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Dr. Anju Jain
Associate Professor, University
of Delhi, Delhi, India

Alternative approach to education philosophy

Dr. Anju Jain

Abstract

Education is one of the most important criteria while judging the progress of a country. This research paper evaluates an alternative approach to education philosophy which can provide innovative way of learning.

Keywords: Education philosophy, education ideology, education methodology

1. Introduction

Education is that vital component which defines the level of human development in a country. A country can never make progress if does not invest in educational infrastructure. India being the second most populous country the world therefore requires a carefully drafted education strategy to solidify its human resources. This research papers provides detailed analysis about an alternative approach to the education philosophy.

2. Research objectives

The objective of the present research is to evaluate an alternative education philosophy that can provide adequate focus on priority areas and. This study further aims to evaluate the education philosophy as provided by Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee.

3. Research methodology

The present research utilized primary and secondary sources to gain insights about different education philosophies. Thereafter a summarized report was drawn and presented in this manner.

4. Research analysis

Syama Prasad Mookerjee was an academician, politician and a social worker who worked for development of the Indian society. He was an eminent parliamentarian, educationist, Indian nationalist and a modern thinker. Considered as the founder of the Bharatiya Jan Sangh, the predecessor of the Bharatiya Janata Party, he served the society till his last breath. During the period of 1943 to 1946, he steered the party by being the president of the Akhil Bharatiya Hindu Mahasabha. Dr. Syama Prasad started serving the society at an early age by contributing in the field of education in Bengal. Equipped with idealistic thinking, he was a perfect candidate for entering the field of politics. He had represented the Calcutta University and had also joined the Bengal Legislature. He had served as the Vice Chancellor of the Calcutta University and the Chairman of Asiatic Society of Bengal. He was also an executive member of the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science and the prestigious Indian Statistical Institute.

He joined the Hindu Mahasabha in Bengal in 1939. He started taking active part in various sessions of the All India Hindu Mahasabha, under the Presidentship of Veer Savarkar and thereafter became the working president of the Mahasabha. Being a true Indian nationalist, he worked extremely hard in the attainment of Indian independence. His freedom struggle and his active contribution in the Quit India Movement is gloriously engraved in the Indian history. He strongly rejected the British proposal of partition of India. He wrote several letters to the then Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, to consider for the Indo – British Settlement. Post-independence, Dr. Mookerjee served as the Minister of Industry and Supply in the interim Central Government.

Corresponding Author:
Dr. Anju Jain
Associate Professor, University
of Delhi, Delhi, India

He played a significant role in the formation and implementation of the first industrial policy of India. Considered to be an excellent policy maker, he introduced many economic reforms to enhance the economic conditions of the Indian economy. He fought for bringing gender equality and improving the conditions of the girl child. Being a strong proponent of high quality education, he set up colleges and institutions for women especially in the rural areas so that people can be educated and the Indian literacy ratio can be improved. He had been elected as a Fellow as well as a Member of the Senate of the Calcutta University in 1924 at just the age of 23 years. He had also been the Dean of the Faculty of Arts of Calcutta University. His ideology was to impart education about the local language along with the English language. He introduced Honours and Pass courses in Hindi, Bengali and Urdu.

He also founded the English daily newspaper "Nationalist" and "Hindustan" in 1944 to spread awareness about the recent happenings and also to inculcate the feeling of learning English along with the vernacular language. A major initiative taken by him at that time was the abolition of age restriction for joining schools and also formulated a detailed College Code of Conduct which was very new at that time. As a man of strong vision, he knew that for imparting world class education, the students and the teachers as well needed continuous trainings and knowledge development programmes. Therefore he kept on organising Teachers Training and Development Seminars, Short term and long term tutorial courses for teachers quite frequently. The Calcutta University further undertook the work of archaeological excavations, foundation of the Ashutosh Museum of Indian Art and Fine Arts Gallery and initiated courses in Chinese and Tibetan languages. In 1938 he was nominated as India's representative to the Intellectual Co-operation Committee of the then League of Nations.

Today when we talk about literacy rate in India, it has increased from about 40% to 74%, it is important to remember about the efforts of the person who took numerous efforts to spread free education across India. It was Dr. Mookerjee who advocated the concept of compulsory education so as to increase the literate population in India. While education in India was considered as only for the rich and the elite class, Dr. Mookerjee argued that education is a fundamental right meant to be taken by each and every citizen of the country. Dr. Mookerjee had implemented a reform which changed the Indian outlook towards education. He pressed for practical classes and tutorials to be imparted to students along with the theoretical lectures. A lot of research work was conducted by the Calcutta University at that time which lays down the very foundation of various technologies that we use today. For the first time, a student exchange programme was introduced into the Indian education system during the tenure of Dr. Mookerjee. He made the prescribed arrangements for students and teachers to visit USA, Europe and the rest of the world to gain an understanding about the western culture. Further the distinguished scholars of foreign universities were invited to provide lecture to our Indian masses. This concept lays down the very basics of the student exchange policy undertaken by the present major Universities in India.

Dr. Mookerjee had a dynamic personality and was open to change as per the global standards. The Calcutta University revised the entire course syllabi for Medicine and

Engineering and increased its scope and introduced practical aspects. He further introduced Applied Science Departments and the Departments of Zoology, Experimental Psychology and Physiology were brought together in a single campus which were earlier scattered across the city so as to facilitate unity and to provide ease of access to all the students and professors. The University Library serves as an impetus in boosting the knowledge levels of students. The library system was highly underdeveloped in the Indian education system. Dr. Mookerjee undertook the effort of expanding the University library and ensuring the availability of books at all times for all the students. He further ensured that no kind of discrimination exist while granting book access to students. Considering the importance of physical fitness along with sports, Dr. Mookerjee for benefiting the health and welfare of students of the University developed the Students Welfare Department for the well-being of students. During the tenure of Dr. Mookerjee, he developed a playground and laid the foundation for sports department in the University. As per Dr. Syama Prasad, high quality primary education, secondary education and thereafter University education are the backbone of an idealistic education system. He discovered the path of progress in the sphere of education. Complete syllabi revision and implementation of modern education techniques resulted in enhanced literacy ratio and reduced school drop out ratio.

5. Conclusion

It can be concluded that the modern education policies have been highly influenced by the education methodologies framed and implemented by Dr. Mookerjee. His immense contributions in the field of education are to be greatly remembered. Standing up against the odds, he fought and demanded for rights of the girl child to education and the abolition of discrimination between the rich and poor, boy and girl while imparting education. Despite of the fact that it was extremely difficult for Dr. Mookerjee to implement such education policies in the then prevailing social and political scenario, he went ahead in authoring a new page in the Indian education history by introducing such advanced and beneficial education system in India.

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