

BEd First year

Paper -05

Unit –II

Topic: Philosophy of Naturalism

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Meaning of Naturalism

As a philosophy naturalism is concerned with 'Natural self' or 'Real self'. It believes that nature is the ultimate reality and natural laws are the real laws. Aristotle was the first who put forward the term naturalism. Later on it was developed by Rousseau, Darwin, Herbert Spencer, Froebel, Maria Montessori, Stanley Hall and so on.

Forms of Naturalism

- **Physical naturalism:** This branch regards unrestricted (free) development of man on the basis of instinct in the midst of nature.
- **Mechanical naturalism:** This branch regards man as a machine. As a machine requires energy to work, similarly human machine works with energy of natural principle.
- **Biological naturalism:** This branch emphasises the development of man's natural impulses ,potentialities and inborn urges in a gradual process.

Characteristics

- Naturalism avoids spirituality and spiritual terms like-divine inspiration, power of soul ,strength of prayer etc.
- It prefers material world than spiritual as nature always exist but changes its form from time to time.
- It emphasises child centric education and free development of children.
- Training of instincts gets special importance by naturalism. Naturalists say that through education in natural consequence the animal behaviour may turn into human behaviour.
- This philosophy believes that senses are the gateway of knowledge .For effective learning adequate sensory experiences should be provided.
- It avoids bookish education. Children should give sufficient freedom and facilities so that they can acquire knowledge through direct contact with nature.

Naturalism and Aims of Education

- **Mechanical naturalism**- Education should aim at giving efficiency and perfection to human machinery.
- **Biological naturalism** – Attainment of happiness in the life of an individual.
- **Mc.Dougall** – Sublimation of instincts ie moulding and guiding and redirecting the inborn urges of the child.
- **Darwin** – Aim of education should be based on the principle of struggle for existence and survival of the fittest.
- **Herbert Spencer** – Complete development of the child- body, mind and soul
- **Nunn** – Development of individuality.
- **Rousseau** – Aim of education should be to train children to adjust with the nature with the help of sense organs.

Naturalism and Curriculum

- According to naturalism curriculum should be divided into 2 levels. At the first level only such subjects should be included that will help the child in training the senses. At the second level education should include such subjects which have linkage with physical and natural environment.
- Naturalism believes in the natural and harmonious development of child's innate power. To attain this objective they say curriculum should be child centred rather than subject centred.
- Instead of giving bookish knowledge child's natural development should be encouraged through exercise and other physical activities.
- Curriculum should be based on principle of flexibility and diversification.
- Apart from language, nature study, art, physical education, science based subjects should get special priority like chemistry, biology, physiology etc.

Naturalism and method of teaching

- Negative method
- Self learning
- Paido centric (child centric)
- Learning by doing
- Play-way method

Naturalism and discipline

- It believes on free discipline.
- It believes on inner discipline.
- Avoids external or forceful discipline.
- It believes on such discipline which comes from the consequence of one's own action.

Naturalism and role of teacher

- According to this philosophy the teacher plays indirect yet important role.
- He plays the role of silent observer.
- The teacher should not directly interfere in the free activities of the learner.
- He should handle the learner sympathetically and affectionately.
- He plays the role of friend, philosopher and guide.

Merits of Naturalism

- Naturalism has made notable contribution in highlighting the child's age, need, interest, ability in educative process.
- This philosophy is successful removing passivity of traditional teaching and gives the learner a platform to enjoy freedom of self learning.
- Naturalism brought revolutionary change in method of teaching which are effective, inspirational and psychological.
- Naturalism has an intimate relationship with the material world or natural consequences. So children get training on those activities which are indispensable for better and practical life.
- Since this philosophy prefers freedom of children with no burden of curriculum so learning becomes enjoyable for them. They also get chance to expose their hidden talents.

Demerits of Naturalism

- Individuality gets special priority in this philosophy but man is a social animal, social development of child should also get preference in any educational system.
- It has no concern about spiritual and moral values of life. Perfection of personality and character always comes from spiritual and ethical knowledge which has been ignored by this philosophy.
- Negative education of naturalism is quite meaningless and full of mysticism. Value of books can not be ignored in real sense and one can not learn everything from self activity.
- The view of naturalism regarding the role of teacher is not acceptable because without the interference and active involvement of teacher no learning takes place .
- The naturalistic concept of full freedom to children and discipline by natural consequences are quite meaningless, unjust and not conducive.

Probable Questions

1. Critically examine the influence of Naturalism on education in terms of its aims and method of teaching.
2. What is Negative education as propounded by Rousseau? Discuss thoroughly.
3. Write notes on implication of Naturalism on modern education system.
4. Write notes on major principles underlying Naturalism as a school of thought.