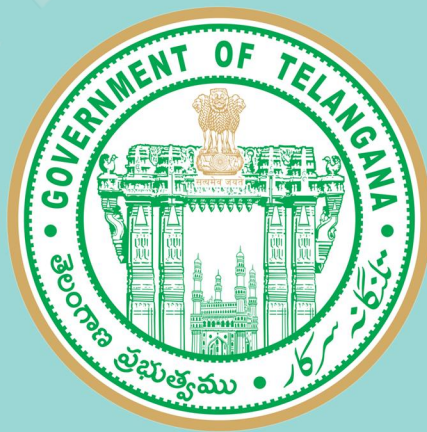


State Curriculum Framework-2011

Position Paper

on

Aims of Education



**School Education Department
Telangana, Hyderabad.**



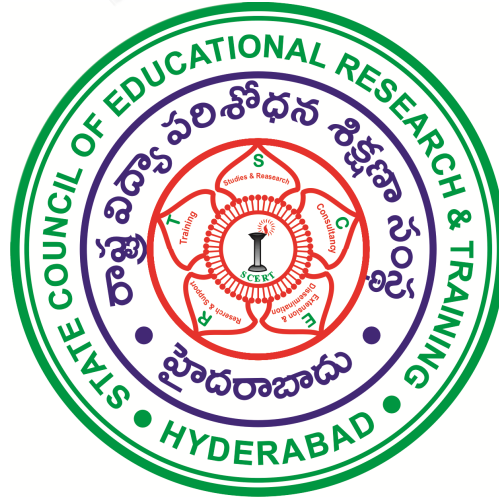
**State Council of Educational Research & Training
Telangana, Hyderabad.**

State Curriculum Framework-2011

Position Paper

on

Aims of Education



**State Council of Educational Research & Training,
Telangana, Hyderabad.**

First Print 2011
Reprint 2019

State Council of Educational Research & Training,
Telangana, Hyderabad.

Vision of the State

The vision of the State is that ALL children should receive high quality education and become responsible citizens with an acute sense of the other. They should be aware of their environment and think about it critically. They should listen carefully and speak fearlessly. They should be able to understand what they hear and read; but they should also be able to question it. Teachers should promote these skills, provide meaningful teaching learning processes in natural and friendly environment that enable children to express themselves freely and ask questions. Teachers are collaborative learners and reflective practitioners. Parents and community should have a sense of ownership and participate in the life of the school. In a world which is becoming increasingly instrumental, materialistic and competitive, school should become a space for reflection, cooperation and promotion of human and ethical values.

CONTENTS

Members of the Focus Group

Executive Summary

1. Introduction
2. Understanding the aims of education
3. Framework for defining the aims
4. Aims of education and the teacher
5. Towards a consensus
6. What should the aims of education include?
7. Implications for Pedagogy and Assessment
8. Conclusion

Bibliography

Members of the Focus Group

Chairperson

Dr. K. Shashidhar Rao, Rtd. Principal, IASE, Masabtank, Hyderabad.

Focus Group Members

1. Dr. N. Upender Reddy, Professor & Head, C&T Dept., SCERT-AP, Hyderabad.
2. E.D. Madhusudhan Reddy, UPS Nacharam, Kosgi, mahabubnagar.
3. Dr. P. Shankar, Lect, DIET, Waragal.
4. Prof. J. Raghavulu, SCERT, AP., Hyderabad.
5. Prof. V. Sudhakar, IFLU, Hyderabad.
6. Suvarna Vinayak, H.M, GPS, Manthani, Karimnagar District, A.P.
7. Khanderao Ramesh Rao, S.A., GHS, Huzurabad, Karimnagar District, A.P.
8. Kakulavaram Rajender Reddy, S.A., UPS, Thimmapur, Nalgonda District, A.P.
9. T.V.S. Ramesh, S.A. UPS, Potlapudi, T.P.Gudur Mandal, Nellore District, A.P.
10. Dr. Anuradha Reddy, Lecturer, SCERT, A.P., Hyderabad.
11. Dr. Revathi Reddy, Lecturer, SCERT, A.P., Hyderabad.
12. K. Yadagiri, Lecturer, SCERT, A.P., Hyderabad.

Special Invities

1. Dr. D. Ramakrishna Rao, Vignanavihara, Gudilova, Vishakapatnam.
2. Dr. V. Srinivas, Lect, NSR College of Education, Hyderabad.
3. Dr. J. Lalitha, Faculty of MEd, CTE, AMS, Hyderabad.
4. T. Ravinder, Director, Vandematharam Foundation, Hyderabad.
5. N. Sarojini Devi, Lect, SCERT, AP., Hyderabad.
6. K. Sahadevudu, Prof. SCERT, AP., Hyderabad.
7. Prof. T. Mrunalini, IASE, OU, Hyderabad.
8. R. Suryanrayana, Sri Saraswathi Vidyapeet, Hyderabad.
9. Gurvin Kaur, Director Center for Learning Secunderabad.
10. Chinaveerabadhrudu, Additional Director, Tribal Education, Hyderabad.
11. Y. Madhava Reddy, Secretary, Vandematharam Foundation, Hyderabad.
12. Dr. Paripally Shankar, Lecturer, DIET, Hanmakonda, Warangal District, A.P.

Consultants

1. Prof. Rama Kant Agnihotri, Retd, Delhi University, Vidya Bhawan Education Resource Centre, Udaipur
2. Prof H.K. Dewan , Vidya Bhawan Society, Udaipur
3. Kamal Mahendroo, Vidya Bhawan Education Resource Centre.

Development & Coordination Committee

1. Smt B. Sheshu Kumari, Director, SCERT, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh.
2. Dr. N. Upender Reddy, Professor & Head, C&T Dept., SCERT-AP, Hyderabad.

Executive Summary

Society and education are interdependent. Both are dynamic in nature. As per the societal needs the education will have to be changed. In turn, education also brings about changes in the society. All educational endeavours are shaped by the implicit aims of the society and the stakeholders. Therefore, it is necessary to understand these clearly.

In the modern context the school system has become inflexible and is forbiddingly instrumental in nature. The whole focus of education seems to be on getting a good grade which would enable the student to get a secure job. We also note that children are getting increasingly bored with the classroom processes and textbooks. We have failed to produce rational and responsible citizens. Examination system breeds levels of fear and anxiety that push children to the borders of severe depression and suicide. Should education aim at creating more professionals to fit predetermined jobs, or at building just, egalitarian and empathic human beings and societies? Is there a need to differentiate between these two and can we perhaps focus on both?

Why should a child come to school? Why should the parent send the child to school and ensure that she comes regularly and for a sufficiently long period of time? Why should the Government run schools? What should be the priorities of these schools? What can schools do, and what is their possible role in the society? What is the purpose of education? All these questions are addressed by the aims of education. Aims of education can give a direction for the education system by considering the aspirations of the child, parents, community and the policy makers. This position paper discusses the aims, understanding the aims of education, frame for defining aims of education, role of the teacher with respect to those aims, as well as the implications of aims of education as regards the teaching learning process, pedagogy and assessment.

It also discusses how knowledge is not a unitary concept and elaborates upon different kinds of knowledge as well as different kinds of knowing. The idea that objectivity, which is a necessary constituent of knowledge, can be achieved only if knowledge is free from emotions must be abandoned. This position paper suggests that the education that the child gets must be of value to her and make her cable of intervening constructively in life around. The community should be able to use and recognise her knowledge and she should feel comfortable and confident in her community.

No aims of education that the community does not value and find meaningful can be sustained in a society. We have pledged to build an equitable, just, secular and rational society and the practices of education must be informed by these aims. They must also be informed by the intrinsic understanding of humaneness, kindness, love, peace and understanding of the other as well of the self. This indicates that the aims need to balance between the development of cognitive and rational development, physical development and affective development, involving the development of empathy, compassion, pluralism, patience, contentment and self-reflection. The society in our times is constantly changing and the aims must reflect the possibility of retaining what is appropriate and humane in tradition and of adapting to the changing understanding, situations and the challenges.

1. Introduction

The issue of aims of education can encompass much more than can be reasonably discussed in a short paper. The aims can include the aspirations of the child, of her family, her peers and her community. They can also include aspirations of the nation and indeed also of the entire humanity. These aspirations, even though aligned over broad areas, are not always in agreement on specific details. Educationists also frequently worry about whether the aims of education are universal and valid across space and time.

However, we cannot afford to discuss the whole project of education without talking about its aims. Education without them would be rudderless and scattered. Terms like child-centered, constructivist, activity based, joyful do not give any foundation on which a school program including curriculum, syllabi, textbooks, classroom processes, teacher training etc. may be constructed. Merely re-examining the classroom transaction and its organisation offers no focus about what the intention is. They cannot for example enlighten us about whether we want children to remember formulas and algorithms and focus on being able to calculate quickly OR they need to understand the structure of and the way of developing knowledge in mathematics or language or social sciences and be comfortable with their concepts. What's really important: To internalise a vast body of information or assimilate the basic conceptual machinery and cultivate the ability of constantly questioning received wisdom? The answers to these specific and many other related questions follow from the statement of aims of education.

Aims of education represent the values and the vision of the good, the meaningful, the necessary, the desirable and also the beautiful. It is inconceivable that one can have any meaningful dialogue on education without bringing into it, consciously or unconsciously, one's value suppositions whatever they may be. Educational assertions on curriculum, methods or any other aspect, by logical necessity, involve our notions of what good education is all about. They may not always be explicit, but they are there nevertheless.

An aim implies an orderly and ordered activity, one in which the order consists in the progressive completion of a process. Given an activity having a time span and cumulative growth within the time succession, an aim means foresight in advance of the end or possible termination.

In the modern context, it has become increasingly important to reopen the discourse on the aims of education. The school system has become inflexible and is forbiddingly instrumental in nature. The whole focus of education seems to be on getting a good grade which would enable the student to get a secure job. We also note that children are getting increasingly bored with the classroom processes and textbooks. We have failed to produce rational and responsible citizens. Examination system breeds levels of fear and anxiety that push children to the borders of severe depression and suicide.

2. Understanding aims of education

Putting down the aims of education is a very difficult task. Yet, it is essential to at least make an attempt. It is the pivot around which the structure and process of education needs to evolve and can be measured and held accountable. It is also important to have a specified view on this as carefully outlined as possible to begin the dialogue among all stake-holders in education. Each of us in our own minds has a list of what the school is for and what it should do. There is also a need to be conscious of this and develop for each of the stakeholder a clearer picture.

In a sense the issue contains the question “Why should a child come to school?” Why should the parent send the child to school and ensure that she comes regularly and for a sufficiently long period of time?” Why should the Government run schools and what should be ensured in these schools? There are many stakeholders and they may have different perspectives on why we should have formal systems of education at all. The wish of the parents that children should remain a part of the community and participate in work at home is as important as their desire that she learns and moves up in the social and economic ladder. The school should be a vehicle for that.

Another issue we need to confront is that children create an enormous amount of knowledge much before they come to school. To take just two outstanding examples: All normal children manage to acquire highly complex and rich grammatical systems of the languages of their neighbourhood much before they come to school. They also manage to create a highly complex structural representation of the space around them. In the case of language, they acquire not only linguistic competence but also communicative competence i.e. they know exactly what kind of language to use with whom and where. One may well question if children can create such complex systems of knowledge without school, why have any formal system of education at all? This should not be a difficult question to answer because the formal systems of science, mathematics, language and social sciences that are taught at school are NOT available outside. However, we must learn a lesson or two from the child’s innate potential for learning.

A consideration of aims of education involves many other dimensions also. The fact that there is strong inequality and diversity both among communities and among individuals needs to be kept in mind and addressed in some ways. There is a diversity

of often unconnected reasons for these inequalities. They pose issues about what kind of society we want to develop and in fact about the notions of human being and social groups in our mind. We also need to address ourselves to the question what the school can do and what is its possible role in society. The consideration of these questions would construct for the person the aims of education. Education by itself cannot have any aims. Only persons, parents and teachers, societies and nations etc., have aims for an abstract idea like education. And consequently their purposes are indefinitely varied, different with different children, changing as children grow and with the growth of experience on the part of the one who teaches. This diversity has to be constructed into some form of a common negotiated framework that is acceptable to all.

There is a need to consider the term 'purpose of education'. Does it subsume largely the expectations of gaining something concrete and measurable from it or does it mean getting educated in the real sense and become a life-long learner? Is there a need to differentiate between these two? Would the aim of education be to make engineers, doctors, scientists OR to use it as an instrument to make a just, egalitarian and empathic human beings and societies? Similarly, would we be happy with the word 'training' the child in the school for a specific period of time or should we insist that it continues to be educated? The differences between these two perspectives may not be obvious at the first glance but they may have wide ramifications. All stakeholders need to understand these questions and appreciate their significance.

For example, the word training conveys learning to do certain specific things and become adept at them. It has a mechanical and constrictive tinge to it. It does not raise any fundamental questions about the assumptions, sources of data, methods used or systems of validation of particular kind of knowledge that may inform the training in question. Those things are taken for granted and the focus is on a mechanical transaction of a highly instrumental curriculum and syllabi. The term education is much wider and evolutionary. Education is a process that is constitutive for the child; it focuses on the 'Why' and 'How' questions? This process does not end with schooling of children. The primary focus here is on developing their ability to understand, think critically, reason, intuit, observe and analyze? It hopes to develop the academic, social, moral and aesthetic dimensions of a learner's personality and focus on her critical sensibilities, powers of imagination and creativity? It is necessary

to share these perspectives with the parents and the community.

This is in contrast to the narrow short term middle class purpose that computes gain in terms of an output and an input. It is as if the child is an input to the school and there is a pre-defined purpose and an end product that we expect. The term 'aim' includes the child as the learner as a participant and less as material. The point is that we need to use terms that suggest that the process we are talking of is constitutive of the child and not something being done to her. This recognition would influence a lot of what we do in the school. If the aims are far too narrow in nature, they can get restricted to an enterprise towards producing doctors and engineers. They can become extremely instrumental. But on the other hand aims like overall development of the human being and realising her full potential become too broad and open to many different sometimes even contradictory meanings. We can say that the most suitable statements of aims are those that refer to general abilities and values as end states rather than job charts. For example: sensitivity to others, critical and creative thinking, autonomy, aesthetic sensitivity, etc. i.e do the learners cultivate the habits of saying: May be I don't know. May be what I am hearing/ reading is wrong? One should not be scared about facing contradictions in aims: for example, does the aim of education include being a responsible, patriotic and citizen and does it also include being a good human being committed to non-violence? If yes, then what should one do in times of war?

3. Framework for defining aims of education

The aims of the school program also need to recognise that communities and societies pass on their experience and their learning to the next generation through various processes. The emphasis in these is on carrying forward the knowledge, beliefs, customs, traditions, ethical systems, the social behaviour and hierarchies. One of the most significant aims of education is to help the child live in harmony with the community and become a repository of the history, culture, ethical systems and in fact the entire being of the community. The educative enterprise also has to open the mind of the young learner to the outside world, fill her with new dreams, possibilities and aspirations. She needs to be able to modify those parts of the heritage that are obsolete, restrictive and oppressive. The change towards the benefit of the community has to be acceptable and therefore the tension between education and acquiring and accepting the heritage as it is.

The collective or the community in the present contexts is being affected by two divergent trends. On the one hand the perspective of the 'right of the individual' is becoming dominant, thereby reducing the importance of the community as a collective in making choices. On the other hand the individual is being pulled towards a global environment making both the individual and the community less critical in managing changes and events influencing things. This context leads us to suggest that strengthening the community and making the relationship of the learner with it is an important aim of education. Rather than pull the child away from the traditions, practices and the beliefs of the community the school needs to engage with them appropriately. This of course needs to be in consonance with the constitutional values of equity, justice, secularism, humanism etc

The *nai talim* experiment recognised this tension and formulated principles that sought to blend education with the community. They articulated the absence of socialization and of engagement with the community of the children in schools. The sense of alienation from the context of such children led them to argue that these children were not being 'educated'. The ability to read and write was not the main aim of human education and according to them the 'schooled' were often not 'educated' in being kind and human. They were not a part of the community and were many times exploitative and inhuman. There are many competing perspectives in analysing all

this. Among all these variations it is clearly important that the community should find the learning and that the student herself can see use of what she has learnt in her life.

This is in consonance with the Position Paper (2.1) of the NCERT on 'Aims of Education' and we quote from the Annexure on Language tradition and rationality (pp. 7-8):

"The term 'tradition' may be interpreted in many ways. In its barest sense, it means that which is handed down or transmitted from generation to generation in a community because it consists of devices and principles that have helped the community to make sense of its experiences and activities. Perhaps, it was for this reason that Wittgenstein had rightly remarked, 'Tradition is not.... A thread he (man) can pick up when he feels like it any more than a man can choose his own ancestors.'

Education, as a planned endeavour, at a personal level on a small scale or institutional level on a large scale, aims at making children capable of becoming active, responsible, productive, and caring members of society. They are made familiar with the various practices of the community by imparting the relevant of skills and ideas. . Ideally, education is supposed to encourage the students to analyse and evaluate their experiences, to doubt, to question, to investigate—in other words, to be inquisitive and to think independently.

As we grow, we face new and unfamiliar experiences which question our old ways of thinking as these experiences are either inconsistent with or at a considerable variance from what we had gradually learnt to take for granted. Such experiences are critical and challenging as they involve or require formulation of new concepts, revision of preconceived notions, and new ways of looking at and dealing with the world. It is this unique human ability that is called rationality, which is manifested in human behaviour in a wide variety of ways.

Our attempts to make sense of our experiences, to comprehend the world that we live in, require that we recognize patterns, structures, and order in the world. Without such recognition, we would not be able to make any judgments, we would not be in a position to be certain about anything. This quest for certainty, taken to its extreme, may become a demand for a monistic and absolute criterion by which it would be possible to draw sharp lines between the rational and the irrational, knowledge and a

lack of it. In becoming captives of such a restricting vision, we forget that there are numerous ways in which we learnt to know and to reason about the world. This forgetting leads us to reduce rationality to mere formulas of deductive reasoning, placing greater value on theory over practice, natural sciences over art, and information over knowledge.”

The above discussion points to the tensions existing in the choices and even perspectives on the aims of education. Each choice has implications and assumptions that we may not find a complete resonance with. The awareness of this complexity warns us of the danger of making rapid and narrowly conceived choices. There is another danger in thinking about aims of education in the context of a diverse society with inequities and differences in culture. There are dangers of the aims of education being dictated by certain social, political and/or economic hegemonies. The construction of the curriculum and indeed accepted knowledge itself can become dictated by the dominant. There is bound to be therefore a need for local element and genuine participation and space for diverse elements in the construction of the educational enterprise.

4. Aims of education and the teacher

In thinking about the transaction of these aims of education in the class-room, the key figure is that of the teacher. We cannot think of either a school or an education system without the student and the teacher. The understanding of the aims of education by the teacher and also the community is critical. The first thing is to ensure that the process is aligned to the aims and second to engage the community in redefining the aims if needed and helping in assessment of the achievement. The preparation of teachers and their empowerment must include understanding these aims and contributing to the discourse for modifying and clarifying them.

There is at the moment no dialogue with teachers on the aims of education. They are not part of the discourse on it and do not contribute to specifying them or formulating the principles behind them. We cannot avoid this engagement by saying they are not interested or it is not for them. The dialogue with teachers cannot be limited to their getting to know the content areas and techniques of teaching. They need to understand the aims and the underlying reasons for the choice made for aims. Even though there are no easy answers to the questions about aims of education and it is extremely difficult to evolve ways of engaging them in a discussion about them, we must make a serious attempt and encourage them to participate in these discussions even though they may often look abstract and not directly concerned with their classroom concerns. The dialogue with teacher must include discussions on democracy, equity, justice, diversity, inclusion and the nature of human beings and their knowledge. The key ideas among these are from the constitution preamble.

5. Towards a consensus

There is a variety of goals in the minds of all of us and there is a certain hierarchy among these for each of us. It is difficult for everyone to agree on a set of aims. In fact it is not easy to even identify a few goals that everyone would agree on. There are also issues of priority and treatment. Aims and curriculum that results from them is a negotiation between stakeholders. In the context of Andhra Pradesh there is a need to reiterate aims of education as being towards the making of a society that is visualised in the preamble to the Constitution of India. We also want to stress the need to have the students continue to relate to their community and context. The aim must be for the community to recognise the students can learn and that they will become better human beings at school. They must be able to apply knowledge and be sensitive to the pain and concerns of others. The aim must also be to enable them to work in groups, interact comfortably with peers in more than just the learning situations, be confident, just, curious, sensitive to others and at ease in the community.

It is important that teachers become a part of this discourse and not only understand what is included in the aims but overtime participate in re-building them and constructing the implications for the class-rooms. It is obvious that teachers do not consciously deal with aims in their daily classroom activities. The curriculum, textbook or classroom strategies also do not naturally emerge from the stated aims. The education process is governed by the 'folk' aims that focus around functional literacy and the preparation for secondary education. The implicit and may be the most crucial aim is socialization of the students particularly coming from the lower strata of the civil society. This leaves out all aspects that expect the learner to become an informed and wise participant in the life of the communities and the world.

A small concrete illustration of this hiatus between the 'folk' aims and the 'hallowed' aims emerges from looking at classroom processes. In doing so we would have to carefully see whether 1) knowledge is being considered as a finished and closed product to be handed over and received with acceptance and blind belief OR (2) knowledge is seen as being constructed by the learner under guidance and is also always seen as changing and transforming.

6. What should aims of education include?

We acknowledge the fact that the child is naturally curious and explorative. She has a marked desire to learn and is an extremely capable learner. It is however clear that even though the child is learning all the time the school offers an organised place for her to carry forward her learning. The Position Paper (2.1) on Aims of Education of the NCERT reflects a lot of ideas crucial to the discourse on aims of education. We quote from it extensively (p. 3-4) in the next part that reiterates our view and its agreement with the national view:

- “(i) School education is a deliberate and more-or less external intervention in the life of a child. Although much learning and teaching takes place at home, in the neighbourhood community, and in actual living communities in rural and tribal India, the school introduces the child to an environment of teaching and learning that, quite by design, marks itself off from the rest of the child’s environment...While the school must perhaps have boundaries of its own—as the life of the school cannot just be merged with the life of the community around it—these boundaries must not become barriers. They must, on the other hand, facilitate the creation of vital links between children’s experiences at home and in the community and what the school offers them.
- (ii) Self-knowledge is diametrically opposed to self-ignorance and self-deception. To be deceived by others is bad but to be deceived by oneself is even worse. However, unfortunately, we deceive ourselves much of the time. The big fat ego, which most of us have, can remain fat only on a daily diet of self-deception. Self-knowledge can be achieved only through the knowledge of the other, and one cannot know the other without being just to the other. Education must be a continuous process of self-discovery, of learning the truth about oneself. This is a life long process; but the school, through insightful teaching and learning situations of various kinds, can bring home to the child the great importance of this process.
- (iii) There is need to convince the child or the adolescent of the superiority of a life of virtues to a life of vice and wickedness. The only way to do this is to effectively demonstrate that genuine human happiness can spring only from a life lived in accordance with virtues. But, how is this to be done? How is one

to counter the opposite belief that it is not the virtues but power and wealth that are constitutive of true happiness? In a world where the latter belief is predominant, it may be impossible to teach the value of virtues to our children. *We need, therefore, to create the possibility of profound questioning of our social structure, and show in various ways the deep connection between human discontent and a life devoid of virtues.*

In this connection, and in the light of so much of breast-beating about the need of 'value education', the following points need to be made about a virtuous or moral life:

First, a virtuous man is not simply one who happens to possess the virtues, say, courage, intelligence, temperance, and so on. In isolation, virtues may not have anything to do with moral life at all. Thus, e.g., courage by itself can be put to incredibly evil use; think of the courage of Nathuram Godse. The same thing *can be said of intelligence. As to temperance*, if it is not tempered with the vital unity of a moral life, it is in perpetual danger of degenerating into soulless, ritualistic disciplining of oneself."

What is it that breathes morality into the virtues?

"It is—we must have the courage to acknowledge—truth and love, or, in terms of our own powerful tradition of moral thought, *ahimsa*. Truth means freedom from self-deception; here it is never enough to speak the truth occasionally. As Wittgenstein puts it, "The truth can be spoken by someone who is already *at home* in it; not by someone who still lives in falsehood and reaches out from falsehood towards truth on just one occasion." Courage, temperance, intelligence, and so on cannot come together in the vital unity of a virtuous life unless they are profoundly mediated by the love of truth. And the love of truth—when we are talking of a moral life—can flourish only in the supreme and active presence of *ahimsa*.

Secondly, in the context of a moral life, the means and the end must form a continuum such that, as it were, the means and the end make a wholesome unity. The distinction between the means and the end in this context, if there is one at all, is not the same as the distinction where the means is merely instrumental in producing the end, e.g., playing football as a means of keeping physically fit. Morality is not external to a virtuous life in the way football is external to physical fitness. (The position taken

here is distinct from the utilitarian position epitomized in the dictum ‘honesty is the best policy’.) In the moral sphere, the process is integral to the product and the product is inalienable from the process. Here, there can be no such thing as finding the most efficient means of achieving a predetermined goal (as in, say, matters of management), for the means in the pursuit of a moral end is not replaceable.

An important corollary of this is that if value education must be a part of the education system, values or virtues must be integral to the whole process of education. Value education cannot be imparted as a separate bit of education; the whole of education has to be value education.” (NCF Position Paper, Aims of Education, p.4)

- (iv) Cultural diversity is one of our greatest gifts. To respect and do justice to others is also to respect and do justice to their respective cultures or communities. We, therefore, need to radically change the centre versus periphery perspective on intercultural relationships in our country. Cultures on the so-called periphery must receive as much attention as cultures in the centre. As for education, its implication is that ways of life other than one’s own must be imaginatively and effectively presented as deserving of as much respect as one’s own.
- (v) Individual differences are as important as cultural differences. Individual children frequently have capacities and skills which do not find adequate recognition in the school environment. Development and flourishing of these skills and capacities would not only enhance the individual’s life but also enrich the life of the community. Education must therefore promote and nourish as wide a range of capacities and skills in our children as possible. The gamut of such skills include the performing arts (music, dance, drama, , and so on), painting and crafts, and literary abilities (weaving stories, wielding language to portray different aspects of life, a flair for metaphorical and poetic expression, etc.). Also, skills as diverse as some children’s special capacity to bond with nature—with trees, birds, and animals— need to be nurtured.
- (vi) Knowledge is not a unitary concept. There are different kinds of knowledge as well as different ways of knowing. The idea that objectivity, which is a necessary constituent of knowledge, can be achieved only if knowledge is free

from emotions (care, concern, and love) must be abandoned. One implication of this for education is that literary and artistic creativity is as much part man's epistemic enterprise as is seeking knowledge through laboratory experiments or deductive reasoning. The former frequently enables us to see the truth in a way that the paradigmatic scientific quest cannot.

- (vii) Education must be seen as a liberating process; otherwise, all that has been said so far will be rendered pointless. The process of education must therefore free itself from the shackles of all kinds of exploitation and injustice (e.g., poverty, gender discrimination, caste and communal bias), which prevent our children from being part of the process.
- (viii) It is very important that school teaching and learning takes place in an environment that is aesthetically pleasing. It is also essential that children take an active part in creating such an environment for themselves.
- (ix) It ought to be possible for every child to be proud of his or her nation. But, one can be proud of something only if it is an achievement of one's own or if one is very intimately connected with those whose achievement it is. We can be proud of our own achievements, or the achievements of our children or friends." (p. 5)

We cannot hope to achieve these aims through didactic teaching or through moralisation and preaching but through carefully constructed situations, experiences and dialogue on these.

We also believe that this has to be in harmony with nature, community and family imbuing the learner with a sense of justice, rationality and self-reflection.

If we consider entire nature and humanity to be our friend then we can rejoice in what humanity is doing. The inference is that while it is very important that education fosters within the child an intimacy with people who are directly connected with achievements that are part of our national heritage, it is equally important to see that children's pride in their own nation does not negate their pride in the great achievements of humanity as a whole.

7. Implications for pedagogy and assessment

An important issue that we need to consider here concerns the implications of all this for the class-room. What kind of processes we need to see in the class-rooms? What implications do the aims have for the class-room? Can we by observing the classroom transaction make out the aims in the mind of the teacher? What are the children learning in the activity that they are engaged with? Is there a need to relate what happens in the classroom to what we want to teach and children to learn in schools and can we have an idea of whether what is happening in the classroom is related to the above aims of education?

It is obvious that just by looking at vociferous participation of the children we cannot conclude that the participation is meaningful. We need to consider the way children are being included and their role and contribution. For example singing the multiplication tables to memorise them cannot be a useful class-room process. These processes are more suitable for the child to remember facts. We cannot have aims that demand autonomy, flexibility and ownership from a class-room that is run with strict authoritarian ways OR even a class-room where children are doing what they want without any system or structure.

Similarly learning to read or to listen is a slow and exacting engagement. It has little or nothing to do with acquiring information. Instead it has to consist of learning to follow, to understand and to re-think deliberate expressions of rational consciousness. It is learning to recognize fine shades of meaning without overbalancing into the lunacy of 'decoding'; it is allowing another's thoughts to re-enact themselves in one's own mind; it is learning in moments of surprised attention, to submit to a refreshing rational understanding, to understand and to respond to what (in this response) becomes a part of our understanding of ourselves. Here again we notice that acquisition of knowledge is constitutive of us.

This cannot be acquired by vigorously doing matching games with cards, reading aloud behind the leader, by writing alphabet etc. Similar analysis has to be taken up for all other aims that we agree with as a part of the program and teachers have to be able to see this as well.

There can be many ways in which class-rooms can be organised to engage children.

Given the need to include the experience and the environment of the child and the requirements of building ability to deal with concepts in their full scope, a pedagogy that moves between utilisation of natural and created concrete experiences and building or following logical frame-works with their analysis is required to be set up. The set of aims that we choose also directs the pedagogy and the assessment that we would use. Aims that include as primary foci being disciplined and remembering facts require a process that would be didactically organised, repetitive and mechanical. There is therefore a link between the aims that we choose and the pedagogy that we use. The teacher giving a rounded explanation without the children having a space for dialogue or for expression cannot lead to concept development and to the fulfilment of other aims. Statements like ‘We will explain, tell properly or just mention in brief’ cannot lead to an ability to learn and the development of understanding.

In the same vein assessment has to include opportunity for the child to build her own answers, construct her own arguments, follow and create her own methods and learn at her pace. She needs to enjoy the assessment process and have the space for expressing herself without the fear of making a mistake and being ridiculed. The tasks have to allow the child to respond in some manner and get feed-back that is honest yet supportive and not dismissive.

8. Conclusion

We believe that the education that the child gets must be of value to her and make her capable of intervening constructively in life around. The community should be able to use and recognise her knowledge and she should feel comfortable and confident in her community. No aims of education that the community does not value and find meaningful can be sustained in a society. We have pledged to build an equitable, just, secular and rational society and the aims of education must be informed by that. They must also be informed by the intrinsic understanding of humaneness, kindness, love, peace and understanding of the other as well of the self. This indicates that the aims need to balance between the development of cognitive and rational and of the physical development and the affective development namely empathy, compassion, pluralism, patience, contentment and self-reflection. We are in a changing time and the aims must reflect the possibility of retaining what is appropriate and humane in tradition and adapt what needs to be brought in to transform to the changing understanding, situations and the challenges. These changes in our understanding must get reflected in the curricular BUT more importantly they should get reflected in attitudes, interventions in life situations and relationships of all the stakeholders.

The assessment process has to respond to these aims and evolve as flexible and open-ended for the teacher and the children. It must engage and interest children and not examine the information retention capacity. It must also have space for checking ingenuity and ability to understand and critically examine concepts and ideas.

Bibliography

- *Issues in Primary Education on Aims of Education*, DPEP, MHRD, NEW DELHI.
- *Learning Without Burden*, Report, MHRD, NEW DELHI.
- *National Curriculum Framework- 2005*, NCERT, NEW DELHI.
- *Position Paper On Aims Of Education-2005*, NCERT, NEW DELHI.