

WHY SHOULD NOT WE ADVOCATE EDUCATIONAL SCIENCE?

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ABSTRACT

When we speak of a system called education, the first thing we need to do is to widen up the horizons of our mindset so that it will open up new vistas for mankind. Educational System in any country has been evolving for so long and has, over the years, been significantly influenced by the works of a number of philosophers, sociologists, researchers and scientists. In this paper, we shall argue that there should be a discipline scientific in nature which will study the educational system. We cannot reshape our educational system if we do not deal with it professionally. No doubt there is a subject or discipline under the same name *Education* to look after the education as a field of study but it is so diluted that there is no uniformity and neutrality in its nomenclature and functions as a result, the subject *Education* has been confined to teacher training programmes only through out the world. Subject *Education*, in common with other social sciences, suffers from a double lag: slow progress in fundamental research and delay in using research findings. Perhaps the disease is even more pronounced in the subject of Education than in the other social sciences. Certainly it is more devastating in its effects because malfunctioning of education endangers the health of the whole society.

Keywords: Education, system, nomenclature, universe and educational science.

CAN EDUCATION BE AN ACADEMIC SUBJECT?

Education is a perennial process originating from the origin of humankind. The first thing which is wrong at global level in our educational system is that a particular subject can not be called as *Education* because education is a social process and combinations of different areas and subjects. It houses many concepts and the word can be applied to all fields and disciplines. Richard Peters in his inaugural lecturer as professor of the Philosophy of Education at the Institute of Education, London, in 1963, insisted that "Education is not an autonomous discipline, but a field, like politics where the disciplines of history, philosophy, psychology, and sociology have application" (Peters, 1963). The developing role of disciplinary perspectives on education has had a vital bearing on the nature of education as a subject over the last 50 years. In particular, it tended to suggest that education should be regarded principally as the application of a range of approaches borrowed from the disciplines, rather than as a single discipline (McCulloch, 2002).

Probably the best known published work to promote disciplinary approach to education was "*The Study of Education*" edited by J.W. Tibble. Tibble's edited collection was intended to explore the nature of education as a subject of study and the nature of its contributory disciplines. Some, as Tibble noted, would illustrate the separate contributions of the different disciplines to the study of education, while others would deal with a major educational topic in an interdisciplinary way, "that is showing the contributions which different forms of thought can make to it" (Tibble, 1966).

Tibble repeated his winning formula with a further edited collection, *An Introduction to the Study of Education*

based on the disciplines, specifically addressed to teachers. He was confident as to the value of this chosen approach in terms of understanding education, and opined:

It is clear that 'education' is a field, not a basic discipline; there is no distinctively 'educational' way of thinking; in studying education one is using psychological or historical or sociological or philosophical ways of thinking to throw light on some problem in the field of human learning (Tibble, 1971).

Education as a discipline has been subject to intense criticism for more than a decade. Individuals as well as groups of critics have singled out specific aspects of education upon which to focus their criticisms. According to Francis S. Chase, *Subject Education*, in common with other social sciences, suffers from a double lag: slow progress in fundamental research and delay in using research findings. Perhaps the disease is even more pronounced in subject education than in the other social sciences. Certainly it is more devastating in its effects because malfunctioning of education endangers the health of the whole society (Chase, 1983).

In his book, *The Education of American Teachers*, Dr. James B. Conant rejects the idea that education is an academic discipline. The argument he develops is a logically simple one that follows a rather familiar pattern. Education, like medicine, is a practical art where scientifically derived generalizations may helpfully guide action and a deductive-theoretical endeavor where the "wide premises of culture," largely unexamined, condition decision-making. And in education, since these two "modes of thought—the practical and the theoretical—are inseparable, it is impossible to designate so "vast a field of human activity directed toward practical ends" as a separate discipline (Conant, 1963).

Conant further suggests that the effort of scholars to identify those separate and distinct fields of knowledge within the total world of human experience and scholarship that are worthy of being studied and taught in the sacred groves of academe is, of course, not new. And over the years, education has been particularly stubborn in resisting easy classification and continues today to nettle the academic purists who guard the doors of truth and scholarship. Seen in historical perspective, Conant represents just the latest effort by a scholar to put education in its "proper" place.

Bernard Bailyn makes a similar plea for a broader definition of education in his book *Education in the Forming of American Society*. Here he urges that we think of education "not only as formal pedagogy but as the entire process by which a culture transmits itself across the generations; . . ." (Bailyn, 1960). Bailyn further suggests that education should be seen more than an academic discipline and it is only possible to gain a proper understanding of the role of education if one sees "education in its elaborate, intricate involvements with the rest of society, and notes its shifting functions, meanings, and purposes" (Bailyn, 1960).

Professor Belth in his book entitled, *Education as a Discipline*, believes that "the study of education is the study of the way in which models for inquiry are constructed, used, altered and reconstructed" (Belth, 1965). In other words, the study of education is "the study of the creation and the use of models on which the operation of reason depends." And it is such a study that one can determine how subjects are developed and improved, and how they acquire their meaning and intellectual force. He performed a valuable service by showing the confusions in the subject of Education with regard to its disciplinary character and functions. He further argued that Education is the "subject of subjects," and education can not be autonomous. It borrows theories from other disciplines. It is "perhaps the most creative, certainly the most demanding, of all areas of study" (Belth, 1965). Belth notes that there are a number of familiar clichés that have grown out of the view that education has no theory of its own: "everyone teaches"; "all institutions educate"; "all experience educates"; and "the basis for teaching is knowing" (Belth, 1965).

The picture of *Education* as a subject is lamentable throughout the global village. The subject has been confined to teacher training programmes as a result the subject education is being used as a knowledge

commodity throughout the world. It gave mushroom growth of teacher training institutions by neglecting the other important issues and dimensions of education. Prof. Mohanty in his book *Adult and Non-Formal Education* published from New Delhi India commented on subject *Education* as:

"We know that in India even the subject of Education of which adult Education is only a specialized branch, was for long a distant star in the galaxy of academic discipline. Education had been considered as synonymous with practice of teaching which required mastery of a few tricks of the trade and therefore, not a subject fit for any intellectual study or research" (Mohanty, 1995).

Prof. Tyler also opined that subject *Education* should not be confined to teacher training programmes:

"Tyler expands and refines the beliefs about the study of education that he brought to the chairmanship of the University of Chicago's Department of Education. In a memorandum to President Hutchins, Tyler had offered three guiding principles. The study of education would henceforth go beyond instrumental questions such as "how to carry on the required educational program most effectively and efficiently." It would confront the reality that "some of the most critical problems facing our generation are questions about what the educational program should be. Moreover, the study of education would involve bringing "the university closer to other agencies of the community concerned with educational problems." (Tyler, 1983). The image of faculties and schools of education is in bleak throughout the world. Recently a popular book *"Some of My Best Friends are Professors"* by Professor Williams in which Williams made the statement that if a survey is made on the campus of any American University concerning the respectability and reputation of its separate faculties, the faculty of education would be considered the weakest and most incompetent (Williams, 1958).

Such a survey was made in America and the scholars of different academic disciplines, from colleges and universities distributed about the nation were selected from the "1957 Directory of American Scholars" edited by Jacques Cattell. Each scholar was asked to comment anonymously on Professor William's conclusion, by rating the faculty of education in academic respectability, intellectual honesty, scholarly research and influential teaching in comparison with other faculties on that campus. Maximum scholars agreed with the opinion of Professor William's conclusion.

John Field of University of Sterling also opined that the study of education as discipline has never formed a significant element or contribution at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. *Education* as a subject is itself a very disparate and fragmented one (Feild, 2002).

For more than three decades before his death in 2003, John Wilson was a ceaseless advocate of education as a coherent enterprise in its own right or, more concisely, of the integrity of education as a human undertaking. He also believed that education is more than a discipline. Wilson's strong convictions about education as a form of action possessing an integrity of its own, and accordingly about philosophy of education as a *sui generis* activity, became clearly evident in his books of the 1970s like *Educational theory and the preparation of teachers* (1975), *Philosophy and practical education* (1977) and *Preface to the philosophy of education* (1979a). These convictions also underlay his many writings on educational studies and his work as a founder editor in 1975, and later as General Editor, of the *Oxford Review of Education*. Informing these convictions was a wary insight, reminiscent of Michael Oakeshott's criticisms some decades earlier, that 'education is a natural stage for the dance of fashion and fantasy' (Wilson, 1980), and that a failure to take up arms against the consequences of this allowed the field of educational studies to become beset by incoherence. Secondly, Wilson's determination to confront the dance of educational fashion took shape as a sense of mission to provide a more disciplined and a more promising environment for educational thought and action. Towards the end of a 1980 essay, titled 'Philosophy of Education: retrospect and prospect', he voiced his concerns frankly:

I see little hope for the future unless and until the staff of institutions concerned with the study of education and

the preparation of teachers themselves, individually and collectively, display a good deal more interest in the rational and intellectual discussion of educational issues, and a good deal more anxiety to sophisticate the level of that discussion (Wilson, 1980).

Briefly speaking, Wilson has repeatedly stressed his view that education is not a 'contestable' concept. In other words he has insisted that its meaning is *not* to be essentially linked to the perspectives of different cultures or different historical eras. It is more than a discipline.

Recently JSTOR conducted a study in order to evaluate the development of research in education discipline. Ithaka undertook this job as a study in the field of education research began in December 2007 and completed in March 2008. Ithaka opined about nature of discipline education as:

The work that goes on in schools and departments of education is so diverse that the field is not easily characterized (Ithaka report, 2008).

The report further says that:

Research in education is interdisciplinary, and can address a range of audiences from practitioners and policy makers to scholars. While scholars based in schools of education sample the subjects and practice of many subfields, we found that they identify primarily as scholars of education, rather than with their subspecialty or methodology (e.g. psychology, economics, or policy) (Ithaka report, 2008).

Now, it is crystal clear that education cannot be an autonomous discipline and it is illogical to say a particular subject "Education" because education is a social, intellectual and all round developmental process. Education as a system is the combinations of different areas, levels of education and subjects. It houses many concepts and the word can be applied to all fields and disciplines. If a particular subject will be called as *Education* then what about other subjects like Sociology, Chemistry, and History etc. Aren't they part of education? A particular subject can not be entitled as "Education" because education is just like Universe having no end, no boundaries, vast in scope and exploring. As a particular place or creation can not be called as Universe similarly particular subject cannot be called as Education that is why in competitive examinations in India, *Education* is not considered as a subject. As Universe is combination of different creations like earth, water, sky, sun etc, similarly education is a combination of different fields, stages, areas and issues like Science Education, Technical Education, Medical Education, Value Education, Computer Education, Secondary Education etc. Education is a very broad term and cannot be confined to a particular process or subject. Just the term "*Human being*" can not be restricted to a particular man or to a man of specific region, country or religion and the term human being represents the whole mankind same is the case with the term Education. Now the question arises "what should be the subject or discipline that will study the whole educational system of any society from different approaches and philosophies"? That subject should be applied and scientific in approach. We suggest that the subject should be called as *Educational Science* like we have *Political Science* to study politics, *Environmental Science* to study environment, *Life Sciences* to study plants and animals. The functions of *Educational Science* will be same what George. F. Kneller has mentioned in the preface of his edited book *Foundations of Education* about the existing subject *Education*:

"Finally, let me say a word about the study of education as a discipline. I agree that the ideas and findings that make up the discipline of education are of little value unless they can be used to improve the actual process of education or, to resolve particular educational problems. The first task of a general study of education is to produce an understanding of education rather than a practical competence in teaching or administration. To this end, a general study of education should be organized around the concepts and facts by means of which education can be understood rather than around the problems that make such understanding necessary. A course cast in terms of certain problems is no likely to pass beyond those problems, whereas a course organized around principles will produce the general understanding of education that is applicable to all educational

problems" (Kneller, 1963).

The detailed discussion about nature and scope of proposed subject *Educational Science* and its areas of specialization are discussed as under:

Educational Science: A scientific subject to study all aspects and dimensions of education.

John Dewey argued that all problems of education can be solved scientifically by applying the method of reflective thinking (Dewey, 1910). So it is evident that almost educational problems need scientific approach for their solutions. In the light of the practical and theoretical difficulties that attend the present effort to determine the "status" of any field of knowledge, the defense for education might well argue that nothing is to be accomplished by continuing to pursue this effort along these traditional and completely unproductive lines. This is not to be interpreted as a willingness to abdicate responsibility for justifying with reason the right of education to be considered a field worthy of the most serious study. It is to suggest, rather, that the whole argument about the legitimacy of education's claim for academic respectability be taken out of the realm of logic and placed, instead, in the dynamic world of the existential present. Once education is viewed against the backdrop of the living present, the whole argument suddenly takes on a strikingly dramatic new character. Modern education, instead of being simply a hypothetical abstraction, rather forcefully makes the point that it exists and is identifiable, has structure and purpose, and, therefore, can and should be analyzed, studied, and reflected upon. It would appear, then, that instead of arguing more on status of education as an academic subject, we should direct our creative energies to understanding the dynamics of this crucially important social phenomenon so that we can direct it with greater intelligence and skill.

If such a deeper, more comprehensive understanding of the nature and structure of education is to be achieved, it is obvious that we must bring to our study of education a breadth and depth of scholarly inquiry that matches these great and exciting goals. The approach to this kind of inquiry must necessarily be broadly integrative in character. Educational Science as an applied discipline can play this role for making our educational system effective and relevant to contemporary era. Though it is true that scholars in history, philosophy, psychology, and sociology can make valuable contributions to our understanding of education, there still remains the primary need for concerned scholars to study the educational process in its entirety and to relate this specific knowledge to this larger pattern. Hence the need of Educational Science as autonomous discipline or subject arises.

Dr. Paul Woodring in 1957 concluded his analysis of American Education in *A Fourth of a Nation* with the strong recommendation that support be given to develop scholars in subject education whose responsibility would be to view the total educational enterprise in its broadest social setting. In defining the tasks of this scholar, Woodring not only identified the kind of comprehensive knowledge about education which is needed but also provided a description of education as a field of scholarly inquiry (Seckinger, 1964).

The scope and importance of subject *Educational Science* in any educational system can be understood from this point that let us consider that educational system is just like solar system. Different planets of solar system are like different faculties, courses and aspects of education revolving around *sun* which is *Educational Science* because no subject can move ahead unless guided by *Educational Science*.

Keeping this in view, *Educational Science* will have a broader scope and vast area of investigation in order to solve educational problems and produce sound educational policies and theories. *Educational Science* will be purely applied and interdisciplinary discipline for the cause of education. In other sense, *Educational Science* should be established as a complementary approach to the study of education. It will be the combination of different forms of expertise that is taken to be the most effective means of addressing the problems and processes of education.

As discussed earlier that *Educational Science* will be applied and interdisciplinary subject so it has to borrow the theories and concepts from different disciplines because educational system of any society rests upon different foundations. The term, foundation, implies a base or structure on which something is to be built. These foundations help us to view education in different perspectives so that sound educational policies and theories will be framed.

The basic foundations of education are as under:

Philosophical Foundations of Education

In the words of J.G. Fichte, "the art of education will never attain complete clearness in itself without philosophy. There is interaction between the two and either without the other is incomplete and unserviceable." According to Taneja, there is bilateral relationship between education and philosophy. Philosophy is theory and education is practice. Without philosophy, education would be a blind effort and without education, philosophy is cripple (Taneja, 2003).

This bilateral relationship gives birth to Philosophy of Education or Educational Philosophy.

Understanding the philosophical basis for an educational system can help to improve the academic success of students on a wide spectrum of learning abilities and styles. Combining philosophy with other modes of instruction can also provide a new and intriguing way to present educational concepts. Philosophy of education is concerned both with facts and values about all aspects of human learning.

Kritsonis urged that studying educational philosophy can help teachers and other educators focus on questions that are speculative, prescriptive, and analytical; it can help enlarge thoughts so better personal choices can be made; it helps in self-evaluation of beliefs and self-knowledge" (Kritsonis, 2007).

Briefly speaking, Philosophy of Education will be a core paper in the syllabus of *Educational Science*.

Sociological Foundations of Education

Sociological factors have a great impact on the educational thought and practice (Koul, 1984). The sociology of education is concerned with the interrelations between education and society. Thus it has different main fields of study. Firstly, it defines, classifies and analyzes both education and society scientifically. Education itself is a vast, covering formal and institutionalized learning, and the informal, unconscious educative impact of the society, the family, the mass media, and so forth. Each form of education is having sociological aspect, including the cultural (aim, ideology, value, norm, curricula, etc.), the institutional (administration, organization, role, etc.), the personnel (teacher, student, etc.), and the process (teaching, learning, administrating, etc.) aspect.

The history of educational sociology shows that it was first established independently in the USA. Generally speaking, this situation remained unchanged until the end of the Second World War, although certain European sociologists devoted attention to education and, in Germany and Poland some scholars tried to establish and systematize educational sociology before the War. In the first stage (1900-1910) educational sociology consisted of the compilation of sociological findings useful for teachers; in the 1920s, it was a sociology of education from the essentialist point of view as against the psychological "Measurement Movement"; and in the third stage (1930- 1950) it became a sociology of educational problems, what is called the functional school of educational sociology by some, a scientific base for the "Community School Movement" or for the diagnosis of youth problems. This stage continued for a decade even after the War. It was not until the concept of sociology of education began to replace traditional educational sociology that sociology began to be interested in the objective study of education. Since then, this idea has been widely

accepted, and the sociology of education, as a sub-division of sociology similar to sociology of law, sociology of the family, political sociology, urban sociology, and using the same empirical techniques, has proved to be the most effective in the analysis and planning of education (Shimbori, 1972).

Broadly speaking, the sociology of education turned its interest to the influence of education upon the society, including the role of education in social and economic development, in the recruitment and training of manpower, and in achieving national independence, unity or revolution. Sociologists of education should introduce a number of sub-divisions according to the form and aspect of education under consideration. Thus, there should be sociology of in-school and one of out-of-school education.

Psychological Foundations of Education

It is gospel truth that process of education has psychological bases. In the words of P. R. Nayar;

“Education is a purposefully designed process aiming at fostering the harmonious and healthy development of individuals as productive, successful and well adjusted persons in society. No aspect of component thereof can be left untouched by Psychology. Almost all lessons in education have psychological dimensions” (Nayar, 1997).

Hence, to improve educational system a need for educational psychology arises. Educational psychology is the study of how humans learn in educational settings, the effectiveness of educational interventions, the psychology of teaching, and the social psychology of schools as organizations. Although the terms “educational psychology” and “school psychology” are often used interchangeably, researchers and theorists are likely to be identified as educational psychologists, whereas practitioners in schools or school-related settings are identified as school psychologists. Educational psychology is concerned with how students learn and develop, often focusing on subgroups such as gifted children and those subject to specific disabilities.

Technological Foundations of Education

There is no denying in the fact that that technological revolution has taken place at global level, as a result an electronic touch has been given to whole educational system. This gave birth to an applied field “Educational Technology”. Technology means the systematic application of scientific or other organized knowledge to practical task. Therefore, educational technology is based on theoretical knowledge from different disciplines (communication, psychology, sociology, philosophy, artificial intelligence, computer science, etc.) plus experiential knowledge from educational practice. Educational technology is the use of technology to improve education. It is a systematic, iterative process for designing instruction or training used to improve performance. Educational technology is sometimes also known as instructional technology or learning technology. In the contemporary era, we can not improve our educational system unless and until it is not supported by educational technology.

Briefly speaking, educational technology should be an integral part of *Educational Science* because education can not be standardized unless supported by technology.

Foundations of Research in Education

It is an accepted fact that research in education as in other fields is essential for providing useful and dependable knowledge through which the process of educational can be made more effective. Research carried out on *Education* acts as the sovereign solvent for educational problems. Hence it is essential to pursue research in the theory and practice of education through proper methodology. Therefore Methodology of Educational Research should be core paper of *Educational Science*.

Statistical Foundations of Education

This area is being used in almost all the fields of knowledge. In education, statistics is the backbone for research. Statistical part of the syllabus is very popular as it is always scoring from the examination point of

view. Therefore it is essential to have Educational Statistics in the syllabi of *Educational Science*.

Historical Foundations of Education

As aspect of our life has a historical approach same is the case of education. Education has its own history. The history of education is the history of teaching and of learning, and the history of what might be described as the curricula: what it is that is taught or learned. Education has taken place in most communities since earliest times as each generation has sought to pass on cultural and social values, traditions, morality, religion, knowledge and skills to the next generation. With the development of writing, it became possible for stories, poetry, knowledge, beliefs, and customs to be recorded and passed on more accurately to people out of earshot and to future generations. In many societies, the spread of literacy was slow; orality and illiteracy remained predominant for much of the population for centuries and even millennia. Literacy in preindustrial societies was associated with civil administration, law, long distance trade or commerce, and religion (Barr, 1984). Hence it is important to have history of education as an essential part of *Educational Science*.

Morphological Foundations of Education

It is the innovative aspect of education which authors of this paper have explored first time. So far as the term *Morphology* is concerned, it is the study of general appearance and structure of an organism or its parts. Of course educational system has also general appearance and different parts so it is essential to know morphology of education. The main focus in this area will be to know what the general structure, stages of education is and its parts like school, colleges, universities, libraries, play grounds, etc. It will also study functional and structural aspect of these parts of educational system. It will also throw light on modes, forms and agencies of education.

Political Foundations of Education

This is also the innovative aspect of education. Right from the Plato, every philosopher has advocated that politics have a great influence on education. In contemporary era, there is a close relationship between education and democracy. So it is important to know political foundations of education with depth. The 1985 Paulo Freire's book, *The Politics of Education*, has stimulated many authors to revisit his theme that students should be taught to understand and critique societal institutions with their influence on education especially the influence of politics. Therefore, political foundations of education should be an essential component of *Educational Science*.

Economical Foundations of Education

As every aspect of life has an economical foundation and same is the case with education. Education economics (or economics of education) is the study of economic issues related to education, including the demand for education, and financing and provision of education (*Wikipedia encyclopedia*). Education economists analyze both what determines or creates education and what impact education has on individuals and the societies and economies in which they live. Historically at the World Bank a great deal of emphasis has been placed on determining outcomes to educational investment and the creation of human capital. The primary mission of the economics of education group is to identify opportunities for improved efficiency, equity, and quality of education and promote effective education reform processes; to help improve, among both World Bank staff and clients, knowledge of what drives education outcomes and results; to better understanding how to strengthen the links of education systems with the labor market; and to build and support a network of education economists and build bridges to all those who are interested in their work. Therefore, economics of education should be an essential part of educational science. (World Bank, 2007)

More than these foundations, the focus of *Educational Science* should also be on below mentioned aspects of education and should be included in the syllabi of *Educational Science*.

- Teacher Education
- Educational Guidance and Counseling

- Educational Planning and Management.
- Demographic Education
- Comparative Education
- Special Education
- Distance Education
- Inclusive and Intercultural Education
- Curriculum Development
- Educational Measurement and Evaluation
- Physical Education
- International Education
- Computer Education
- Peace Education
- Value Education
- Sex education

From the above cited list, it is obvious that areas of teacher education and physical education are of prime importance in any educational system so these two areas of education should be studied professionally and two separate allied scientific subjects should be launched. At present, around the world, we have teacher training programmes like ETE, B.Ed and M.Ed but as discussed earlier that education can not be confined to a particular training or subject so the nomenclature of these programmes need to be redesigned. Authors also suggest that the existing B.Ed degree should be renamed as B.T.S. (Bachelor of Teaching Studies) or B.T. Ed (Bachelor of Teacher Education) like B.P.Ed (Bachelor of Physical Education). Similarly M .Ed should also be renamed as M.T.Ed.

It is important to keep in view that our educational systems enroll every year large number of special children, so, it is essential to have teacher training course in the areas of special education besides general education. It is pertinent to mention here that each university should have *Faculty or School of Educational Sciences instead of Faculty of Education* with following subjects/ Departments like School of Life Sciences.

- Educational Science
- Teacher Education
- Physical Education
- Special Education

CONCLUSION

Briefly speaking, *Educational Science* should emerge as modern and scientific subject for the overall study of education. *Educational Science* will be a discipline with a mission to advance knowledge on the strength of research, innovation, teaching and extension for the cause of education. The subject will aim at producing talented professionals in education needed by the modern world. The proposed subject shall engage in capacity building and research in policy making, planning and administration of education instead of present subject education which has been confined only to teacher training programmes throughout the world. Let us accept the change and be educational scientists like social scientists. I shall conclude here with my own definition of *Educational Science*:

“Educational Science is the scientific study of the all aspects of education for the cause of education.”

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