include:

- **Developing a Progressive Educational System:** To create an education system that is dynamic and ideal for societal needs.
- **Creating an Inspiring Environment:** To offer an atmosphere conducive to the growth and development of the five facets of personality: physical, vital, mental, psychic, and spiritual.

- Promoting Unified Knowledge: To highlight the interconnectedness of all forms of knowledge.
- **Fostering Global Unity:** To cultivate a sense of unity among all of humanity.
- **Preparing India's Role in Global Harmony:** To identify and prepare for India's contribution to establishing a new international harmony.

### *Check your Progress*

13. Where did Sri Aurobindo establish his ashram and focus on spiritual and educational activities?

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14. What is the main aim of education, according to him?

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15. What are the main principles of integral education according to Sri Aurobindo?

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## 4.6 Let us sum up

In this chapter, we explored the Neo-Vedanta humanistic tradition in modern Indian thought. Swami Vivekananda proposed a constructive educational framework that blended spiritual and material values. He believed that India required an educational system rooted in its ancient traditions. Influenced by their comprehensive knowledge of Western science, art, literature, and culture, figures such as Shri Aurobindo, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, and Rabindranath Tagore were well-positioned to compare Eastern and Western philosophies. Their work reflects a synthesis of ancient Indian ideals with contemporary Western principles,

incorporating elements of nationalism, internationalism, individualism, and socialism. Consequently, their educational philosophies present a holistic approach, advocating for a well-rounded education that encompasses physical, mental, social, moral, and spiritual development.

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## 4.9 Answer to check your progress

1. Swami Vivekananda defined education as "the manifestation of perfection that is already in man"
2. Service to mankind.
3. Personality.
4. Man-making, fostering strength of mind, expanded intellect, and strong character.
5. Rabindranath Tagore founded the Visvabharati on December 22, 1921.
7. Tagore's primary aim was to give spiritual culture to the boys.
8. Tagore's book "Gitanjali" won the Nobel Prize in 1913.
9. The motto of Visvabharati University is "Yatra Visvam bhavari ekamidam" which means "where the world meets at one place."
10. Gandhiji conducted educational experiments focused on "learning by doing" and "learning by cooperation" at Tolstoy Farm in South Africa.
11. According to Gandhiji, the ultimate objective of education is to develop a balanced and harmonious individual, as well as a just and balanced society.
12. Gandhiji suggested that spinning and weaving should be the center of learning in schools, emphasizing craft-centered education.
13. According to Gandhiji, one reason for the failure of the Basic Education Plan was the lack of sufficient trained teachers to effectively implement the plan.

14. Sri Aurobindo established his ashram and focus on spiritual and educational activities at Pondicherry.

15. According to Sri Aurobindo, the main aim of education is The evolution of the total humanity.

16. The main principles of integral education according to Sri Aurobindo are Spiritual, rational, vital, and physical development; unity in diversity; and evolution of the individual and collective humanity.

#### 4.10 Model Questions

1. Compare and contrast the educational philosophies of Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi. How did their backgrounds and experiences shape their views on education?
2. Discuss Rabindranath Tagore's concept of education as unfolded in his institution, Shantiniketan. How did Tagore integrate arts, nature, and spirituality into his educational framework?
3. Analyze Mahatma Gandhi's views on basic education. What were the main principles of his Nai Talim (Basic Education) system, and how did it aim to transform society?
4. Compare Sri Aurobindo Ghosh's integral education with the educational philosophies of Swami Vivekananda and Rabindranath Tagore. How did Aurobindo's emphasis on spirituality and integral development differ from the others?
5. Discuss Swami Vivekananda's vision of personality development through education. How did he define personality, and what role did character building play in his educational ideals?
6. Explain Rabindranath Tagore's views on the importance of creativity and self-expression in education. How did his approach challenge traditional educational methods?
7. Analyze Mahatma Gandhi's emphasis on moral and ethical education in his concept of Nai Talim. How did Gandhi propose to integrate these principles into practical learning?
8. Compare Sri Aurobindo Ghosh's thoughts on the purpose of education with those of Mahatma Gandhi. How did their respective visions address the needs of Indian society during their time?
9. Discuss the role of arts and culture in the educational philosophies of Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Aurobindo Ghosh. How did they incorporate these elements to foster holistic development?

10. Evaluate the impact of Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, and Sri Aurobindo Ghosh on modern educational practices in India. How relevant are their ideas in today's educational context?

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