

Philosophical and Educational Thought of Rousseau

Philosophical Thought of Rousseau

Rousseau was born in Geneva, Switzerland in 1712. His mother died a few days after his birth, so he grew under the care of his father and aunt. Rousseau's father was an ordinary watchmaker and was a frolicsome person. He loved Rousseau but he could not look after him well. Rousseau received his early education from his father and had started to read fiction from the age of six years. When he was sent to school, he was subjected to unfavourable influence due to artificial environment and system of punishment, as a result he fled from school. He started to study history and religious books at home. When he was tired of reading, he did look at town's natural scenery. This routine went on until the age of ten. Natural environment of Geneva had profound effect on him, which later blossomed into his thinking and writing.

Each thinker has his own specific philosophical thought; it is another thing whether he propounds it clearly or not. Rousseau was a thinker who has not presented his philosophical thought in a proper sequence, but we can guess his philosophical thought by his conduct, statements and articles. His conduct, statements and articles are very diverse; he appears to be an idealist at one place and a naturalist at another.

Rousseau believed in God, he considered man as pure from birth, and accepted the need of the state. All these thoughts are idealistic. From this viewpoint, he can be called an idealistic thinker. The scholars of political science consider him to be the harbinger of idealism. But his thought about making human life happy is completely naturalistic, he did not believe in any ultimate aim of human life, he only laid emphasis on preparing him for this life alone. His views are very revolutionary in this context. According to him, each man has his own unique personality, has his unique interests and has his unique needs. All men are born independent at birth and want to live independent, but the society does not want them to live independently and binds them in its rules. In his own views, these social bonds produce evilness in man. This is the reason that Rousseau laid stress

on making man free from social bonds for his independent development. He was so grieved at the prevalent society that he applied his whole energy in its opposition. He went so far as to term all of civilization, culture, religion and morality as meaningless. Not only this, he described these as the cause of sufferings in human life. In the wake of this opposition, he even forgot that human civilization and culture are the outcomes of age-old human endeavour and religion and morality are the bases of human life. But it was natural for him to think so at that time. The common people were being exploited in the name of religion all over Europe; the religious and political leaders described themselves as God and exploited common people for their self-interests. Rousseau had to suffer himself at their hands.

Rousseau considered the nature of man as pure. According to him, man by nature loves everybody, cooperates with everybody and lives a simple and happy life; but in the stronghold of civilization, he learns how to tell a lie and deceive and exploit others. Rousseau considered civilization as the product of knowledge and science, so he opposed knowledge and science too. He experienced that intelligent people exploit the simple and pure people, so he opposed **rationalism** or **intellectualism** of revolutionary thinker **Voltaire** and raised the voice of ideology of the heart. He reasoned that the nature of man is good, so we should develop emotions in him in place of intelligence. He raised the slogan 'back to nature'. By back to nature he meant, not heading for atrocities or barbarism, but deviating from the artificial behaviour (civilization) to natural behaviour. On the basis of these thoughts of Rousseau, we can analyze the metaphysics, epistemology, logic, axiology and ethics of his philosophy.

Metaphysics of Rousseau's Philosophical Thought

Though Rousseau has not written anything about the creation of the universe, nor he has analyzed soul and God anywhere, but he believed in God. He accepted the existence of the soul and God, but opposed the padres who described themselves as the means of attaining paradise. The padres were exploiting the common people in the name of religion all over Europe. Rousseau thought that God has created this material world with due thought and each matter is pure in itself, so is man; so we should allow him to live according to his own nature.

Epistemology and Logic of Rousseau's Philosophical Thought

According to Rousseau, the knowledge of nature is the true knowledge. Rousseau has used the word 'nature' in several forms — one for that which is made without human effort, second for that which man has got by birth and with which he has not interfered. Rousseau considered civilization and science as the main causes of all sufferings of the world, therefore he did not consider their knowledge as necessary. Later, he prepared a complete layout of the ideal state and prepared an exhaustive education for man, and emphasized on teaching man

all that which is beneficial to human beings as a whole. Rousseau expressed his views about the means and teaching methods for attaining knowledge very clearly, that the children should be allowed to learn by sense organs, and by self-experience. Knowledge should not be imposed upon them from outside; it is a thing to be experienced from inside.

Axiology and Ethics of Philosophical Thought of Rousseau

Rousseau considered man as the best creation of God and he knew that God has made him good from birth. This is the reason that he advised man to be free from all types of social, political and religious rules, in order to behave according to his own nature. He believed that man's basic nature is simple and pure and of loving one another and to live a happy life. His own experience was that man learns how to tell a lie and to deceive and exploit in the name of civilization. And it was true of his times that the intellectual classes were exploiting the common people immensely. Even if we overlook his statement in the former half, and pay attention to the latter half, we find that Rousseau expected man to have simple and pure conduct, he expected of him to love and cooperate with one another and not tell a lie or deceive or exploit one another. Rousseau has used only one word for all these expressions — **good will**. It remains true that Rousseau had opposed the polluted society and polluted civilization and culture of his times, and had opposed the polluted state; otherwise he himself has presented the outline of an ideal state and has presented an exhaustive educational plan for making man a good man.

Educational Thought of Rousseau

Educational thought of Rousseau is based on the following basic thoughts :

- (1) The nature is pure, simple, beautiful and pleasant.
- (2) Man's nature is also independent, but pure, simple, beautiful and pleasant. He wants to live independently, yet he has the inherent attitude of loving one another, cooperating with one another and pleasing one another.
- (3) Society is replete with several defects and nature is completely pure.
- (4) Man's behaviour has become unnatural or artificial due to civilization and he has come to hate in place of loving and to exploit others in place of thinking of others' happiness.
- (5) We get true knowledge from nature, and not from society.
- (6) Man's sense organs are the gateways of knowledge.
- (7) Education by sense organs is true education.

Now we shall make an effort to analyze his educational thought in an orderly way.

Concept of Education

At the time of Rousseau, education was in the hands of Church. The State

was also under the influence of the Church, and the Church and the State had so much of importance that the significance of the individuals had been neglected. This thing remained true in education too; children's individual attributes had no value; all children were considered to be minor adults, and they were acquainted with the beliefs of the Church and of the State at the earliest convenient time in order to make them loyal to these institutions. The class difference was at its peak, there was no proper arrangement for the education of the poor and mass education was being looked down upon. Rousseau raised his voice against all these.

Rousseau said that education is a natural process by which the inherent powers of the children are developed naturally, so all children should be given opportunity for their natural development. He described the contemporary education as artificial because the natural powers of the children were not developed by it; rather they were introduced to external social beliefs. He laid emphasis on development of knowledge in place of giving knowledge. He said that it is not necessary to acquaint the child with the truth, rather he should be enabled to discover the truth. He emphasized experience in place of information. This experience can be got by sense organs, so he asked to train the sense organs first and then to experience by them, and then to discover the truth by that experience. He called this as education. He termed it as **negative education** and former type of education as **positive education**.

Thus, according to Rousseau, there are two forms of education — positive education and negative education. In his own words, "I call positive education one that tends to form the mind prematurely and instruct the child in the duties that belong to man." And in his own words, "I call negative education that which tends to perfect the organs that are the instruments of knowledge, giving this knowledge directly is true education, and that endeavours to prepare the way for reason by proper exercise of the senses. A negative education does not mean the time of idleness, far from it. It does not give virtue, it protects from vice, it does not inculcate truth, it protects from error. It disposes the child to take the faith that will lend him to truth when he has reached the age to understand it and to goodness when he has acquired the faculty of recognizing and loving it."

In negative education Rousseau has laid stress on training of sense organs and learning by experience, in place of bookish knowledge. In it, the children are not bound, they are independent to bring about their development in natural environment according to their own nature. The children are not given verbal instructions, rather they learn by doing.

Rousseau considered negative education as the true education. According to him, the child's education at the beginning should be completely negative. He opposed bookish knowledge and teacher's instructions in education for any level. According to him, true education is the one that is helpful in the natural

development of the child, and in which there is minimum instructions by individual or society. In his own words, "Education is a development from within, and not an accretion from without, it comes through the working of natural instincts and not through response to external forces."

Aims of Education

Rousseau attached more significance to individual as against society, so he emphasized man's individual development by education. He said that man should be made a man before he is made a soldier, padre or magistrate. This man should be a natural man and should be an emotional man. He would love everybody and cooperate with everybody. He would be free from such defects as lies, ego and selfishness. For it, he has talked of natural development of spontaneous powers of man. According to him, this should be the aim of education. There is an order of man's development, he passes through several stages — infancy, childhood, adolescence and youth and then becomes an adult, and his physical and mental conditions at different levels are different. On the basis of this difference, Rousseau has specified some difference in aims of education for different age levels. We can clarify it as follows :

1. Physical Development : Man is a psychophysical being. His mind is also the part of his body. Man exists by his body, else not. So his physical development is the foremost need. Rousseau believed that physical weakness is the mother of all sins, so he laid emphasis on making the child strong from early life. In his own words, "All wickedness comes from weakness. The child should be made strong so that he will do nothing which will be bad." According to him, the only aim of infant education should be to effect physical development. Effort should also be made to realize this aim at other levels too.

2. Training of Sense Organs : Sense organs are the gateways of knowledge. Rousseau has emphasized training of sense organs and learning by experience as opposed to bookish knowledge. According to him, the chief aim of childhood education should be the training of sense organs. Rousseau said that the child is not a minor adult, therefore he should not be acquainted with the knowledge of duties meant for adults. A child is a child, and childhood is the age inclined for its physical and sense organs development, so maximum stress should be laid on strengthening the sense organs of the child.

3. Intellectual Development : Rousseau said that when the sense organs of the child are trained, he would discover the truth by his self-experience, and it would bring about his intellectual development. He considered it to be an educational aim. In his view, effort should be made to realize this aim during adolescence. He said that the child should be given such an environment in which he works hard, works diligently, takes interest in exploration and develops knowledge by self-experience.

4. Emotional Development : According to Rousseau, development of the body, sense organs and intelligence should be effected during the first three stages of human development respectively. When their development has taken place then his heart should be developed during youth; love, sympathy and cooperation should be inculcated in him for the entire mankind.

5. Art of Living : Rousseau recognized the harsh truths of life. He knew that man desires to live and his living is different from other beings. So he wanted to make him proficient in the art of living. He himself said about the education of *Emil*, "To live is the trade I wish to teach him." According to him, the working fields of men and women are different despite their similar natural structure, so they should be trained in their respective functions. He was in the favour of giving vocational education to men and wanted to impart the education of domestic work to women.

6. Protection of Rights : The Church and State were exploiting the common people at the time of Rousseau, so he laid emphasis on the development of power of opposition along side man's physical development, training of sense organs, intellectual development, emotional development and training in art of living. He believed that protection of rights is also necessary for happy living.

7. Development of Independent Personality : At the time of Rousseau, people in Europe were under the clutches of society, religion and state. Rousseau clarified that man is born free and he has the nature to live freely, therefore he should be given the freedom to create his society and state and to govern them by himself. It can be possible only when individual is given freedom to think and express his thoughts. The type of personality developed in such an environment, is called independent personality.

Curriculum of Education

Rousseau presented psychological stages of human development and determined different aims and different curricula for each stage. He was not in favour of imposing anything on the children, he talked of creating the environment according to nature, so he has developed curriculum according to the psychological conditions of different age groups. He has divided the educational life of man into four periods or stages, and has specified separate curricula for them.

Infancy (Birth to 5 Years) : The children are just like animals at this age, their muscles become strong and they become active, they want to do something or the other at all times, they show interest in playing, jumping, running and singing, so the children of this age should be given opportunity to do just these types of activities. Rousseau believed that artificial life has destroyed our health, so he suggested to allow the children to move independently in the lap of nature so that their body becomes able to stand with winter and summer. He opposed any type of instruction or bookish knowledge for the children of this age group.

Childhood (5 to 12 Years) : Physical development of the children continues during this stage, so they should be given all opportunities for playing, jumping, running and swimming. Besides, the development of their sense organs begins at this stage, so they should be given opportunity for watching, touching, smelling, listening and tasting different objects, and their experiences should be bounded in language. At this stage, the children should be imparted the education of nature study, language, mathematics and geography. They would learn by their self-experiences. These very subjects should become elaborate in the following levels.

Adolescence (12 to 15 Years) : At this stage, besides the physical and mental development of the children, they begin to understand and evaluate the outcomes of their activities. Curiosity becomes intense at this stage and they show interest in discovering new objects, so they should be given the education of natural sciences. Besides, they should be given the education in language, mathematics, geography, music and social life. Vocational education should also be started at this stage. In it, Rousseau has included wooden work, etc.

Youth (15 to 25 Years) : At this stage, the children enter manhood, so they should learn to stabilize their emotions. Rousseau was in favour of starting positive education at this stage. Though he had opposed sociality in the wake of contemporary society, yet he had accepted the significance of social rules, ethics and religion while providing education to his imaginary male character **Emil** in his book '*Emile*' and he had provided this education to him during youth. Rousseau wanted that the children should look into different glimpses of human life during this stage, they should look at the lifestyle and behaviour of the rich and of the poor, of people of pure conduct and of the suffering people, ill people in hospitals and prisoners in prisons. It would awaken feelings for human life in them. They should also be acquainted with ethics and religion at this time, but this religion should not be narrow, it should be devoid of artificiality, it should be natural religion. Provision of education of good qualities by direct experiences should be there at this stage. According to Rousseau, the religious tales can be told at this stage, but they should be real and not imaginary, and they should be able to effect development of noble qualities, such as love, sympathy, cooperation, mercy and forbearance, etc. Rousseau has also supported the education of history at this stage because it provides education of conduct. The physical and intellectual education of the previous levels will continue during this stage too and the vocational education will be completed now.

Curriculum for Women : Rousseau had not come in the proximity of an educated woman of an established family. He had been kicked by the society and had not received love of any woman. Whatever love he got was in the form of his maid-servant. Therefore, whatever thoughts he possessed about women were quite abnormal. On the one hand, he mentions about the equality of nature in both men

and women, and on the other, he says, "A woman of culina, is the plague of her husband, her children, her family, her servants — everybody." So he did not allow his imaginary female character Sofia, the wife of Emil to become educated, civilized and embellished lady of Paris, but he educated her in home science (cookery, sewing and rearing of children, etc.). He provided similar activities to both boys and girls at infancy and childhood levels, but he divested the women of higher education and thought that only the education of domestic life was proper for them. According to Rousseau, the women will have to be given the education of good conduct, because good qualities have to be developed in both men and women. Without having attained the development of noble qualities, happiness cannot enter human life.

Methods of Teaching

Rousseau considered man to be a psychophysical being and thought that any type of his development depends on his body (organs of action and organs of senses) and mind (mental faculties). On this basis, he developed his teaching methods. His first slogan was 'back to nature'. He laid much stress on this fact that the child's education should be conducted in the lap of nature, and it should be according to his own nature. Rousseau has described four stages of development — infancy, childhood, adolescence and youth and has described the nature of children of each stage and has specified different activities for them. He did not accept bookish knowledge at any stage.

According to Rousseau, the children should be taught by self-experiences. **Learning by self-experience** was his another slogan. He wrote that the child should not be taught orally, allow him to learn by experience.

Rousseau considered sense organs as the gateways of knowledge. According to him, the development of sense organs should be attained first; the development of knowledge would take place automatically. He laid much emphasis on the use of sense organs at the time of teaching. **Education through senses** was his third slogan.

Rousseau opposed keeping the child under any type of control. He said that the child should be given complete freedom in effecting his natural development. **Freedom in education** was his fourth slogan.

Before Rousseau came on the stage, the child was considered to be a minor adult. Rousseau opposed this attitude. He clarified that the interest, aptitude, ability and needs of the child are different from those of an adult person. According to Rousseau, the child should be given education according to his interest, aptitude, ability and needs. The interest, aptitude and ability of the child should be kept in view at the time of teaching. This was his fifth and final slogan of Rousseau regarding teaching.

Thus, Rousseau opposed the traditional methods of teaching and gave complete freedom to the children in the educational field, and thus created a new method of learning by self-experience. We can see the clear effect of his revolutionary thought on modern teaching methods.

Rousseau has described the book system as defective, and has mentioned learning by self-experience in its place. This self-experience occurs through sense organs, therefore the significance of sense organs, and activities enhanced in child's education. He also said that the child should be given opportunity to learn according to his own nature and opposed any type of external bounds on him. He also emphasized self-activity. Rousseau's thought later created several psychological methods, such as observation method, exploration method and Dalton method.

Discipline

Rousseau's thoughts regarding discipline are unique. He considered man pure by birth. He believed that God has made all things pure, they become evil in man's contact. In his words, "Everything is good as it comes from the hands of the author of nature, men meddle with it and it degenerates." He said that the child should be kept away from this polluted society, in the lap of nature where he will become disciplined of his own. It is not required to tell him anything from outside, nor it is needed to punish him for his errors. He said that the nature itself punishes for our errors.

Rousseau's thoughts about discipline can be discussed in two forms — principle of freedom and principle of natural consequences. According to the first principle, we should allow the children to develop according to their nature, no external bound should be imposed on them. According to the second principle, the children should not be punished for their errors, the nature would punish them by itself, evil tasks would beget them sorrow and noble tasks happiness; they would select activities on the basis of sorrow and happiness, and they would become disciplined of their own accord. According to Rousseau, it is true discipline.

Teacher

In opposition of society, Rousseau described the teacher as a defective social being and advocated of removing him from child's education. But it was only an opposition, he had accepted the significance of family, school and teacher in the education of *Emil* in his book '*Emile*'. But he did not want to see the teacher as an instructor. He says that the function of the teacher is to assist the child in his natural development, he will not give instruction, rather he will create suitable environment for the child's development, he will not preach, rather will give opportunities to the child for doing himself, observing himself and inferring himself. He will not be the controller but an assistant.

Student

Rousseau was an individualist. He respected the individuality of man and favoured to give freedom for his individual development. He believed that each individual is pure by birth and has certain inherent powers on the basis of which he effects his own development. This development can be effected in true terms only when he is distanced from artificial environment and is given freedom to do his tasks and express his thoughts independently. This is the reason that he gave utmost significance to the student in the educational field. He said that each individual should be given opportunity for his natural development, he should not be kept in any type of bindings. Children should be given freedom to express themselves. He has gone to the extent of saying that the children be kept free from the bindings of social laws and moral conduct. But this freedom does not mean harming others in any way. Rousseau has made the student as the focal point of education and has provided education according to his innate powers, interests and needs. He clarified that the interests, attitudes and needs of different children of different age groups are different, so different curricula should be specified for different age groups. The mistake of taking a child as a mini adult should never be committed.

School

Rousseau was greatly dissatisfied with the society and social institutions of his time. He described the school system of his time as very defective, and opposed it. He gave the slogan of back to nature. He said that society and its civilization was the root cause of all evils, so the children should be kept away from its evil influences, and they should be imparted education in the lap of nature. Thus, he favoured establishing schools away from society in the lap of nature. He laid much stress on this fact that the children should be given complete freedom in schools, no control should be exercised over them. He described even the time table as a binding and said that it is not needed, the children should be free to do any activity at any time. The function of the teacher should be limited to create a free environment for their independent development. According to Rousseau, the teachers should work as assistants to the students, and not as instructors. They should not punish the children rather should love them and have sympathy with them and should share their activities. The teachers should maintain the school environment so simple, sweet and pure that the children are able to effect their natural (simple and pure) development there.

Other Aspects of Education

Educational Administration : At the time of Rousseau, the State was considered to be the absolute existence and the Church and the State had complete say. It was then propagated that the individual took birth for the State, so he should

abide by the State orders. This task was being performed by the Church and education was being used as a medium for this purpose. The Church was propagating religious orthodox beliefs on the one hand, and loyalty to the State on the other. Thus, the Church and the State occupied importance in education. Rousseau felt this bitterness and said that the Church and the State and all other social institutions are very defective, they cannot be expected to look after the welfare of the individuals, they are bent upon exploiting the individuals. So it is necessary that education be kept away from their evil influence. He said that education should be controlled neither by the Church nor by the State. He presented the idea of keeping education free from any type of social bindings. Rousseau staunchly opposed the supreme right of the State on education. But Rousseau has not replied regarding who should arrange the education. It appears that he wanted to assign educational system in the hands of persons like him, because he had taken the responsibility of two children's education.

Mass Education : Rousseau was a great supporter of mass education. He laid stress on mass education from the very beginning. But he has not presented any clear plan as how this educational system can be run without the cooperation of the society or state.

Women Education : Rousseau wanted distinct education for men and women. According to him, women are delicate by their inherent nature, but they become harsh after having got higher education and transform into a plague for the men, therefore they should not be imparted higher education. He also laid stress on one thing that there is a difference in the working areas of men and women, and they should be allowed to develop on the basis of this difference. He was in the favour of giving education of domestic tasks to the women. He did not want to see women involved in fashion, so he opposed giving them education of any vocation.

Vocational Education : Rousseau laid stress on enabling man to live happily, for this he advocated vocational education for men in order to earn their livelihood.

Religious and Moral Education : Though Rousseau opposed society, religion and state all his life, but the fact remains that he was not an opponent to the society, rather he opposed the contemporary polluted society; he was not an opponent to the religion, but was against exploitation of the common people at the hands of the contemporary Church; he was not an opponent to the State, but was against the despotic administrative system of his time. In his book 'Emil' he has provided religious and moral education to both **Emil** and **Sophia**, but his religious and moral education was not narrow, it was education of love for the whole of mankind, it was the education of service and it was the education of goodwill.

Evaluation of Educational Thought of Rousseau

The evaluation of an object, activity or thought is done on the basis of certain predetermined norms. Education is the process of making man a good man, It is the process of enhancing his knowledge and skill, and providing proper direction to his conduct, thought and behaviour. In such a case, the evaluation of an educational thought or system should be done on the basis, how far it has been or can be helpful in making a man good man. We have made an effort in this regard.

Every great man is the product of his times, the contemporary situations have influence on his making. This thing also applies on Rousseau. At the time of Rousseau, the whole of Europe had monarchical or aristocratic rules and the Church enjoyed supremacy. At that time both of the Church and the State were exploiting the common people. Rousseau himself became a victim to it. Consequently, his soul cried in grief and he raised his voice against the contemporary society, religion and state. He went so far in this opposition as to prove even human civilization and culture and religion as the underlying causes of all human sufferings. His thoughts opposing the Church and the State created a mental revolution in the whole of Europe which later culminated into the bloody 'French Revolution'. Rousseau is considered to be the harbinger of the French Revolution and the father of modern democracy.

As far as Rousseau's educational thought and his contribution in the educational field are concerned, his name follows those of Plato and Comenius in the western world. At one time his educational thought had created a ripple in the educational world. But the fact remains, the rapidity with which his educational thought was accepted in the educational world, was equally rapidly rejected too. We shall evaluate his educational thought in present context in order to prove our point.

Concept of Education

Rousseau considered education as a natural activity. He clarified that learning is the inherent nature of man, so he should be allowed to learn according to his nature. According to him, true education is the one that assists in the natural development of the child, and in which there is minimal instruction by the individual or society. In his own words, "Education is a development from within, not an accretion from without, it comes through the working of natural instincts and not through response to external forces."

There can be no two opinions on the fact that man has a desire to learn and a power to learn from the birth itself, but he learns only when there is an interaction between him and the teacher. Another fact in this context is that only that is taught to man what his society desires, and the most important point is that the man is prepared for the development of the society by education, and this task goes on

continuously. So today education is accepted as a social process. Besides, it is accepted as a dynamic and progressive process, it is taken as a process by which a society develops its civilization and culture continuously.

Aims of Education

Rousseau has divided the period of education into four levels or stages, and has determined different aims for each of these levels. We can arrange the aims as determined by him as — physical development, training of sense organs, intellectual development, emotional development, art of living, protection of rights and development of independent personality.

If we carefully examine Rousseau's thought regarding aims of education we find four major defects in it in present context. First, he laid emphasis on the attainment of an aim at one level, while education is a continuous process and is continuously helpful in the attainment of any aim. Second, he considered man simple and pure from birth and emphasized on his natural development; while the fact remains that man is only a higher animal since birth, his social development is needed in order to make him a man, it needs his cultural development. Third, he did not consider the education of political system and citizenship as necessary, but it is badly needed today. And fourth, he did not give any place to moral, character and spiritual development of man, while the position is that people are tired of materialism and they are returning to spirituality in the search for real happiness and peace. Today education is required to lay equal emphasis on the development of all the three aspects of man — natural, social and spiritual.

Curriculum of Education

Rousseau has presented psychological stages of human development as — infancy, childhood, adolescence and youth. He determined different aims and different curricula for these stages.

The division of man into different age groups from the viewpoint of development is certainly important in the educational world, but modern scholars are not in agreement with the aims and curricula as determined by Rousseau for different age groups. His opinion of effecting only physical development up to five years from birth, of training his sense organs up to twelve years and then starting the education of language, mathematics, history, geography and vocation is unpsychological. He opposed the society, religion and rule on the one hand, and provided education of rule, religion and sociality to **Emil** on the other hand, these two opinions are nothing but mutually contradictory. Of course, we have learnt from Rousseau that the curriculum for the children of any level should be constructed according to their physical and mental abilities and needs. For it, we remain indebted to him.

Methods of Teaching

Rousseau's effort to keep away artificiality from educational field is commendable. He said that the children should be kept away from the artificial and defective environment of the society to keep them in the lap of nature for education. His first slogan was 'back to nature'. He opposed of taking the children as mini adults and opposed the instruction and lecture methods in order to acquaint the children with the duties of the adults. He said that child remains a child, and not a mini adult, his energy and attitudes are different from that of an adult, so he should not be burdened with ideals, he should be allowed to learn independently. His second slogan was 'allow him to learn independently'. He emphasized the education of sense organs. 'Education through senses' was his third slogan. His fourth slogan was 'give freedom to children in learning'. His fifth slogan was to 'give opportunity to children to develop according to their interest, aptitude and ability'. His opinion regarding giving complete freedom to the children in order to assist them in their natural development, and to base children's education according to their inherent interests, aptitudes and needs, is accepted even today.

Everybody agrees with Rousseau's opinion that the children should be given opportunity to learn through sense organs and they should be given opportunity to learn by self-activity and self-experience. But keeping the children away from society in the lap of nature is rather abnormal and is not acceptable to anybody. Everybody agrees with Rousseau regarding his opinion about child's education to be according to his interest, aptitude and ability, but complete freedom in education is somewhat abnormal. Whatever the fact, due to the influence of Rousseau's thought, emphasis came to be laid on experience by sense organs (observation, etc.) and self-inference, and on the bases of these several new psychological methods were developed as observation method, experimental method, exploration method and Dalton system, etc. We shall remain indebted to Rousseau for this.

Discipline

Rousseau presented two principles regarding discipline — the principle of complete freedom and the principle of natural consequences. According to the first principle, the children should be given complete freedom for behaviour; and the second principle clarifies that the nature itself punishes the children for their erroneous tasks, so the teacher should not give any punishment to them.

The slogan of complete freedom in the field of discipline can only be termed as erroneous on the part of Rousseau. The children cannot be allowed to do anything of their free volition, it would create only disorder. It is not reasonable to think that the nature would punish them by itself, and that they would abandon the tasks which would give them sorrow. Social system and morality is the result of man's prolonged experience of thousands of years. It would be proper to keep man in social bindings for his proper development.

Teacher

Rousseau has two contradictory views about the teacher. First, he considered the teachers as full of evils and wanted to keep the children away from them and to provide them education in the lap of nature; and second, he expected the teachers to assist the students in learning naturally.

In the wake of opposition to the society and social institutions, it is not proper on the part of Rousseau to consider the teachers as full of evils. His opinion that the teacher's task is to help the children in their natural development is also defective. We are aware that man has attained victory over nature, today he is no more a slave to nature, but he rules it. Then how can the role of teacher be limited to only assist the children in their natural development. The teacher will have to acquaint the children with the human achievements in order to proceed further. Of course, everybody accepts Rousseau's contention that the teacher should not function as an instructor, but as a guide.

Student

Rousseau was the first man who raised the voice for freedom of man. He respected the individuality of the children in the educational field, and emphasized on arranging education according to their interest, aptitude and ability. Prior to Rousseau, education was either teacher-centred or curriculum-centred; Rousseau emphasized on making it child-centred.

As far as basing children education on their interests, aptitudes and abilities is concerned, it is acceptable widely but allowing children to effect their development in their own way is not acceptable. We have already seen the evil consequences of giving complete freedom to children in the field of education.

School

Rousseau was greatly dissatisfied with the contemporary society and social institutions. He opposed the strict control system of the contemporary schools on students and laid emphasis on allowing them doing anything according to their own nature. He opposed even the school time table.

Everybody agrees with Rousseau so far as the construction of schools in the lap of nature away from polluted society. Education is the means of eradicating the defects of the society, therefore the school environment should be ideal and it should be free from the defects of the society. But allowing the children to develop according to their nature and providing them facilities for this purpose is rather abnormal. If there is no time table in the schools and their working system is not specified, the teacher would not be able to know when, what and how he has to do his duty; and any type of system would not be possible in the schools, and consequently we would not be able to make children anything more than animals.

The feature of man's working is the system or planning, man cannot progress on the path of development with unplanned tasks.

Other Aspects of Education

Educational Administration : Rousseau wanted to keep education free from the bindings of the Church (religion) and of the State. As far as making education free from the bindings of Church is concerned, the whole world agrees with this view, but as far as making education free from the State control is concerned nobody agrees with it. Today education is considered to be the duty of the State. The only reform needed is that the State should arrange education by keeping the interests of the individuals and the state both.

Mass Education : Rousseau laid much stress on the need of mass education, but he has not expressed his opinion who should arrange this education. Over and above, he has raised the slogan of freeing education from Church and State control. The views of Rousseau about mass education are not acceptable today. By mass education today is meant general, compulsory and free education for all men and women, and the state is assigned with the duty of arranging it.

Women Education : Rousseau's views about women education are also not acceptable. He was in favour of imparting education to women only of domestic tasks or home science, while today emphasis is laid on imparting general education to all men and women compulsorily, and specific and higher education to them according to their interests, aptitudes, abilities and needs.

Religious and Moral Education : There is no uniformity in the views of Rousseau as far as religious and moral education is concerned. On the one hand, he raised his voice in his book *Social Contract* against exploitation of the common people in the name of religion and morality; and on the other, he provided religious and moral education for both of his **Emil** (male character) and **Sophia** (female character) in his book '*Emil*'. The truth remains that he was not opposed to religion, rather he was opposed to the exploitation of the common people at the hands of padres in the name of religion.

Influence of Rousseau

Rousseau was a revolutionary thinker. At one time, his thoughts had created a revolution, but due to his criticism of religion, philosophy, society and state; the rapidity with which his thoughts were accepted, were rejected equally rapidly. But he would be remembered always for providing psychological basis to education. Today education is based on psychology in almost all countries of the world. Children's nature is given specific importance in the educational field. The whole process of education is planned on the bases of the interests, aptitudes and abilities of the children. Rousseau is considered to be the father of progressive education in place of orthodox education in the world.

Conclusion

In Brief, it can be said that Rousseau was not opposed to the society, but he was opposed to the contemporary polluted society in which the rich were exploiting the poor and the intellectuals were exploiting the simple people. He was not opposed to religion, but was against the exploitation of the common people at the hands of padres in the name of religion. He was not opposed to the state even, he was opposed to the contemporary despotic administrative system and aristocracy. He was opposed to the principle of 'individual for the state', and he raised his voice against it which later culminated into the 'French Revolution' of 1789, and the establishment of democracy in place of monarchy and aristocracy.

Rousseau was greatly dissatisfied with the education of his times. He laid emphasis on freeing education from the Church and State control in order to effect natural (individual) development of the children. He put forward his suggestions regarding aims of education, curriculum and teaching methods. He gave the slogan of complete freedom in place of harsh discipline (control) in the educational field and emphasized on removing artificiality to establish natural environment in schools. His views had great impact on the people suffering at the hands of exploitative education, and there occurred a massive revolution in the educational world. However, as he challenged the existence of the society, religion, civilization, culture and state; this revolution occurred just like a storm and vanished just like a typhoon.

As far as the concept of education and its aims and curriculum are concerned, Rousseau's opinions have become quite meaningless, but his views regarding teaching are psychological and are agreeable to everybody. His slogan of complete freedom in place of discipline has become meaningless now. Of course, its effect has continued to advocate that harsh control and punishment system is not considered good in the educational field. Rousseau's views about teacher have also become obsolete. Of course, his view of taking the child as the centre of education is agreed upon with certain modifications. Today, teacher, student and curriculum are given equal importance in the field of education. Rousseau's views have become outdated as far as mass education, women education and vocational education are concerned. Now it is considered to be the duty of the state to arrange education, and emphasis is laid on arranging general education for all men and women compulsorily and specific and higher education according to their interests, aptitudes, abilities and needs. It is clear that the influence of Rousseau on modern education is quite less today, but whatever form it has today, Rousseau remains the foundation stone of all that.

Test Questions

Essay Type Questions

1. Discuss the educational planning of Rousseau and tell how far it is useful in present context.
2. Elaborate the aims of education, curriculum and principles of teaching as propounded by Rousseau.
3. "Rousseau effected massive revolutionary changes in the field of education." How far do you agree with this statement?
4. Evaluate the contribution of Rousseau as an educational thinker.

Short Answer Type Questions

5. In which form did Rousseau accept education?
6. What are the aims of education as determined by Rousseau?
7. Present Rousseau's plan regarding curriculum.
8. Introduce the teaching methods as propounded by Rousseau.
9. What is the difference between positive education and negative education according to Rousseau?

Objective Questions

10. Select the right alternative :

- (i) To which country did Rousseau belong originally?

(a) Switzerland	(b) England
(c) Holland	(d) Poland
- (ii) In which book do we find Rousseau's educational thought chiefly?

(a) Social Contract	(b) Emil
(c) Confessions	(d) New Horizons
- (iii) Into how many parts has Rousseau divided the duration of education?

(a) 2	(b) 3
(c) 4	(d) 5
- (iv) In whose control did Rousseau want to place education?

(a) State	(b) Church
(c) Society	(d) None of these.

Answers

10. (i) Switzerland

10. (iii) 4

10. (ii) Emil

10. (iv) None of these

