

# Application of Dewey's Philosophy of Education for Students with Intellectual Disabilities

**Dr. Sandhya Kumari Singh\***

Lecturer, Department of Education, Babu Shiv Nath Agrawal College, Mathura

**Abstract –** *The philosophy of education is a significant area of study both for Western and Indian philosophers. Philosophy of education was not systematically set forth before the twentieth century. In the west only Plato produced a notable philosophy of education (in his "Republic") in pre-twentieth century. He was the first systematic philosopher to work in this field. Plato along with John Dewey believes that philosophy of education occupied a central place in philosophical thought. Dewey, in fact, once suggested that "philosophy may even be defined as the general theory of education."*

*In the following pages we discuss the different views of philosophy of education in Western and Indian perspectives. The western philosophy of education is divided based on the origin of reality. The origin of reality to the idealistic philosopher is quite 22 different from the realistic or the pragmatic philosophers. Therefore the perspective towards the life for the idealistic philosopher is also different from the other philosophers. Depending on the perspective towards the life, the aim of education is also different for the different philosophers.*

**Keywords:** *Philosophy, Education, Pragmatic*

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## INTRODUCTION

"All children and youngsters of the world, with their individual qualities and shortcomings, with their expectations and desires, reserve the option to education. It isn't our education frameworks that reserve an option to specific sorts of children. Along these lines, it is the educational system of a nation that must be changed in accordance with address the issues everything being equal". Traditionally diversely abled children and those with exceptional needs have encountered exclusion, discrimination and segregation from the standard of education. Some of them are put in extraordinary schools. Countless these children are denied access to any education. Over 90% of children with disabilities don't go to schools. Among the 113 million children who are denied of their essential human ideal to education, crippled children likely include the most elevated extent. UNICEF-appraises that —only 1 in each 50 children with incapacity approaches education. A portion of the significant reasons for exclusion are: - improperly planned educational programs, wrong instructing learning material, blocked off structures, and instructors, lacking important abilities to oblige children having differing scope of requirements.

## The Birth of Inclusive Education

Inclusive education, which has its origin in special education, originally set out to meet the needs of learners who were being traditionally excluded from the school or were otherwise marginalized within the classroom. A series of shifts from focusing on the differently abled child as a problem to focusing on changes in the management of the classroom revealed surprising changes in learning. The results demonstrated benefits to those who were traditionally excluded from learning as well as all the others in the classroom. Today inclusive education or inclusion in education is a conceptual approach aimed at achieving quality education by making changes to accommodate all learners regardless of their physical, social or psychological differences.

Inclusive education: - —It is an approach that seeks to address the learning needs of all children, youth and adults with a specific focus on those who are vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion. It implies all learners, young people with or without disabilities being able to learn together through access to common pre-school provisions, schools and community educational setting with an appropriate network of support services. (Action plan for Inclusive Education of children and Youth with Disabilities\_ Ministry of Human Resource Development, Aug 2000-2005)

### **Inclusive Education and the Differently-abled Child**

The Normalization Principle of Wolfensberger had much earlier placed focus on the person with disability and the slogan —change the environment to suit the child not the child to suit the environmentll became a well-known quote as opposed to the orthodox and rigid Procrustean logic of —one-size-fits-allll. This brought about a recognition and conceptualization of a major shift from integrated schools to one that is more inclusive. Universalization of education came about because every child must have the right to a good start in life. So if every child matters then every child is special and has the right to be included... AND THEN that is ESPECIALLY important for children with special needs.

We can make inclusion happen by;

- Removing physical barriers posed by stairs, doorways, toilets, water faucets, and other architectural aspects imperative to accessing facilities in the school.
- Removing the barriers of the teaching system, by providing facilities for accessing information related to the curriculum, by the use of modern technology like computers using specialized.
- By providing awareness, sensitivity, and solutions for teachers. Removing the barriers of examination system by providing means of free and fair evaluation of the students 'knowledge irrespective of his /her sensory physical status. Removing the barriers of attitude developed due to lack of awareness. The practice of developing inclusive schools involves:
- Understanding inclusion as a continuing process, not a one-time event Strengthening and sustaining the participation of children, teachers, parents and community members in the work of the inclusion
- Restructuring the cultures, policies and practices in schools to respond to the diversity
- Inclusive settings focus on identifying and then reducing the barriers to learning and participation, rather than on what is special about the individual
- Child or group of children, and targeting services to address the problem
- Providing an accessible curriculum, appropriate training programs for teachers, and for all students, the provision of fully accessible information, environments and support

- Identifying and providing support for staff as well as students

### **Reasons for Inclusion**

The Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (CSIE), Bristol, UK, identifies how Inclusive Education is necessitated on the following fronts Human rights.

- a) All children have the right to learn together.
- b) Children should not be devalued or discriminated against by being excluded or sent away because of their disability or learning difficulty.
- c) Disabled adults, describing themselves as special school survivors, are demanding an end to segregation.
- d) There are no legitimate reasons to separate children for their education. Children belong together - with advantages and benefits for everyone. They do not need to be protected from each other.

### **Good education**

1. Research shows children can do better academically and socially in inclusive settings.
2. There is no teaching or care in a segregated school, which cannot take place in an ordinary school.

### **Good social sense**

1. Segregation teaches children to be fearful, ignorant and breeds prejudice.
2. All children need an education that will help them develop relationships and prepare them for life in the mainstream.
3. Only inclusion has the potential to reduce fear and build friendship, respect and understanding.

Research is done about concept & differentiation between segregation & inclusion. Methods & techniques are developed for Special education, but for inclusive education few efforts about program & curricula can be listed out especially in India. Providing access to education is only the first stage in overcoming exclusion or discrimination. There is a need for a shift in perspectives and values so that diversity is appreciated and even welcomed, while teachers are given skills to provide all

children, including those with different learning needs, with quality education.

Inclusive education is still often seen as a matter of providing education for children with different abilities in a regular school setting. UNESCO, similar to other development agencies, is promoting a much broader view of inclusive education, which encompasses all children who are excluded on grounds of gender, ability, ethnicity, linguistic or poverty related reasons. In many countries failure to increase retention rates and poor levels of achievement in low quality schooling environments continue to remind us that claims of improved enrolment rates insufficient as evidence of progress in the education system. Furthermore, a child's learning is also influenced by factors such as family background, health and nutrition, community involvement, etc. which are the dimensions that bring about a more holistic approach to education, making it more inclusive and effective.

### **Basic Goals of the Education System**

The goals and objectives of education are derived from a number of sources including the constitution and works of High Council for fundamental change in educational system. According to the goals approved by the supreme council of education, national development is the primary aim of education and it should be developed to increase productivity, achieve social and national integration and cultivate social, moral, and spiritual values with great emphasis placed on strengthening and encouraging the Islamic faith. The goals also emphasize the role of education in developing labor for different levels of economy and thus education is visualized as an investigation in the future.

### **John Dewey's Importance in Educational Field**

John Dewey was a philosopher, psychologist, educator and also a social reformer. He is famous as the father of American progressive education. He was the one who had the most powerful influence on education of the 19th century. No other philosopher in modern times, especially in America, has made a deeper and more effective impression on educational theory and practice. In education, his influence has been a leading factor in the abandonment of authoritarian methods and in the growing emphasis upon learning through experimentation and practice. In revolt against abstract learning, Dewey considered education as a tool that would enable the citizen to integrate culture and vocation effectively and usefully. Dewey actively participated in movements to forward social welfare and woman's suffrage, protect academic freedom, and effect political reform.

He was a thinker whose vital influence upon the reform of school methods is greater than that of any of his

contemporaries. More important, his philosophy has been the inspiration for many who hoped for rational, democratic solutions to the great social challenges of the twentieth century. The real test of Dewey's influence is the practical effect which his ideas have had on the people for whom he wrote. Many of his ideas have persisted in class rooms and schools around the world.

John Dewey was as a thinker and reformer of international public influence and during his lifetime, one public opinion poll after another, revealed that he was esteemed to be one of the ten important thinkers in American history. His work on education is famous worldwide and is still influential today, anticipating an ascendancy in contemporary American Pedagogy of multicultural independent thinking. Professor Dewey was a powerful educational philosopher and his influence on American education has been immense but his influence is not limited to the United States. He has also affected the pedagogy of other countries of the world. He travelled to other countries of the world. He has done research and written many books and articles which are studied in various countries.

### **REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES**

Review of related studies is an inevitable step in an educational research. Any researcher in any field of knowledge requires an adequate familiarity with the work which has already been done in the same area. It can help researchers to know what is still unknown and untested. The conflicting conclusions and substantial agreement of the previous studies help to sharpen the understanding of knowledge in the problem area.

Benander (2010) studied Revisionist criticism of John Dewey's theory of schooling. The study revealed that while the revisionists have raised pertinent objections to liberalism in general, they have misrepresented the way of Dewey's views and have overlooked important elements of a constructive social philosophy that were central to his work.

Boisvert (2006) made an attempt to study John Dewey as a metaphysician. The study revealed that Dewey was a profound and important metaphysician. Dewey's development has been divided into three major periods: idealism, experimentalism and naturalism idealism.

Bagakis (2011) studied the crisis in education. Dewey, Piaget and Marx, consider the American educational system, in reflecting the economic system, is in a state of crisis. The methodologies of two of the most important representatives of progressive, child-centered, active learning theories of education, John-Dewey and Jean Piaget, have been 39 epistemologically analyzed and found wanting as possible solutions for the crisis in

education. Both theories are found to contain an excessively individualistic orientation, which leads to "blaming the victim" ideology.

Ball's (2005) investigation was to study a reinterpretation of the relevance of John Dewey's educational philosophy to India. And into that research an outline of Dewey's philosophy of democracy has presented. The relevance of this model for India has been discussed. The main findings of the study included:

1. John Dewey's philosophy of democracy and education was recommended as an appropriate model for Indian public education.
2. It was established that the present crisis in Indian public education was a philosophic crisis at base.
3. Modern Indian philosophic solutions had not been able to meet the present requirements of India's public education.
4. There is need to re-examine the foundations and the goals of Indian democracy and education.

## METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

In studying Dewey's works, we will find that according to his epistemology, he uses problem-solving issue as the main method of teaching. But, beside the method, he considers other methods also. The following text makes a brief mention about them. From Dewey's perspective, separating method of teaching from instructional material and subject matter for education is somewhat dangerous. For instance, it will have neglecting realities, high discipline public learning, and will turn education into a mechanical and superficial one. Everyone is forced to select a procedure which is done throughout his experience giving and a good method is one that creates self-task and open minds, causing a united idea and responsible feeling in child.

**Problem-Solving Method** Just as was discussed in the previous chapter and epistemology section, Dewey believes that problem-solving method is an indication of through process, investigation process, and teaching process and learning. John Dewey also believed in an experience-centered curriculum in which pupils learn by doing. Problem-solving is a key concept to emphasize in teaching and learning. In society, problems are identified and attempts made at viable solutions. Problem-solving method is the same as through stages, that was reviewed before.

**Guidance Method** Dewey believes that teacher's task during education is to guide the students in solving

problems and inquiry. Teacher's task, more than everything, is guiding the student and helping him in his investigation work. Dewey believes that teacher should prevent himself from expressing thought in absolute and detailed manner, as much as possible. Because this will cause the student to consider (assume) all the important problems to be solved beforehand. Providing 143 some parts of the information could be useful, that student may need them to solve the problem

**Practical Method** Dewey emphasized practical ideas in both his philosophical and educational theories. In his view, if what is known is not independent of the activity of our knowing the nature of its reality, then knowing becomes an act of participation. The true and valid object of knowledge becomes that which has consequences for practical action. Thus, practical method is amongst educational methods approved by Dewey. He believes that educational program should include simple practical material that can familiarize children with rules and regulations while working with the terms.

**General and Individual Methods** Dewey believes that education has general and individual methods. General methods are in no way opposed to individual initiative and originality to personal ways of doing things. He expresses that, even though, general methods are valuable and important, and could only be used in special cases, and are not enough, teachers should invent special methods, 144 through using general methods and considering the current situation and their own innovation.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

1. To assess the Physical and Human Resources in urban and rural schools with respect to-
  - i. Modification in infrastructure for inclusion of differently abled students.
  - ii. Material essential for inclusion of differently abled students.
  - iii. Technological support required for inclusion of differently abled students.
  - iv. Availability of Human Resources for inclusion of differently abled students.
  - v. Knowledge, Acceptance and attitude of teachers in urban and rural schools with respect to inclusion of differently abled students.



2. To compare the Physical and Human Recourses in urban and rural schools with respect to inclusion of differently abled students.

## CONCLUSION

Preparing teachers does not simply mean providing prospective teachers with inclusive education skills; it is important to provide training and support for existing teachers as well. Building the capacity for inclusive education must include awareness raising activities as well as integrated pre-service and in-service teacher training programs to ensure that teachers are aware, ready and willing to bring inclusive education into action.

This program in inclusive Education for teachers definitely enriches the school teachers regarding the true concept of inclusion. It focuses mainly on the three important steps essential for inclusion of students with different abilities in the regular classroom, i.e. identification, assessment and remedial strategies. Most of the other programs.

The present program gives stress on self-preparation regarding inclusion, cooperative and collaborative learning techniques. Moreover it is based on social constructivism which is the basis of true inclusion. It makes the teachers capable of making the maximum use of available resources. The program makes optimum use of modern technology for orienting the teachers. The above study helps teachers to develop their skills regarding inclusion of all students in regular classrooms. The program mainly focuses on the application of all the strategies regarding inclusion.

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### Corresponding Author

**Dr. Sandhya Kumari Singh\***

Lecturer, Department of Education, Babu Shiv Nath Agrawal College, Mathura

[sandygandhar2020@gmail.com](mailto:sandygandhar2020@gmail.com)