

Meaning, Purpose, Function and Morality of Education: An Overview of National Education Policy-2010 of Bangladesh

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Abstract: This paper provides a review of ideas and research regarding the meaning, function, purpose and morality of education. Firstly, it will accumulate the ideas of meaning, function, purpose and morality of education of the world views. For it, the paper will research the views of Plato to the present renowned educationists. Secondly, these ideas will be compared with the ideas and goal of education of National Education Policy-2010 of Bangladesh. Finally, it will try to focus the upon shortage and barriers of fulfilling the aims of education regarding National Education Policy-2010 of Bangladesh.

Key words: meaning, purpose, function, and morality of education

Introduction:

Life without education is meaningless and like the life of a beast. Every aspect and incident need education for sound development. 'A man who cannot live in society, or who has no need to do so because he is self sufficient, either a beast or a god; he is no part of a state.'^[1]As man is a social being, he must cope with the changed world by acquiring knowledge and experience through education. Moreover, we should remember 'The state [...] is a plurality; it should be formed into a social unit by means of education.'^[1] Education is not a static but a dynamic process which develops one according to changing situations and times.

Education is a life-long continuous process. It starts from the womb of the mother and continues till death. It is the process of development from infancy to maturity. It includes the effect of everything which influences human personality. It is also called the force for social development, which brings improvement in every aspect in the society. Even human behaviour is modified and improved through educational process.

Consequently, Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, believes,

Education is the key to a nation's development. Education is the principal means to achieve the goal of poverty alleviation. A properly educated nation, which is modern in genius and intellect and forward-looking in thinking, can only put the country at the zenith of its development.^[2]

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Whenever we determine the aim of education 'the educational system we must aim at producing in the future is one which gives to every boy and girl an opportunity for the best that exists. The ideal system of education must be democratic, although that ideal is not immediately attainable.' [3]

As education is the key factor to build up a human as well as nation, 'the education policy reflects the character of the state and the society . . . the nation wants a unified, scientific and realistic policy, which will produce competent citizens as well as complete human beings.' [4] [5] 'Education is a major catalyst for human development.' [5] One of the reputed proponents of modernization theorist, Rostow also believes 'the education of a generation of modern men' was a precondition for an economy to begin to grow. [6]

Though last forty years the previous governments of Bangladesh took steps to introduce a credible education policy to ensure the indiscriminate education for all, none could do it as they failed to identify the real problems and to think beyond political intention. When the present government has come to the power, they have taken a proper step. Unfortunately, we see the education policy sets up the real policy to solve the problems but our text books fail to follow it properly. Here the paper shows a comparison between the educationists' thoughts and National Education Policy-2010 of Bangladesh regarding meaning, purpose, function and morality of education.

Literature Review:

The National Education Policy-2010 of Bangladesh aims at ensuring the quality education for all. It fixes its twenty nine goals and describes how and why the mission and vision should be fulfilled. It highlights a bit to explain the meaning and function of education though there is a clear interpretation of purpose of education. As a result, going through Bertrand Russell's *On Education* (2000), Martin Luther King Jr.'s outstanding speech on education, Rabindranath Tagore's view on education and some other famous and well recognized educationists' views on education, I have tried to know the meaning, function and purpose of education. These views produce almost the same meaning and mention that the education has a particular purpose but experts present different function of education. Martin Luther King Jr., B. Gudem, Muzaffur Ahmed, Hummel Charles, J. Wilson and some other emphasize that the purpose of education should be the spiritual. On the other hand, Bertrand Russell, E.L. Dale and Arthur Foshay claim that the purpose of education should be used to gain the materialistic happiness in the world. And the National Education Policy-2010 of Bangladesh determines a mixture of both though mostly it emphasizes on the materialistic gain of a man's life. The paper tries to compile these views to show how the National Education Policy-2010 of Bangladesh is going to get success in its aim regarding meaning, function and purpose of education.

Methodology:

For a successful and profound research, this research followed to read the primary sources i.e. the National Education Policy-2010 of Bangladesh and the texts of the mentioned educationists and the secondary sources in which we have

got the different relevant interpretation of those primary sources. After reading all the collected sources I have tried to compile the views and their action and the reaction on “meaning”, “function” and “purpose” of education. This paper has a certain limitation. Deficient of available literatures is one of them.

Research Question and Objective:

The paper has set up three questions: first, what are the world’s views of meaning, purpose, function and morality of education?; second, what are the National Education Policy-2010 of Bangladesh’s views of meaning, purpose, function and morality of education?; and finally, where do the gaps lay between first and second views? After compiling these views side by side, it tries to recommend how the gaps can be solved.

Meaning of Education:

The word ‘education’ has been derived from Latin. In Latin, it has a number of meanings; for example, ‘to bring out’, ‘to nourish’, ‘to lead out’, ‘act of teaching or training’, ‘to bring up’ etc. But in India, it has been derived from Sanskrit’s word ‘shiksha’ or ‘vidya’. In Sanskrit, it means ‘to discipline’, ‘to control’, ‘to instruct’, ‘to teach’, and ‘to know’. [7]

Wherever it has been derived from is not a matter because the purpose of education in everywhere is almost the same. Actually education is a systematic process through which one can acquire ‘knowledge, experience, skill and sound attitude’ [7]. Without getting systematic process, one can also gain ‘knowledge, experience, skill and attitude’, but s/he cannot use it for the welfare of human being. Education always gives one lesson how to distinguish ‘true and false’ or ‘right and wrong’, or ‘good and evil’. Because of education, human being can apply his/her ‘sense of faculty’. Moreover, ‘education is the harmonious development of the physical, mental, moral or spiritual, and social faculties, the four dimensions of life, for a life of dedicated service’. [7]

According to Plato ‘education is the capacity to feel pleasure and pain at the right moment.’[8] [11] On the other hand, Aristotle thinks that ‘Education is the creation of sound mind in a sound body.’[1] For Aristotle, education through habit does not mean a sort of training automatic repetition. Education through habit is connected with three notions which should be mentioned: imitation, experience and memory. Man likes to imitate; all the arts are based on an imitation of nature. But imitation is also an essential source of lessons and education. ‘Imitation is a distinctive feature of man from his childhood: imitation separates him from the animals and it is through imitation that he acquires his earliest knowledge.’[9] But a good example is needed if imitation is to serve the cause of moral education: ‘Without a good example there can be no good imitation and that is true in all areas.’[10]

Similarly, Rabindranath Tagore believes that ‘education is the process of the

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individual mind, getting to its full possible development.’[11] Swami Vivekananda opines that ‘education is the manifestation of divine perfection already existing in man.’[12] Moreover, Pestalozzi’s opinion about education is also remarkable. He believes that ‘education is natural, harmonious and progressive development of men’s innate powers.’[13]

Martin Luther King, Jr. finds that people around the world do not use the benefits of education in the same way.[14] [18] Some others believe that ‘education should equip them with the proper instruments of exploitation so that they can forever trample over the masses.’[14] But the other believes that ‘education should furnish them with noble ends rather than means to an end.’[14] Because of these two opposite attitudes, we see the world is unrest because one tries to dominate the other and the other tries to cooperate and establish the equity with equality among them. The capitalistic society indulges the former.

So ‘education has a two-fold function to perform in the life of man and in society: utility and culture.’[14] As a result, we see education most of the time fails to fulfill its purposes because the ‘so-called educated people cannot think logically and scientifically.’[14] Why do the press, the classroom, the platform, and the pulpit in many instances not give us objective and unbiased truths? In reply, Martin Luther King, Jr. says that if education cannot ‘enable one to sift and weigh evidence, to discern the true from the false, the real from the unreal, and the facts from the function’ [14]; the world never sees peace at all.

For Gundem education is ‘the study of teaching and upbringing.’[15] [24] Dale defines ‘education as critical social science with enlightenment, rationality and political bilding as superior categories.’[16] Robert S. McNamdedd refers education ‘as a complex system embedded in a political, cultural and economical context.’[17]

Purpose of Education:

Now we will see why and what purpose we should fix in education because there is a definite purpose underling all educational activities. Bertrand Russell believes that ‘the purpose of education is civilization, a term which has a definition which is partly individual, partly social.’[3] And civilization demands respect for law, justice as between man and man purposes not involving permanent injury to any section of the human race, and intelligent adaptation of means to ends.

Aristotle departs from the formal line of argument to observe that there seem to be four sorts of lives that are chosen by men. One is the life of pleasure. This life, Aristotle says, is appropriate for slaves or beasts. The second sort of life is one which aims at honour. The meaning that Aristotle gives to this kind of life makes it the object of politics. The third sort of life is one whose object is the pursuit of wealth, but, as Aristotle points out repeatedly in both the *Ethics* and the *Politics*, the pursuit of wealth is a means and not an end to the good life. Finally, the fourth kind of life is that of contemplation, whose proper object is theoretical knowledge, and in the latter part of the *Ethics* (Book X), Aristotle argues that it is the highest end.[18]

So if one thinks that being educated he will be happy he must remember that 'flourishing or happiness is not a state of feeling but an activity.' [18]

Webster defines education as the process of educating or teaching 'to develop the knowledge, skill, or character of...' [19] [30] Thus, from these definitions, we might assume that the purpose of education is to develop the knowledge, skill, or character of students.

Moreover, Bill Beattie thinks that 'The aim of education should be to teach us rather how to think, than what to think—rather to improve our minds, so as to enable us to think for ourselves, than to load the memory with the thoughts of other men.' [20]

According to Arthur W. Foshay:

The one continuing purpose of education, since ancient times, has been to bring people to as full a realization as possible of what it is to be a human being. Other statements of educational purpose have also been widely accepted: to develop the intellect, to serve social needs, to contribute to the economy, to create an effective work force, to prepare students for a job or career, to promote a particular social or political system. These purposes offered are undesirably limited in scope, and in some instances they conflict with the broad purpose I have indicated; they imply a distorted human existence. The broader humanistic purpose includes all of them, and goes beyond them, for it seeks to encompass all the dimensions of human experience. [21]

Furthermore, 'Freedom is one of the ultimate goals of education, for happiness is impossible without freedom.' [10]

Similarly John Dewey believes:

The purpose of education has always been to everyone, in essence, the same—to give the young the things they need in order to develop in an orderly, sequential way into members of society. . . . Any education is, in its forms and methods, an outgrowth of the needs of the society in which it exists. [22]

Dobbed 'Bengal's earliest and boldest feminist writer' [23] and one who worked throughout her life to remove what she called the '*pardah* of ignorance' [24], Rokeya Sakhwat Hossain also believes:

The purpose of education is not to blindly imitate a community or a race. It is to develop the innate faculties of the individual, attributed by God, through cultivation. Proper use of these qualities is incumbent upon us, and their dissipation is a vice. God has given us hands, legs, eyes, ears, imagination and the power to think. If we strengthen our hands and legs through exercises, do good deeds with our hands, observe attentively with our eyes, listen carefully with our ears, and learn to make our thinking ability more sophisticated through reflection, then that is true education. 'We do not consider the pursuit of academic

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degrees as real education.’[23].

So, education always ensures the equity in society. The concepts of equity, excellence and efficiency are interlinked. It is the general and high level of competence of the large majority of people achieved through a system of accessible, relevant and efficiently delivered education that ensures attainment of a broad socio-economic base for consolidating national freedom and advancement in a quickly changing world.[25]

In education, concern for equalities, discrimination, opportunity, vulnerability, disaster, conflict, peace, stability and employment have always got priority as concerns for inclusive development.[5]

Functions of Education:

Sometimes, we forget there are a number of differences between purpose and function of education. [24] We must think that ‘A *purpose* is the fundamental goal of the process—an end to be achieved. *Functions* are other outcomes that may occur as a natural result of the process—by products or consequences of schooling.’[27]

In order to fulfill the purpose the education and function Martin Luther King Jr. emphasizes on moral values. He opines:

The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. But education which stops with efficiency may prove the greatest menace to society. The most dangerous criminal may be the man gifted with reason but no morals. ... We must remember that intelligence is not enough. Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education.[14]

But Aristotle considers that education is essential for the complete self-realization of man. [10] Finally, we hope ‘education should be limited to what is appropriate for the pupil, taking account of his age, character, and so on.’ [10] We do believe ‘equitable and quality education equips individuals for both individual and social development.’ [5]

Morality in Education:

Aristotle devotes a good deal of attention to particular moral virtues – not just the four cardinal virtues of wisdom, courage, self-control, and justice emphasized by Plato in the *Republic*. In Book VI of the *Ethics*, Aristotle also discusses the intellectual virtues. These he also characterizes as states of the soul, and they are five in number: *art*, scientific knowledge, practical wisdom, philosophic wisdom and intuitive reason. [18]

The importance of both the moral and the intellectual virtues is emphasized in this passage:

The origin of action - its efficient, not its final cause - is choice, and that of choice is desire and reasoning with a view to an end. This is why choice cannot exist either without reason and intellect or without a

moral state; for good action and its opposite cannot exist without a combination of intellect and character. Intellect itself, however, moves nothing but only the intellect which aims at an end. [18]

'The virtues, wisdom and happiness are acquired through education.' [10] Without morality, if one acquires knowledge, experience, skill and attitude, should we call it education? We should not, because the function of education, therefore, is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. But education which stops with efficiency may prove the greatest menace to society. The most dangerous critical may be the man gifted with reason, but with no morals.' [14] In *Education and Discipline*, Bertrand Russell emphasizes that education 'must consist of two parts: a conception of the ends of life, and a science of psychological dynamics, i.e. of the laws of mental change.' [28]

Musgrave says that moral education:

must, therefore, take account of the way in which these choices seem to be made. Attention must be given to the knowledge needed, the relevant structures to be used, the skills necessary for interpreting the thoughts, feelings and actions of others involved, and to the process of weighting used by moral actors as they balance these elements. [29]

Thus:

All morality consists of relationships between persons; that its three concerns are therefore, self, others and the relationship between them; and that the heart of morality is therefore respect for persons. [The child's concept of a person] does not have to be learnt as such, [but] it does have to be built up by moral education in terms of knowledge, habits and attitudes. [30]

Wilson and Sugarman say roughly the same thing, as:

If we want to be able to show that certain types of education produce 'morally educated' people, we must first identify a 'morally educated' person so that we know what types of education to look for. [31]

Meaning, Purpose, Function and Morality of Education in National Education Policy-2010:

Our education system is at once discriminatory and inconsistent. The standard of education is on the decline. The absence of effective quality control mechanisms and non-standardization of the core content of basic learning materials make the education scenario even less satisfactory. More than half of the population in Bangladesh is denied the right to education. 'Bangladesh spends 2.17% of its national income on education.' [32] With this little amount of money, the rate of education is not possible to increase let alone to ensure quality education.

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Because of undisciplined education system, still now we see the gender inequality in education in Bangladesh. 'The gender inequality is directly related to the role women play at home and in non-home production activities. Gender inequality is higher in non-urban areas and amongst socio-economically backward groups.' [25]

We are afraid whether we can achieve our goal or not as among the factors that conducted or continue to conduce low level of achievements and regression are:

- a) minimal level of response to demographic pressure, b) irrelevant curriculum in relation to job market, c) inadequate evaluation of internal and external efficiency, d) deliberate alimentionation of the community and stakeholders in education governance, and e) inappropriate financing. [32]

Regarding these, Professor Muzaffer argues that to deal with governance crisis in education; issues of equity, efficiency and excellence should be investigated. [25]

So far we have seen morality must be taught in school, college and university. The National Education Policy-2010 of Bangladesh ensures it too but 'majority of the guardians think text books contain ethical knowledge and they are insufficient. All the teachers found the textbooks contain ethical knowledge and education but only one fourth of them found those are insufficient.' [33] 'In the text books, moral lessons are found in religion, social and environmental context as a mere advice. They are available in the form of do's and don'ts. Stories carry ethical lesson but no individual lesson/ chapter was found to be available in any books.' [33]

In order to fulfill the aim of education and implement the function of education, the text books of school, college and university must play a vital role. But the texts books are completely failure to meet the aim of National Education Policy-2010 of Bangladesh, because the ethical knowledge as mostly find with 'speak the truth' but there is no steps to be practical. Moreover, 'understanding of the guardians and the teachers contradicted in some issues on text books.' [33]

Exclusion and inequality are major obstacles on the way toward development. In Bangladesh, inequalities are primarily in terms of gender, ethnicity, disability, or geographical location. [34]

The educationists are aware of those obstacles. That's why, in Chapter-16 of the National Education Policy-2010 of Bangladesh claims 'Education is the founding stone for the development of the country and society. A large number of women of the country are deprived of education for various social, economic and cultural reasons.' [35] The policy clarifies how the discrimination between man and woman education will be removed. Moreover, it claims ensuring proper opportunity for woman, they can 'foster awareness and confidence among women and strengthen women's outlook in favour of demanding equal rights; and to motivate women at all levels to acquire skills in order to participate in the affairs of running the country.' [33]

Even we see the Prime Minister of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh realizes the importance of morality in education. She believes: the important aspect of this Education Policy is that it emphasizes religion, science and technical education. This Policy attaches importance to the natural sensitivity of people and also to the delivery of education that helps find employment in the material world. [2]

The national policy highlights the importance of necessity of morality in education. It reveals its purpose saying:

The primary objectives of this policy are directed toward the cultivation of human values. It seeks to prescribe ways through which citizens can be groomed to become leaders in pro-people development programs and progress of the society. They will become rational and intellectually accomplished human beings with ethical perceptions, who have respect for their own religion as well as for others' faiths. Education will help them to grow up as non-communal, patriotic and efficient persons free from superstitions. And simultaneously, it is only education that can equip the nation to acquire the qualities and skills that will strengthen Bangladesh to work with equal capacity and pace of the global community. [35]

The policy emphasizes again and again on morality to achieve the aim of education. It fixes the aim:

2. to stimulate the intellectual and practical qualities of the learners so that moral, human, cultural, scientific and social values are established at personal and national levels; . . .

7. to remove socio-economic discrimination irrespective of race, religion and creed and to eradicate gender disparity; to develop non-communalism, friendliness, global fraternity, fellow-feeling and respect for human rights;

8. to create unhindered and equal opportunities of education for all as per learners' talents and aptitudes, irrespective of geographical, social and economical situations to establish a society that is free from discrimination; to resist use of education as a commodity to reap profits; . . .

16. to help students grow up with sound moral character through lessons from their respective religious teachings and moral sciences; [35]

Even the policy has an individual section which emphasizes and explains why the religion education should be given more acutely and the students should be encouraged to practice ritual activities. Moreover, the policy exposes how religious education can help the students to achieve the aim of education. The aims and objectives of the policy say:

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The objective of religious and moral education is imparting knowledge about the respective religions of the learners, improvement of the students' behavioural pattern, and establishment of moral virtues in life and society and building of moral character of the learners.[35]

The objectives of this education are:

- to impart proper and quality religious and moral education by radicalizing the existing system;
- to put further emphasis on moral aspect; along with fundamental teachings of every religion; Religious education will not limit itself only to religious customs and rituals, rather it will seek to build up the moral character of the students. [35]

The policy also determines that without religious knowledge none can gain morality because,

morality is rooted in religion. However, social and cultural values and regional realities also significantly contribute to it. The methods of teaching moral education will be determined by attaching importance to these factors and through the preparation of appropriate textbooks. [35]

Findings and Recommendation:

The paper has found that the National Educational Policy-2010 of Bangladesh has strictly followed the world views of meaning, purpose, function and morality of education. But it fails to recommend how to achieve those properly and easily. Moreover, the objectives and functions of the National Education Policy-2010 of Bangladesh sometimes do not match with the text books of the school and college levels. That's why, I would like to suggest that achieving the aims and goals of it, the Education Ministry should take some necessary steps to overcome the shortage of teaching aids and qualified teachers in school and college levels. Moreover, the educationists may work to fulfil its aims so that the country can progress economically and morally.

Conclusion:

According to James Ross, 'The aim of education is the development of valuable personality and spiritual individuality.'[36] The true aim of education cannot be other than the highest development of the individual as member of society. Let education burn the individual flame, feeding it with the oil of society.

In order to ensure the peace and happiness in society, equity is a must. 'Equity should not be judged only as access; rather it should be envisioned as an equitable opportunity to acquire marketable skills and a system, which obliterates all cost barriers.' [32]

Through the education, we must implement the goal of education and ensure the ethics to make the world peace and happiness. Mahatma Gandhi once said,

‘Education means all-round drawing out of the best in child and man-body, mind and spirit.’ [37] As such,

education becomes the basis of personality development on all dimensions-moral, mental and emotional. Therefore, we all understand the need in the long run; education forms the foundations on which the castles of peace and prosperity can be built. [33]

So we should understand that level of ethical knowledge is a broad practicing of which should be started at home with support from education materials important to understand those lessons and focuses on the need.

Finally, the paper can claim that what the National Education Policy-2010 of Bangladesh sets to understand the meaning and purpose of education to build up a self dependent nation is absolutely followed the views of the world recognized educationists. So, in order to achieve the real target, we need to implement the policy properly in time in the class room. In addition, as there is a subtle gap between the policy and the text books, the concerned authority had better take necessary steps as early as possible.

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