

KNOWLEDGE ACCORDING TO NATURALISM

Naturalism is a concept that firmly believes that ultimate reality lies in the nature of the matter. Matter is considered to be supreme and mind is the functioning of the brain that is made up of matter. The whole universe is governed by laws of nature and they are changeable. It's through our sense that we are able to get the real knowledge. The senses work like real gateways of knowledge and exploration is the method that helps in studying nature. Naturalism is a term loosely applied in educational theory to systems of training that are not dependent on schools and books but on manipulation of the actual life of the student.

THEORETICAL RATIONALE OF NATURALISM

Naturalism is the doctrine which separates nature from God, subordinates spirit to matter and sets up unchangeable laws as supreme.

METAPHYSICS

- Naturalist God is not within Nature. He is not all nature but more than nature.
- The self seems to be an organization of experience in each individual which is constantly developing and changing. The human self is seen by naturalism as an offshoot of Nature, and not as springing from beyond Nature.
- Naturalists are not much interested in the concept of soul of man. According to them man is the child of nature; in the evolutionary processes that have been at work in the universe.

EPISTEMOLOGY

- Naturalism highlights the value of scientific knowledge, through specific observation, accumulation and generalization.
- It also lays emphasis on the empirical and experimental knowledge.
- Naturalism also lays stress on sensory training as senses are the gateways to learning.

AXIOLOGY

- Naturalism believes that Nature is versatile. Instincts, drives and impulses need to be expressed rather than repressed.
- According to them, there is no absolute good or evil in the world. Values of life are created by the human needs.
- Ethics of naturalism is hedonistic- the highest good is the most highly refined and abiding pleasure.
- Aesthetic values are rooted in nature and do not depend on any source outside nature for their validation. Nature itself provides the criterion for beauty.

NATURALISM IN EDUCATION

We are born weak, we need strength; helpless, we need aid; foolish, we need reason. All that we lack at birth, all that we need when we come to man's estate, is the gift of education. ~Jean Jacques Rousseau

Naturalism as a philosophy of education was developed in the 18th century. It is based on the assumption that nature represents the wholeness of reality. Nature, itself, is a total system that contains and explains all existence including human beings and human nature. Education must conform to the natural processes of growth and mental development. It should be pleasurable. This readiness for specific kinds of activity is evidenced by their interest. Education should engage the spontaneous self-activity of the child. Adults are foolish, therefore, if they do not use this native self-activity as an ally in their teaching. The way to do this, Spencer advised, is to tell the learner as little as possible and induce him to discover as much as possible.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF EDUCATION

- Education is for the body as well as the mind; and this should not be forgotten. The naturalist, as Herbert Spencer represents them, first regards the pupil from the physical side. He has a body, or, to be more accurate, he is a body one of his first requirements therefore is that he be healthy, a vigorous animal, able to stand the wear and tear of living.
- Rousseau's aim is to show how a natural education, enables Émile to become social, moral, and rational while remaining true to his original

nature. For it he is educated to be a man, not a priest, a soldier, or an attorney, he will be able to do what is needed in any situation.

- Whereas traditional education had placed major emphasis upon intellectual function, the naturalist proposes that the child be given opportunity to grow physically, mentally, socially, emotionally, aesthetically, vocationally, under the auspices of the school.
- According to Spencer this can be achieved by “that education which prepares for direct and indirect self-preservation; that which prepares for parenthood; that which prepares for citizenship; that which prepares for the miscellaneous refinements of life.” Thus the school’s most important job as an educational agency is to see to it that the child learns how to preserve his own physical health and well-being. Preparation for citizenship and leisure time activities appear at the end of the list and are of lesser importance.
- “**Complete living**” is the general aim which includes-
 - i. Self-preservation
 - ii. Securing the necessities of life.
 - iii. Raising children.
 - iv. Maintenance of social and political relations
 - v. Enjoyment of leisure.

THE CONCEPT OF TEACHER

- The teacher’s role is to remain in background. The natural development of child should be stimulated. Since, Nature is considered to be best educator.
- According to naturalists the teacher is the observer and facilitator of the child’s development rather than a giver of information, ideas, ideals and will power or a molder of character.
- In the words of Ross “teacher in a naturalistic set up is only a setter of the stage, a supplier of materials and opportunities, a provider of an ideal environment, a creator of conditions under which natural development takes place. Teacher is only a non-interfering observer”.
- For Rousseau, the teacher, first of all, is a person who is completely in tune with nature .He has a profound faith in the original goodness of human nature. Naturalists are of the view that teacher should not be one who stresses books, recitations and massing information in literary form, “rather he should give emphasis on activity, exploration, and learning by doing”.

THE CONCEPT OF STUDENT

- Rousseau once commented that “Everything is good as it comes from the hands of the author of nature.
- The pupil is to the teacher what man is to the philosopher. “I hate books; they only teach us to talk about things we know nothing about. ”Jean Jacques Rousseau

CURRICULUM

- Its curriculum is usually based on the needs, interests and abilities of the child in relation to its levels of development. So, a child-centered curriculum forms an amicable answer of the Naturalist.
- It helps in recognizes individual differences and experiences of the child should form the core element of the curriculum.
- Professional courses in child and educational psychology became the center of the educational program for teachers. “Know the child and you will know what to teach” became the slogan of the naturalists.
- They think that each and every child has the power to and demand of his own to frame curriculum. A child will gather experience from nature according to his own demand. He is not to be forced to practice any fixed curriculum.
- They have advised to include the following in the curriculum –
 - i. Science dealing with nature will include Physics, Chemistry, and Botany etc. These branches of science will help children to be acquainted with nature.
 - ii. Mathematics and language will be included because these will help to acquire the subjects of science.
 - iii. History and Social Science – in order to acquire modern knowledge, one should practice the process of evolution. It will also help to realize the importance of those in their present life.
 - iv. Agriculture and Carpentry will offer opportunity to the children to act them in freedom and will increase their power of observation.
 - v. Naturalists felt the importance of Physical Education and Health Training for self-protection. But they did not form any particular curriculum for this. They say that the children should be given opportunity for their free movement of bodies in natural

environments. They will thus acquire techniques of self-protection from nature and expose themselves in nature.

- vi. Drawing naturalists have considered drawing as the main technique of self-expression.
- vii. The role of humanistic studies becomes minor, as they contribute to “preparation for the worthy use of leisure time.” In other words they are recreational rather than essential

METHODOLOGY OF INSTRUCTION

- Methods of instruction should be inductive. This follows from Nature’s advice that teaching make fullest use of the self-activity of the pupil, telling him as little as possible and encouraging him to discover as much as possible for himself.
- The natural mode of self-expression is Play and learning should be done through cheerful spontaneous and creativity of play. The process of discovery is given importance. The activities like excursions, fieldtrips and practical experiments are recommended to enhance learning
- All of Rousseau’s recommendations on “how to teach” is based on the belief that experience is the only teacher.
- Spencer, the scientific naturalist, enthroned experimentation, the usual method of empirical sciences, as the only valid method of teaching
- Thus all teaching methods should be characterized by pupil activity involving direct or at least vicarious experience; the pupil must educate himself.
- A second characteristic of naturalistic teaching learning methods is found in their conformity to the natural development of the pupils. It means readiness of the organism for any given learning. Negatively stated, this principle means that it is not the teacher or society that determines what the child should learn, but his own developmental level. Positively stated, it means that when the organism is ready for a certain type of learning activity it will seek in naturally, that is, without being forced by the teacher or by adult society.
- A third characteristic of naturalistic methodology is that all educational activities should be enjoyable to the child.
- Rousseau advocates negative education – which is typical of naturalistic philosophy – the subordination of the child to natural order and his freedom

from the social order. He defines negative education as one that tends to perfect the organs that are the instruments of knowledge before giving them this knowledge directly. The child should be left free to develop his body and senses. He attaches great importance to sense training as he believes senses are the gate ways of knowledge.

CONCEPT OF DISCIPLINE

- Punishment should be constituted by natural consequences of wrong deeds; should be certain, but tempered with sympathy.
- Naturalism aims at making education free from the bondage of rigid discipline under which children were tortured. The freedom of child disciplines him and he is naturally controlled by his own learning and

AGENCIES OF EDUCATION

- It follows that mothers and /or fathers are the natural teachers, and there is no firm basis for adding to institutions.
- Rousseau proposes that formal schooling is both unnecessary and harmful to education “according to nature.”
- Even the tutor’s role must be subordinated to that of the home and nature. His function is a negative one: to keep the child and youth from the evil influence of corrupt institutions and society.
- Of these three educational agencies (home, church, and school) Rousseau would recognize only the home. The foundations of good physical and mental health are laid during infancy If the child is spoiled by faulty home training during these formative years, this tutor will have great difficulty in correcting the errors. .
- Other naturalists believed that although the parents role is very important in the child’s education, one should have formalized institutions whose very existence is rooted in nature. They acknowledge the important function that secondary educational agencies serve. Mass communication

media such as radio, television, movies, and newspapers, all play important parts in the modern child's education.

EVALUATION OF NATURALISM IN EDUCATION

- The absence of any permanent goals for education. Without some permanence of aims education can easily become a haphazard.
- By designating experience as the sole source of knowledge naturalism limits itself to one methodology and to a narrow.
- The view that human nature is essentially good resulted in the elevation of pupil freedom to the detriment of even the minimal order and discipline essential from optimal learning.
- The most significant educational reform proposed by the naturalists flows from their belief that the natural growth pattern of children should determine the content and method of education. The modern concept of "readiness," accepted by educators of all persuasions, is a result of this principle.
- It reminds the educator that content and method should be adjusted to the individual differences of the pupils.
- Another principal advocated by the naturalists and generally accepted by all modern educators' stresses the pedagogical value of "learning by doing."
- One final contribution suggested by naturalistic theory which has been a value to all educators can be traced to the dictum that "learning is naturally pleasurable."

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