

Educational Works Of Friedrich August Froebel

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ABSTRACT

Friedrich Froebel appears extremely prominent in western and Indian history who for the first time applied the idea of unity and spontaneous growth to education. He believed in an eternal law which governs all things. He developed his philosophy by deduction from the nature of man and thus attained the true human development and the requirement of true education. Friedrich Froebel, found a profound insight into the uniformity and essential unity of natural laws. This created in him a longing to study the natural science in order to find them in various applications of nature of universal laws. In this he assigned a place in education and the development of the individual. Friedrich Froebel approached human education from both biological and spiritual perspectives. Froebel discovered that brain development is most dramatic between birth and age and recognized the importance of beginning education earlier than it was practiced. The number of innovations that Froebel pioneered through his research activities includes multiple intelligence, different learning styles, play based, child centered, holistic education, parent innovation, training, education paper folding, use of music, games and movement activities for education. Over one hundred and fifty years ago, Froebel urged educators to respect the sanctity of child development through these statements.

Keywords: Unity , Spontaneous growth, nature of man

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Introduction

Education is a liberating force as also an evolutionary force which enables the individuals to rise from mere materiality to superior plans of intellectual and spiritual consciousness. Education is a dialogue between the past, present and the future, so that the coming generations receive the accumulated lessons of the heritage and carry it forward. (UNESCO, 1998). Education by general agreement is a total development of individual physical,

mental, spiritual as well as social. Education provides knowledge, skills and also inculcates values, training of instincts, fostering right attitudes and habits. This total development is the meaning of self-revelation. Through education not only a person learns to fit in the environment, he also learns to modify it to make his life convenient and enjoyable. The function of education is to fit the individual to his environment so that he grows fully and completely as his innate potentialities warrant.



The kind of education which the nineteenth century calls 'the new education' is based on the works of many thinkers and Froebel is one among them. He for the first time applied the idea of unity and spontaneous growth to education. He believed that Divine essence of man should be unfolded, brought out lifted into consciousness. Education should lead and guide man to clearness concerning him and in himself, to peace with nature, and to unity with God; hence, it should lead him to knowledge of himself and of mankind, and to the pure and holy life to which such knowledge leads. Although Froebel he said that centuries would pass before his views of the human creature as manifested in the child and of the educational treatment it required would be universally received. Yet it can be seen that Froebelian kindergarten soon caught the eye of the educational world. Since his kindergarten school has sprung up rapidly in all the progressive countries of the world. Many tendencies in the curricula and methods of the school can be traced back to him. To him the child was inherently good, recognizing the importance of the native capabilities of children, he advocated a sympathetic regard for these both by parents and teachers. It was he, who created a new respect for the individuality of the child. Froebel realized the value of discovering and developing the individuality by means of initiation, execution and cooperation in the educational process. Since then these have become the bywords in educational theory and practice. He has inspired the various arts and crafts like clay modeling etc in the modern education. His emphasis upon the activity and social participation and a school without books and set tasks, was a unique contribution to educational practice. He impressed upon the educational world that rigid discipline and the traditional formality of the school atmosphere must be given up so as to develop the

dynamic and active qualities of the child's nature. His emphasis upon the manipulation of the objects and freedom to express oneself produced a greater attention to activity and sense realism in place of the constant and regimented reading of books. He wanted the education to fit the individual for full life within the group and aimed to open up a pupil's whole wide range of human knowledge and experience. His conception forms the chief concern of education today.

Objective Of The Study

The following objectives were formulated for the present study:

- 1: To study the life and works of Friedrich Froebel.

Methodology

Philosophical method, according to Pass more (1967) is not exclusively employed by philosophers only. Every man utilizes a philosophical method in his thinking on philosophical problems. However, the philosophical method is mainly utilized by the philosophers. The philosophical method is not absolutely different from the scientific method because every method has its own procedure to investigate truth. There seem to be as many philosophical methods as there are different philosophies.

Philosophical method is multi - sided. Though the philosophers have sometimes emphasized on this or that method exclusively, yet all the methods have been found to be useful in philosophical thinking. A researcher in the area of educational philosophy aims at analysis of



the meaning and nature of different kinds of educational practices. The researcher identifies appropriate norms and standards for educational practices through cross examination of ideas reflected by different thinkers in the field of education.

A common view among philosophers is that philosophy is distinguished by the methods that philosophers follow in addressing philosophical questions. There is, however, not just one method that philosophers use to answer philosophical questions.

For the present study, the investigator started to collect the task keeping in view the theme into consideration of the available literature such as write ups or opinions of the philosophers and commentaries on the relevant philosophical works appearing in the form of books, journals, transcriptions, recordings, research reports and through library work. Since the investigator has chosen a philosophical research problem, therefore the investigator adopted philosophical method and analyzed information from the primary and secondary sources to realize the objectives of the present study. Main philosophical tools like induction, deduction, analysis and synthesis were used to arrive at the conclusion and to report the results. In this way, general philosophy and educational philosophy of Friedrich Froebel is presented.

Works of Friedrich August Froebel

Froebel is the author of many works, but special mention should be made of following works because they are mainly devoted to education.

a) Autobiography

This Froebel's work was published in January 1886. This book is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and

with almost no restrictions whatsoever. This book is translated and annotated by Emilie Michaels. In this book the Froebel mentions the famous saying 'Come let us live in our children'. We must content ourselves with two long autobiographical letters contained in this volume, which, though incomplete, have yet the peculiar charm that comes from the candid record of genuine impressions. The first of these letters that the Duke of Meiningen has already appeared in English, in a translation by Miss Lucy Wheelock for Barnard's American Journal of Education in a small volume under the title Autobiography of Froebel. While a faithful attempt to reproduce the original, this translation struggled in vain to transform Froebel's rugged and sometimes seemingly incoherent sentences into adequate and attractive English, so that the long letter has proved to most English readers formidable and repellant. But in the original it is one of the most charming productions in literature, candid and confidential in tone, and detailing those inner groupings for ideas that became convictions which only an autobiography can reveal. These qualities are so admirably preserved in the translation by Miss Emily Michaels and H. Keatley Moore that it seemed to leave nothing to be desired.

b) Education for Development

Friedrich Froebel's Education for Development the Second Part of the Pedagogy of the Kindergarten (1889), translated by Josephine Jarvis. The second part of Pedagogy of the Kindergarten presents a more thorough discussion of the educational principles underlying play. In these eleven further essays Froebel discusses his theory of the meaning of the ball, the sphere, the cube, and its various subdivisions, casting new light on his thought with each exposition.

c) The Education of Man

The Education of Man (1899), translated by W. N. Hailmann: Hailmann's highly regarded translation of Froebel's Die Menschenerziehung (published in 1826, fourteen years before he opened his first kindergarten). The work is divided into two parts: the first deals with general principles and considers the developments during infancy and childhood; the second discusses the chief subjects of instruction, grouping them under (1) religion, (2) natural science and mathematics, (3) language, and (4) art. In the education of man Froebel says the true method of education consists in considering the mind of the child as a whole in which all the parts work together to produce harmonious unity.

d) Mother Play

Froebel's "Mother-Play" (1897): The book discusses in a practical way the foundations of the philosophy of Froebel as found in his most important work. Intended to be as much a book for mothers as for teachers, it shows the significance of the kindergarten and its claims for being the cornerstone upon which all child education should rest. Froebel, however, attached great importance to education in the child's early life. He thought that if the education of pre-school years was not properly reformed, no tangible improvement could be made in school education. In this book Froebel mentions that in the Kindergarten, education is generally imparted through songs. It is, therefore, that songs are included in the daily school program. All the songs, selected and included by Froebel, are about the common objects of life. They relate to nursery games and satisfy some physical, intellectual or moral needs of children. These

are arranged no accordance with the development of the child. Each such song has three parts (i) a motto for the mother's guidance (ii) a verse for singing to the child and (iii) a picture illustrating the verse. There are in all fifty play songs of this type. Besides these plays-songs, Froebel also devised such nursery rhymes, as Jack and Jill, Humpty Dumpty and Cinderella. The main aim is to enable the child to use his senses, limbs and muscles and to make him familiar with the objects, around him.

e) Pedagogies of the Kindergarten

Friedrich Froebel's Pedagogies of the Kindergarten or, His Ideas Concerning the Play and Playthings of the Child (1899), translated by Josephine Jarvis. This is a translation of Die Pedagogic des Kindergartens, fifteen of Froebel's essays collected by Richard Lange in 1861. Froebel founded an educational value in every phase of the child's play and in every object that engages its attention.

He gives a thoroughgoing discussion of the educative effect of objects, such as a ball or cube, upon the development of the kindergarten child, viewing each object from three points of view: as a form of life, as a form of beauty and as a form of knowledge. The work includes diagrams illustrating educational methods of play. About the play, Froebel remarks, Play is the characteristic activity of childhood. It is the highest phase of child-development-of human development of this period, for it is self-active representation or the inner-representation of the inner form, inner necessity and impulse. It is through play that the child discloses his real self and clearly indicates his interests. So Froebel gives a prominent place to Play activities in his Kindergarten system. He has rather based the educational process in the early years on play. He



utilizes play for cultivating in child the habits of action, feeling and thinking. Courage, instinct and motivation are also developed through play. But Froebel's play activities are all very well-directed and guided by the teacher. In this book Froebel mentions the functions of play way method as it helps to prolong the memory skill. It provides opportunities for all children to participate. Therefore, the teacher has to plan in the initial stage itself to fulfill the needs of every child and Play way method is based on Activity Based learning; it stimulates creative skill and self expression. This system is life oriented; it serves school as a second home for the children. The needs of the children can be fulfilled and increased. It narrows down the gap between the children and the teachers. It creates apt learning environment accordingly in the classroom. All his works, whether scientific, philosophical, social, or educational, ended in admiration for the appearance of a divine spirit in all things growing. This experience was for him the essence of all religion. He is the representative of German transcendentalism in the realm of education.

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