



## **A Study on the Educational Thought of Jiddu Krishnamurti**

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### **Abstract:**

This paper aims to analyze the essential nature of philosophy and the educational philosophy of Jiddu Krishnamurti. He believed that the mind, once suppressed, never acquires awareness, and that education is the foundation stone of life. Therefore, education is essential as it develops the mind without fear. To produce a holistic personality, Jiddu Krishnamurti recommended an integrated curriculum and teaching strategies. He was opposed to rote learning and the formal system of education. This study aims to explore the philosophy of life of Jiddu Krishnamurti through an in-depth examination of his educational philosophy.



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## **Introduction**

Holistic education is incomplete without philosophical insight. On the other side, philosophy will never attain fulfillment without education. It is evident that all the great philosophers are also great educationists. An individual's educational pursuit is marked by their philosophy. Education is such a deliberate course of action that makes numerous tasks relevant to the times. Philosophy and education thus harmonize with each other. In the context of time, different perspectives became visible. Philosophical considerations put on hold. As a result, significant changes occurred in the field of education, and it became an obvious fact that education could not meet social aspirations. Whenever human society confronts critical difficulties, philosophy reaches out to help. The twentieth century witnessed significant changes in educational thought.

Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895-1986) was a profound thinker, learned scholar, spiritual orator, and a great philosopher of the twentieth century. He was best known for his school of thought, alternative education. Though he possessed no conventional educational qualifications, he became known as a prominent critic of the formal system of schooling and rigorous practices. Opposed to the prevailing educational framework and its consequences, he presented an unconventional perspective on education, namely 'Right Education'. The latest National Educational Policy (NEP), 2020, has followed his vision as the most relevant philosophy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **Objectives of the Study**

This study seeks to explore the philosophy of life of Jiddu Krishnamurti and to examine his educational philosophy.

## **Philosophy of Life**

Krishnamurti is truly a free thinker; therefore, he refused to fit himself into any belief, creed, or system, or to become a system himself. He proposed that nothing more than a total transformation of the individual self could cure conflict and suffering worldwide. His message to humanity was, 'first understand the purpose of our existence, the purpose of our life, and understand what we were thriving for. Then utilize everything to strengthen us. To find out what you really love to do is one of the most difficult things. That is part of education.' His teaching is his ideas on truth, mind, thought, intelligence, attention, perception, freedom, love, and self.

## **Research Methodology**

Here, the content analysis procedure has been used to meet the objectives. The books of Krishnamurti, his official websites, and various journals on Krishnamurti serve as primary and secondary sources.

## **Krishnamurti's Philosophy of Education**

An individual has to practice his /her own ideas through the medium of education. By doing so, each and every philosopher has made their thoughts and ideals alive. Jiddu Krishnamurti shared

the same ideals and trod the same path. Through his experiments, he presented his thoughts in a certain form. Krishnamurti rejected the existing form of education and introduced his educational philosophy, 'Right Education'. Krishnamurti's concept of 'Right Education' encompasses -

- Right Functions of Education
- Right environment
- Right School
- Right Curriculum
- Right Method of Teaching
- Right Teacher

The books that portray his ideals include '*Education and Significance of Life*', '*On Education*', '*Life Ahead*', and '*Letters to the School*' (Vol. 1 & Vol. 2).

### **Education according to J. Krishnamurti**

Krishnamurti has critically analysed the present education system and found structural weaknesses in its aims, purpose, teaching strategy, and curriculum. He declined the contemporary education system, as it does not emphasize the human factor but instead relies on rigid techniques. He mentioned that this system is characterised by rote learning and information-based examinations. It failed to develop the cognitive domain specifically; understanding, application, and analysis-based attitudes could not be developed among learners. Mind cultivation is largely missed. Jiddu Krishnamurti instituted several schools where his educational philosophy is nurtured. These are Rishi Valley School, Rajghat Besant School, and Brockwood Park School. These schools foster freedom, self-awareness, holistic development, and application-based knowledge.

### **Aim of Education**

Krishnamurti was strongly opposed to knowledge-based education, as it primarily deals with facts and information. This kind of education can never be transformative. The significance of life lies in the search for truth as a whole. In 'Jiddu Krishnamurti and His Insights into Education', Scott Forbes mentioned that the aims of education :

- Educating the whole person (all parts of the person)
- Educating the person as a whole (not as an assemblage of parts)
- Educating the person within the whole (as part of society).

### **Curriculum and Ideas of a School**

Krishnamurti recommended an integrated curriculum. He believes that holistic development is an essential criterion. As he was an eco-conscious person, he always considered environmental studies a compulsory subject. Various other activities were also offered during the course of study, such as art and craft, yoga, performing arts, and debate. Krishnamurti never supported an examination-centric curriculum, as it is a teacher-centric approach to learning. It attains the intellectual and professional goal. The social, moral, aesthetic, physical, and spiritual dimensions

are never attained. Therefore, he refused such a peripheral course of study. Krishnamurti prioritized an experience- and activity-based curriculum through which learners adopt the principle of living in harmony. Because of this, Krishnamurti advocated the 'Art of Listening'.

Regarding school, Krishnamurti set certain criteria. He used to believe that a school should provide a home-like environment where learners can act without hesitation. The school structure will never make pupils feel frightened or force them to follow inflexible rules and regulations. Krishnamurti (1979) believes that "If the student is not happy, he is incapable of learning this art." He characterised the school as a place where one can learn as a whole, not in a partial manner. It is obvious that scholarly achievement is much needed, but a school should be larger than this type of confinement. Here, the teacher and learners set out on their journey to quench their thirst for knowledge. This quest for search will shape their thinking as well as their behaviour (Krishnamurti, 1984).

### **Teacher**

The child's potential is largely shaped by their teachers. So the role of a teacher is non-negotiable. They should keep the learners away from the competitive world. This rat race raises competitive spirit, destroying their creativity, originality, and critical thinking. The first and foremost duty of a teacher is to guide learners to cultivate a pure soul and a conscious mind that seeks to explore truth, and to invest their energy in exploring the world of knowledge and life. Such a discipline motivates them to face the challenges encountered throughout life. They never practice the escapist route.

### **Method of Teaching**

For Krishnamurti, following a set of teaching methods is unacceptable because it is usually repeated, creating monotony in the classroom. He supported insightful and discovery learning. He asserted that the purpose of life is to know oneself. This process of searching encourages one to step forward toward true knowledge. He assured that conventional methods such as lectures, demonstrations, and projects can be applied, but only for the presentation of surface-level knowledge. While shaping the psychological foundation, a broad perspective and a neutral stance are highly valued and expected from teachers and guides.

### **Discipline**

Krishnamurti was not in favour of harsh discipline. It seems to him to be a conformity. Because he assumes that strict discipline produces obedience without reverence. Krishnamurti prefers order in place of discipline. According to him, "discipline means to learn, not to conform, not to suppress, not to imitate the pattern ... in it are involved several things: to learn, to be austere, to be free, to be sensitive, and to see the beauty of love ... discipline is freedom" (Krishnamurti, 1970). Krishnamurti continues to say, "If you are considerate, if you are watching, if you are listening, then, because you are free, you will be punctual, you will come to the class regularly, you will study, you will be so alive that you will want to do things rightly" (Krishnamurti, 2012, p.31). Therefore, self-discipline should be the moral of life.

### **Examination and Evaluation**

The present examination system is suppressing fearless learning and promoting exam phobia. Krishnamurti rejected the conventional examination system, which he saw as the root cause of the downfall of present education. Krishnamurti thought that students should not learn in fear of examinations. They must learn from natural interest. Adopting a positive mindset, teachers can help learners by assessing their cognition through formative tests, informal discussions, and other methods such as seminars, debates, and assignments. Through this form of formative assessment, teachers can easily observe their students' progress and rearrange their teaching and learning plan. They must provide a detailed report of progress rather than just marks or grades, which leads to competition. Krishnamurti therefore offered an alternative education, praising the 'art of living' as a form of learning.

### Findings

The only concern of Jiddu Krishnamurti was to release humankind from the slavery of social boundaries. Conventional education never allows for the experience of freedom. True education helps one to be oneself and understand life. Nevertheless, modern exam-based education breeds thoughtless entities. The idea of 'Right Education' helps us discover our true selves. His declaration about education is based on humanistic education, as reflected in the goals of the education he offers. In his view, a teacher should take responsibility for nurturing all the qualities in students that lead to humanity. He envisages the school as a powerhouse of wisdom.

### Conclusion

The reflections of Krishnamurti's educational philosophy in the National Educational Policy 2020 affirm its validity in the present scenario. It helps the policymaker in the right direction. After reviewing the NEP 2020, it appears this policy is intended to support a holistic, integrated education system. It aims to develop the capacity for humility, empathy, and courage, and to support the acquisition of a scientific attitude, resilience, creativity, critical thinking, and metacognitive skills. It is only possible when we meet certain preconditions, such as a school that serves as an empowering institution, an integrated curriculum, a teacher who is a holistic educator, and supportive parents. Furthermore, the NEP 2020, which has reflections of Krishnamurti's philosophy, inspires hope of transformation, the transformation of progress.

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