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EDUCATIONAL THOUGHTS OF PAULO FREIRE: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT
This paper puts emphasis on Paulo Freire's educational thoughts, philosophy, aims of education, concepts and theories of education, his ideas on critical pedagogy and comparison with the other great educators- Rabindranath Tagore, Rishi Aurobindo, and Rousseau. The method of this study was a systematic literature review. The study reveals that Education is a process of liberation in which individuals are empowered to become active participants in their own learning and in the social and political life of their communities. At the same time, the comparison with the three great educators makes the Paulo Freire's educational thoughts unique, distinct, and significant.

KEY WORDS: *Educational Thoughts, Critical Pedagogy, Rabindranath Tagore, Rishi Aurobindo, and Rousseau.*

INTRODUCTION

Paulo Freire, a famous philosopher and educationist, was born on 19th September, 1921 in a middle-class family in Recife, the capital of the North-eastern Brazilian State of Pernambuco. Due to the Great Depression, he was exposed to poverty and hunger from a young age. In March, 1934, his father died, due to which he had to face financial difficulties. Freire mentioned that poverty and hunger had a profound impact on his ability to learn. These challenges shaped his commitment to improving the lives of the impoverished. In 1934, he enrolled at the University of Recife, where he studied philosophy and Language Psychology. Freire made a significant contribution to education, advocating for the delivery of education to the wider public. His revolutionary pedagogical theories influenced global educational and social movements, while his philosophical writings had an impact on various academic fields such as theology, sociology, anthropology, applied linguistics, pedagogy, and cultural studies. Additionally, Paulo Freire introduced the concept of Critical Pedagogy. Paulo Freire didn't believe in strict discipline; he believed in spontaneous learning of students. His most famous educational texts were "Pedagogy of the oppressed" and "Cultural Action for Freedom". His Dialogic Pedagogy represents a specific approach to understand human beings and the social world, from which general principles for teaching and learning can be generated. He died on 2nd May, 1997 due to a heart attack in Sao Paulo. In 1959, Freire was awarded a doctorate by the University for conducting seminars on the promotion of adult education at the University of Recife and for developing a course in history and philosophy of education. UNESCO awarded Freire with the 'Teacher for Peace Award'.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the study were as follows:

1) To study the contribution of Paulo Freire in education;
2) To explore the Critical Pedagogy by Paulo Freire;
3) To investigate the Pedagogical approach to education proposed by Paulo Freire;
4) To analyse the banking education system of Paulo Freire in education;
5) To evaluate the problem posing model of Paulo Freire in education;
6) To compare the educational thoughts of Paulo Freire with those of Rabindranath Tagore, Rishi Aurobindo, and Rousseau.

METHODOLOGY

A systematic literature review was used as the methodology for this study. In comparison with the three great educators, major aspects of educational thoughts were considered.

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PHILOSOPHY OF PAULO FREIRE

Paulo Freire was both a believer in existentialism as well as in Marxism, who emphasized above all the inequality and injustice in society caused by the capitalist system. According to Freire's philosophy, those who strive to address the suffering of humanity are not leaders who act on behalf of the people, but rather leaders who work alongside the people as their servants. This concept is what Freire refers to as 'Scientific Revolutionary Humanism'. His philosophical perspective developed through his experiences as a teacher and his interactions with students. Instead of adhering to traditional hierarchical cultural structures, Freire's approach in the classroom seeks to challenge the power dynamics that elevate some individuals above others.

EDUCATIONAL THOUGHTS OF PAULO FREIRE

Paulo Freire was completely against the banking system of education. He believed that schools functioned exactly like the banking system. He criticizes education as a banking system that stifles the creative potential of students. He thinks that no one can teach anyone else, and no one can gain knowledge alone, but people learn together, that is; while teaching students, teachers also gain a lot of knowledge. Freire's educational theory is the extension of his philosophical ideas. He is in the opinion that the problems of poor society can be overcome by progressive education and practices.

Aims of Education according to Paulo Freire

Paulo Freire viewed education as a means of liberation from oppression, emphasizing that students should be given the opportunity to be the creators of their own reality. He argued that knowledge is not something merely transferred from teachers to students but is already inherent within them. The aim of education will be to create various problems among the students, solving which they will gain knowledge on their own.

Critical Pedagogy of Paulo Freire

Critical Pedagogy is both an educational philosophy and a social movement that integrates education with Critical Theory, first introduced by Paulo Freire. Freire made significant contributions to the development of Critical Pedagogy which serves as an academic response to the prevailing inequalities and oppressive power structures within the education system.

Paulo Freire's Concept, Theories and Models of Education

- Banking Education
- Problem – Posing Model
- Learning Circles
- Dialogue
- Liberatory Education
- Praxis

Banking System of education

Paulo Freire compared the traditional way of education to the 'banking model'. He believed that the basic nature of education should be descriptive. According to him, in this type of education system (banking model) a teacher imparts his own knowledge, ideas and students just listen and memorize everything. They have no connection with real life, hence the teaching style here is very passive. This approach of education is called banking model of education.

Teaching Methodology

According to Paulo Freire, the teaching method will be such that the teacher gives complete freedom to the students to answer and if the students give any other answer instead of the prescribed answer, the teacher explains and analyzes the answer from the student and explains it to the students in the local language. As a result, students can acquire knowledge about various subjects and apply them in real life as per the need.

Curriculum according to Paulo Freire

Paulo Freire's perspective, curriculum planning is a fully pupil-oriented process. He believed that curriculum is a continuous process shaped through the mutual participation of teachers and students. According to him, 1) The curriculum should be related to the live of the pupils, 2) It should be grounded in students' experiences. 3) Learning should be problem-based, encouraging critical thinking and 4) The curriculum should promote a democratic and participatory learning environment.

Learning Environment according to Paulo Freire

According to Paulo Freire, the learning environment will be one where students of different religions and different cultures learn together. The learning environment will be structured in such a way that there will be 15-20 students and some teachers. Both teachers and students will be treated as equals. Both will have full freedom to express their own opinion.

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Teacher according to Paulo Freire

According to Paulo Freire, a teacher should never adopt an authoritarian approach or attempt to control students. Instead, teachers should be generous, humane, and respectful of students' independence. Freire emphasized equality between teachers and students, fostering a relationship built on mutual respect, trust, and care. In this model, both teachers and students have the freedom to ask questions, promoting an open and interactive learning environment.

Problem-Posing Model

An alternative approach to learning proposed by Paulo Freire is the problem posing model. This model was created by Paulo Fourier to challenge the banking model of education. According to this model, the teacher will throw a problem in the classroom. To solve that problem, there will be an exchange of experience, knowledge, talk – etc. Between the teacher and the student. This approach develops critical thinking in students.

Dialogue

According to Freire, the key to the organization of knowledge is dialogue. According to his ideology, dialogue in education should be applied with politeness. Dialogue should always encourage critical thinking and be presented in a fearless manner.

According to Freire, there are three principles of dialogue -

- Inquiry of thought: Thinking about a subject of knowledge.
- The materialization; Making sense of the subject of knowledge.
- Problematization: Asking questions about the subject of knowledge.

Liberatory Education

Liberation education is the foundation of revolutionary pedagogy. Paulo Freire defines librarian education as liberating education. According to him, librarian education frees the student from his mental, social, economic and political pressures and through this a student can develop himself as an active and self-reliant person.

Praxis

According to Freire, the process of linking theory and practice is called praxis. That is, praxis is the main focus of emancipatory education.

Discipline

Paulo Freire never believed in any strict discipline. He felt that there should be regular communication and interaction between teacher and student. He talks about democratic discipline i.e. the discipline will be democratic where students will also have freedom to express their opinions, thoughts, feelings.

Adult Literacy

In 1958 – 1964, A movement took place in Brazil led by Paulo Freire. It was a great mass movement. Its objective was to educate the elderly and give them literacy, along with giving them life oriented education to survive in life. But the movement was closed in 1970 due to the axiomatic power of some political leaders in Brazil. As a result, the literacy crusade also stopped. Due to which the education of the students stopped and the workers were also out of work. In 1967 UNESCO came forward to help and then the work of 'MOBRAL' or 'Brazilian Movement for Adult Literacy' started. 'MOBRAL' is – a movement started in Brazil at that time – The Brazilian movement for Adult Literacy started work, that is 'MOTORAL', it had a lot of support from UNESCO. In MOBRAL' those above 15 years, including those who are illiterate, were treated as older learners and they participated. Here the curriculum was emphasized on 3R's – Reading, writing and Arithmetic i.e. learners should be able to write, read and do arithmetic. Science and cultural education were also given.

MAJOR FINDINGS

According to Paulo Freire's educational philosophy, Education is a process of liberation in which individuals are empowered to become active participants in their own learning and also in the social and political life of their communities. Paulo Freire developed an approach to education that links the identification of issues to positive action for change and development. Paulo Freire created the concept of Critical Pedagogy where the teacher not only teaches but is learning while in dialogue with the students and the students also learn to think critically and question the information they are given.

Books of Paulo Freire

- Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970)
- Cultural action for freedom (1970)
- Education for Critical Consciousness(1973)
- Education, the practice of freedom (1976)

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- Politics and education (1998)

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PAULO FREIRE

A) Educational thoughts of Rabindranath Tagore and Paulo Freire

- **Aims of Education**

According to Rabindranath Tagore, the aim of education was to achieve complete development of the personality, to establish the relationship of the student with nature, to awaken the scientific outlook of the student, with the help of which the student would try to unravel the mysteries of the world.

According to Paulo Freire, the aim of education is to change the world through education, to help lower class people reach higher levels of society and through education to change the lives of the oppressed.

Rabindranath Tagore's key words in education are love of humanity, beauty and freedom etc. But according to Paulo Freire, the main aim of education should be to give freedom to the oppressed to speak, think and act through education.

- **Curriculum**

According to Rabindranath Tagore, curriculum will be the container and carrier of culture; if the purpose of education is to introduce people to the culture of the world, then the curriculum will be the carrier of this culture. In this curriculum he said to include language, literature, philosophy, science, art, music etc.

Paulo Freire advocates the inclusion of various religious texts in the curriculum. Besides, he emphasized on adding languages, arts, games, philosophy etc. to the curriculum. He also talked about teaching maths, history, geography etc. to children in simple language.

Rabindranath selected subjects in his curriculum that were suitable for the education of the whole man. On the other hand, Paulo Freire advocates the inclusion of social education in the curriculum.

- **Teacher**

According to Rabindranath Tagore, a teacher should approach students with childlike simplicity, gently exploring their minds while nurturing them with care and compassion.

Paulo Freire believed in equality between teacher and student. The teacher serves as a guide, presenting problems and encouraging students to explore solutions based on their own curiosity.

According to Rabindranath Tagore, the teacher will be a loving person, he will teach the students with care. On the other hand, Paulo Freire says that the teacher and the students will learn together and both the teacher and the students will have the freedom to ask questions.

- **Discipline**

Rabindranath Tagore thought that if students are given freedom, they will become organized by themselves. However, the only right freedom should never become arbitrariness.

Paulo Freire never believed in any strict order. He believed that regular communication between teacher and student should be complete. Both teachers and students deserve equal status.

Rabindranath Tagore did not mean the right to arbitrariness by freedom. On the other hand, Paulo Freire believed in democratic order. According to him, the discipline will be democratic where students will have full freedom to express their opinions, thoughts, feelings.

B) Educational thoughts of Rishi Aurobindo Ghosh and Paulo Freire

- **Aims of education**

According to Rishi Aurobindo Ghosh, the aim of education should be to help the learner to perceive material knowledge in the light of parajna.

According to Paulo Freire, the function of education is to humanize the individual through conscious action aimed at changing the world.

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Rishi Aurobindo Ghosh states that one of the aims of education is to establish the unity of the individual and the society. On the other hand, according to Schreyer one of the goals of education should be to transform an unequal and unjust world into a moral and deeply supportive one.

- **Curriculum**

Aurobindo Ghosh spoke about the four parts of the curriculum are - spiritual education, mental education, life-giving education, physical education etc.

Paulo Freire advocates the inclusion of multiple religious texts in the curriculum. Besides, he said to include mathematics, geography, history, arts, games, philosophy etc.

Paulo Freire talked about incorporating social studies into the curriculum. Sage Aurobindo Ghosh spoke of selecting experiences for curriculum composition in terms of various aspects of personality development.

- **Principles of Teaching**

Sri Aurobindo Ghosh was in favour of placing the responsibility of selecting the teaching method entirely on the teacher. He said that students cannot be taught anything by force, the teacher must rely on the individual mental characteristics of the student for learning etc.

According to Paulo Freire the teaching method will be one where the teacher gives the students complete freedom to answer.
Aurobindo Ghosh considered the primary responsibility of the teacher in conducting the teaching method. On the other hand, Paulo Freire said that in conducting the teaching-method, the teacher should aim to give the students full freedom to answer.

- **Teacher**

According to Sri Aurobindo, it is the teacher's job to inform the students how he can prepare their minds and senses to acquire knowledge.

According to Paulo Freire, the teacher will guide the students to learn according to their own curiosity.
According to Aurobindo, the teacher will make the student aware of those techniques, by applying which the student will be able to acquire knowledge on his own. According to Paulo Freire, the teacher never considers himself to be the strongest or the most powerful, there is a constant exchange of knowledge between the teacher and the student, both learning together.

C) Educational thoughts of Rousseau and Paulo Freire

- **Aims of education**

According to Rousseau, the general aims of education are to make the child active, to help the child acquire control over his senses, to help the child to make proper use of his mental faculties. According to him, the special aim of education should be to help the individual to properly manage his physical organs and mental faculties and to enable the students to be aware of their own existence and lead a fulfilling life.

According to Paulo Freire, the aim of education is to help the individual to know himself as well as the environment around him and to develop awareness or critical thinking among students.

Both Rousseau and Paulo Freire emphasized child centered education. Rousseau's educational doctrine is known as naturalism. On the other hand, Paulo Freire was particularly influenced by the work of Karl Marx.

- **Curriculum**

According to Rousseau, special emphasis should be placed on the activeness of the child in the curriculum. By observing, experimenting etc. the child will derive knowledge from the natural world and do physical exercise in childhood.
Paulo Freire talks about social studies in the classroom. Besides, he talked about teaching children in simple language such as language, arts, games, mathematics, history, geography etc.

Rousseau himself did not formulate a specific curriculum for ideal education. He placed physical training, manual work, vocational education in the curriculum. On the other hand, Paulo Freire emphasized the inclusion of philosophy, language, arts, games, etc. in the curriculum.

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- **Teacher**

According to Rousseau, the teacher must be fully educated and confident in natural principles. The teacher will be the student's playmate. Developing the student's life should be the sole aim of the teacher's life.
According to Paulo Freire, both the teacher and the student will be of equal status. The teacher should never try to control the students. Both teachers and students will respect both.

According to Rousseau, the teacher will take charge of the complete life-long education of the student. On the other hand, Paulo Freire says that the teacher will constantly present problems to the students and through the constant exchange of knowledge between both the teacher and the students, they will learn together.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Rabindranath Tagore, Rishi Aurobindo Ghosh and Rousseau have all emphasized child- centered education. Everyone talks about students' autonomy, just like Paulo Freire and child centered learning but he emphasized that students should not be suppressed while teaching.

Rabindranath Tagore talked about the inclusion of Language, Philosophy, Literature, Science, Art etc. in the curriculum so that people get acquainted with culture. Rishi Aurobindo Ghosh talks about the inclusion of Spiritual, Mental, Physical education, Life education etc. in the curriculum. According to Rousseau, children will gain knowledge from the natural world through observation, experimentation etc. Like these Philosophers, Paulo Freire also talked about active learning of the child. He also talked about the inclusion of religious books in the curriculum and along with religious books. He also said to teach Mathematics, Geography, History, Arts etc. in simple language.

According to Rabindranath Tagore, a Teacher should be a person with a child-like mind. On the other hand, according to Sri Aurobindo Ghosh the teacher will play the role of a counsellor But Rousseau did not give much importance to the role of the teacher, he said that children will learn actively by themselves in the lap of nature. According to Paulo Freire the teacher will be a person causing problems for the students. The teacher will be the guide, who will guide the learning according to the curiosity of the students.

CONCLUSION

Knowing the life story of Paulo Freire and working with his educational thought, the researcher has witnessed a pleasant experience. A new form of society's education system is depicted through the education philosophy of Brazilian educationist Paulo Freire. His educational thought dreams of the oppressed class of people in the society to be enlightened by the light of education. The principles of pedagogy outlined by him reinvented the aims and objectives of education that lead to the emancipation of the oppressed. His theory is one of using education to bring about social, economic and political changes in the society. According to him, education should be where students get a chance to discover themselves and through education they try to change the world. According to Freire's view, each person is an individual independent being. They are the ones who can change and rebuild the world so the purpose of education will be to humanize the students through conscious action to change the world. Moreover, like the philosopher Rousseau, John Dewey, the educationist Paulo Freire's educational thought was the basic foundation of modern-day child-centered education.

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