PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION
(DR. ZAKIR HUSSAIN)

Unit structure

8.0. Objectives
8.1. Introduction
8.2. Brief life history
8.3. Dr. Zakir Hussain’s philosophy
8.4. Dr. Hussain’s views on education
8.5. The four essential values
8.6. Educationally productive work
8.7. Freedom, discipline and authority
8.8. The teacher’s role
8.9. Teacher as custodian of values
8.10 Education and culture
8.11 Characteristics of good school
8.12 Contribution of Dr. Zakir Hussain to education
8.13 Summary
8.14 Unit end exercise

8.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this you will be able to:

- Explain his views on various aspects of his general philosophy.
- Understand his educational philosophy.
- Explain his expectations of good school.
- To appreciate his contribution to education.

8.1 INTRODUCTION

A graceful stylist, a sensitive soul vibrant with deep emotions, practicing educationist of long standing, Dr. Hussain is by far one of the best representatives of a secular, free and civilized India. Known for his devotion and sacrifice to the educational cause he is one of the chief exponents of Basic Education. It is a great privilege for the people of our country that two of her most eminent educationists, Dr. Radhakrishnan and Dr. Zakir Hussain, have functioned as presidents of our country. By
8.2 A BRIEF LIFE HISTORY

Dr. Zakir Hussain was born on February 8, 1897 in Hyderabad. When he was hardly nine years old his father died and his family returned to his ancestral home in Qaimganj in Uttar Pradesh. After finishing his schooling in Etawa, he joined the Mohammedan Anglo-Indian College in Aligarh. While studying for M. A. zakir Hussain responded to the clarion call of Gandhiji and left the college to join the Non-cooperation Movement with the British. Along with other students, he founded Jamia Millia Islamia (National Muslim University) in 1920 at Aligarh. To satiate his hunger for higher education, he went to Berlin University wherein he earned his Ph. D. degree in Economics. On returning to India in 1926, he took over as Vice Chancellor of Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi, at the age of 29 only. In 1948 he was made the Vice Chancellor of the Aligarh Muslim University. In 1952, he was nominated to the Rajyasabha. In 1957, he became the Governor of Bihar. In 1962, he was elected to the office of the Vice President of India. In 1967, he became the President of India and remained at this post till his death in 1969. On being elevated to the presidency of India he said, “My choice of this high office has mainly been made on account of my long association with the education of my people. It is, indeed a great honour that the nation has bestowed on a mere teacher who some 47 years resolved to devote the best years of his life to national education”.

8.3. DR. ZAKIR HUSSAIN’S PHILOSOPHY

Dr. Hussain was an idealist. A clear evidence to this is his zeal to translate Plato’s Republic in Urdu. “Belief” to him was an essential prerequisite of character. He said, “Feeble beliefs must be replaced by healthier habits and irrelevant institutions by progressive institutions. Our will should get guidance not form the twilight of the intellect but from the broad daylight of true beliefs”.

Secularist to the core, he was a humanist with a broad vision and never allowed his Islamic principles and his nationalism fall into narrow grooves but set them in the context where the East and West, the ancient and the modern, the Muslim and the Non-Muslim could find a happy meeting ground. In the words of Moraes, “He loved India, he loved the world”. He loved truth, justice and humanity. He advocated humanistic education, the foundations of which are best laid in the early years of life.

About reality he says that this universe is real. There are two worlds; the material world and the spiritual world. Material world is of senses and deals with things of the world. The spiritual world is of soul
and spirit. Hence pleasures of world are considered secondary. The spiritual world is to be realized by mind through its ideas.

He attaches the highest value to man in his educational philosophy and seeks to evolve man to the best of his potentialities. He had faith in ‘man’ and it is clearly visible in his philosophy and educational ideas.

### 8.4. DR. HUSSAIN’S VIEWS ON EDUCATION

According to Dr. Zakir Hussain education in this country is sadly handicapped. He considers education as the very life sustaining sap of a cultured society. The problems for this state of affairs are as follows:

1. Sitting for long hours silently in the classroom receiving lessons in complete passivity in a manner, which is most un-child like conformity. This system kills the natural ardor the child once had and transforms him into a listless non-reaching entity.

2. Scarcity of good teachers. What is available in the system are teachers with cruelty, harshness and strict regimentation.

3. Another source of indiscriminate hardship is the heavy and meaningless curriculum.

4. The existing educational system enables the democratic educator to dispose of the mistaken notion that education must be the shaping of the educand according to a given generic type, according to a ready-made educational ideal with a sharp delineated content. He believes that education is not the process of pressing into shape but a letting loose and setting free which respects the the unique and specific individuality of the educand. The success of Indian education depends on the ideas and principles and how its evolution helps in the growth and development of the democratic way of life, on how it provides for the full growth and development of individuality, on how it harnesses harmoniously developed individuality to social ends, and how it masters the mysteries of selflessness.

To him the basic principle of education in a democracy should be reverence to the individuality of the child, the child who is to grow into the citizen through his intelligent and willing participation in education. For democracy is nothing but the full discharge of duties to himself and to the society by every citizen. This is possible only if the competencies are discovered and developed to their fullest by education.

Regarding the process of education, he compares it with the growing development of human body, from its embryonic beginnings grows and develops to its full stature by means of agreeable, assimilable food, movement and exercise, in accordance with physical and chemical
laws, so does the mind grow and develop from its original disposition to its full evolutionary cultivation by means of mental food and mental exercise according to the laws of mental growth. This development of individual human mind must start from infancy. He firmly believed that the process of education is a continuing one in which the journey is as important as the destination.

Dr. Hussain expresses his deep concern for the fact that more often than not the means become the ends in due course. It appears to him that schools are the creation of an evil mind; otherwise they could not have been what they actually are. He says, “Schooling is not equated with learning the three R’s but it is on the other hand, a gradual initiation to life”. He would like schools to be familiar with the society, family and individuals.

He believed in having and acquiring only that knowledge which is functional and in support of this he cites an English educator:- “knowledge is idle in a community if it becomes the private possession of an esoteric coterie”. He wanted education to provide effective leadership in a world of change. Dr. Hussain’s primary objective is to provide leadership to community, which gives sustenance to its academic organ.

His views on university education are very clear. He considers ‘work’ as the main instrument of education. He wants education to be life long. It should be relevant and provide effective leadership to the community to which they belong to. This is possible only by learning to respect ‘work’ and treat it as an instrument of educating mind so that universities could repay their debt to the society. In this connection Ramaswamy Iiyer observes that the principal purpose of university education is to enable one to serve the country in its variegated scientific and technological necessities.

He dislikes the peculiar reaction to a problem by an Indian, which he says, is ‘evasion’. No matter a university has to face it must never evade an issue but face it boldly and squarely. A true university should possess a passion for excellence. He has reservations on the people having patience especially with poverty, dirt, disease and incompetence. He says, unless patience is combined with diligence, it is a crime. If a university discharges its obligations well, there is no earthly reason why a new world of which Dr. Hussain so fervently and sincerely dreams of may not come to pass.

Dr. Hussain has his clear view on the long-standing controversy between ‘science’ and ‘humanities’. He believes that that the advance modern world has made in the recent past is entirely due to the application of scientific knowledge and its application to social and political problems that man is faced with. He laments that the specialization in each field of technology has reached to such an extent that the jargon of is hardly understood by those in the other field of specialization. This phenomenon
is rightly described by C. P. Snow, “never was the exclusion of one branch of knowledge from another so pronounced, and neither was one faculty so developed at the expense of the other as we find today”. Dr. Hussain concludes that humanities and science are not something mutually contradictory but complimentary. One should realize the fact that science is devoid of values especially moral and ethical values. He points out that science is a system of philosophy without ethics. Science devoid of ethical judgment becomes an ally of everyone – of the good as well as the bad and is of service in changing the world into a paradise or reducing it to a veritable hell.

Regarding the importance of education, he said in his speech after being sworn in as the President of India in the following words. “I maintain that education is a prime instrument of national purpose and that the quality of its education is inseparably involved in the quality of the nation”.

**Dr. Hussain laid stress on the following aims of education:**

i. Education should develop a sense of common national ethos.

ii. Education should develop higher values of life.

iii. Education should develop qualities of citizenship.

iv. Education should also derive inspiration from traditional knowledge and real work experience.

v. Education should develop positive attitude.

vi. Education should develop a sense of social responsibility.

vii. Education should develop vocational efficiency.

His views on education and politics are that education is the master and politics is its servant. About education and morality he says it is necessary to combine power with morality as well as with science and technology. Regarding education, science and technology his views are very distinct. The scientists and technologists must keep in mind social welfare. Education thus should develop the totality of the child. He laments that Indian education is lacking in the following major drawbacks. (1) Indian education has been like stagnant water for quite some time. (2) Indian education ignores new ideas and fresh thinking in educational matters.

**Check your progress**

Answer the following in one or two sentences:

1. What are Zakir Hussain’s views on ‘belief’?

2. Why Zakir Hussain is considered a ‘humanist’?

3. What is his view on reality?

4. Who does he attach the highest value in his educational philosophy?

5. Why does he say education in India is handicapped?

6. What is his view on the relationship between education and society?

8.5. THE FOUR ESSENTIAL VALUES

During a convocation address, Dr. Zakir Hussain gave four self-evident values for the young people. They are health, strength, beauty, and cleanliness. These simple values tend to expand as one endeavors to realize them. When one pursues health, he finds himself pursuing the objectives of a healthy body, healthy mind and a healthy character. A strong vigorous body enables one to be strong, alert, disciplined mind and a strong character. Such a person possesses a firm, efficient, persevering and thorough personality. Beauty refers to beauty inside and outside as well as a beautiful world around. The objective of a clean body entails one to have an unblotted clean mind and a clean life.

8.6. EDUCATIONALLY PRODUCTIVE WORK :

Dr. Zakir Hussain in his own choicest words gave one of the finest statements about the meaning of work in education. He placed work on the niche of honor and worship. His idea of work has developed across the
years not through bookish knowledge but through devotion and experience. He says, “I have after years of thinking on the subject come to the conviction that work is the only instrument of effective education. It may sometimes be manual work and sometimes non-manual work. Although it is work alone that can educate, I have also come to the conviction by long observation and experience that all work does not educate”. Only that work is educative which serves value. Dr. Hussain calls such work of educational value as ‘educationally productive work’; work which helps in the cultivation of the mind.

Other views on education are: (i) productive work should be related to mental work. (ii) The sequence in work education is ‘thinking and doing’ and ‘doing and thinking’. The real school work consists in training children to think before they take up an activity. He lays emphasis on the fact that work should be planned and executed. It’s ‘why’ and ‘how’ must be carefully considered. He firmly believed that work is worship.

8.7. FREEDOM, DISCIPLINE AND AUTHORITY :

He reiterates that freedom and authority are not opposites. There is no authority in education without inner freedom. There is no freedom without creative work and orderly environment. The individual is helped by the school to go through certain stages. In the beginning the authority of teachers is of experience and maturity. At the end, the authority is of the values developed by the child. Responsibility, freedom and discipline go hand in hand and education should train the student in each of these.

8.8 THE TEACHER’S ROLE :

The teacher must make all efforts to lead his pupils to acquire higher values of life. This he should do through his personal conduct and character. The teacher is not to dictate or dominate, instead he is to help and serve the student. The teacher must also understand that the pupils have their own personality and the personality must be well looked after and nourished. The teacher should be an embodiment of love and patience in dealing with the children.

8.9. TEACHER AS THE CUSTODIAN OF VALUES :

What sort of man could be an ideal teacher? Dr. Hussain has clear vision about this. He has categorized human beings based on some dominating principles. The highest principle of theoretical man is truth, that of imaginative man is beauty, that of the economic man is gain, that of religious man is salvation, that of political man is power, and that of social man is love. It is rather difficult to find a pure type but they have some dominating principles. Dr. Hussain considers predominantly a character of the social type can make a good teacher. The teacher belonging to social
type is characterized by love for other fellow beings, a feeling of solidarity and belongingness with them, an urge to help them, and finds joy in giving oneself up for them. The teacher is not to dictate or dominate the pupils but help and serve them in order to mould and shape them in faith and love. The teacher should be the custodian of the highest values cherished by the society. It is his pious duty to transmit these values to his pupils through the charisma of his personality.

8.10. EDUCATION AND CULTURE:

History is the record of the past and in it are the roots of our inheritance. The depth and expanse of it is very vast. Our present should be based on a sound footing of the past experience taking into consideration of the present and aimed at a bright future. Our history is enriched by a variety of cultures and civilizations, a good number of world religions and great philosophers. It is the function of education to sift through the rich heritage and make them available for the moral and spiritual nourishment of growing generations. Dr. Hussain says “Education should be able to distinguish between the heritage that helps and that heritage hampers the tradition that undermines and the tradition that fortifies”.

8.11. CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD SCHOOL:

In his speech on founder’s day celebration of Modern School, New Delhi, on November 25, 1962, Zakir Hussain gave the following characteristics of a good school.

1. Knowledge of individuality of each child: A proper understanding of the individuality of each pupil should be the prime concern of the school and the teacher. The children come from different social and family backgrounds, possesses different capabilities and tastes, different likes and dislikes and different personalities. The school and the teacher should make sincere attempts to understand these and deal with them in such a way that the students benefit fully from the school activities.

2. Understanding the stages of development: The second concern of the school should be directing the school programmes in consonance with the stages of development of the pupils.

3. All round development: Another characteristic feature of a good school is that it devotes its efforts to the growth and development of the three H’s of the pupil.

4. Purposeful activities: Education is a purposeful activity and the programmes of the school should be leading to educationally productive work.
5. Social and individual development: The school should aim at the individual development as well as generating a sense of social responsibility.

6. Self-education: the school should take initiative in enhancing the process of self-learning in the pupils. In fact the best way to teach is to help the learner how to learn i.e. learning to learn.

8.12 CONTRIBUTION OF DR. ZAKIR HUSSAIN TO EDUCATION:

Dr. Hussain’s contribution to education is worth noting. Some of them are given below.

1. Establishment of the Jamia Milia Islamia.
2. Formulation of the Wardha Scheme or Basic Education.

In 1937, Gandhiji expressed his views on education that literacy itself is no education. He therefore, wanted children to be taught useful handicrafts to enable them to produce and earn from the moment they begin training.

A conference of National Workers was held at Wardha in the same year under the presidency of Gandhiji. The conference appointed a committee of eminent educationists under the chairmanship of Dr. Zakir Hussain to prepare a detailed syllabus. This report of the committee on education later came to be known as the ‘Wardha Scheme of Education’. Dr. Zakir Hussain played an important role in the preparation of this report.

Salient features of Basic Education as suggested by the Committee

1. The duration of the course has to be seven years.
2. Students are free to choose one basic craft of their choice from among the options given.
   - Spinning and weaving,
   - Carpentry
   - Agriculture,
   - Gardening, (Fruits and vegetables)
   - Leather work,
   - Any other craft which the local and geographical conditions permit. Example: Cane work, coir manufacturing, handicrafts, etc.
4. The medium of instruction should be mother tongue.
5. Duration of work in the curriculum per day is 5 hours thirty minutes.
6. Total working days per year should be 228 days.
7. The school should be a residential one.
Check your progress

Fill in the blanks with the correct option given below.

1. According to Dr. Hussain, educationally productive work is that one _________.
   a) Which helps in cultivation of knowledge.
   b) Which has devotion and experience.
   c) Which is placed at the niche of honor and worship.
   d) Which serves the society.

2. Education should train the students in ________-and ________-
   a) Responsibility and authority.
   b) Freedom and discipline.
   c) Discipline and creativity.
   d) Authority and maturity.

3. According to Zakir Hussain the dominating principle that makes a good teacher is -------
   a) The truth of a theoretical man.
   b) The love of a social man.
   c) The beauty of an imaginative man.
   d) The gain of an economic man.

8.13 SUMMING UP:

Economist by training, educationist by profession, humanist by temperament, Dr. Hussain is one of the most creative and distinguished sons of India. He has been an important liberating force in education enriching its purpose as well as contents, experimenting in methods and techniques, elucidating its true relationship and responsibility not only to society but also with the precious legacy of man as a whole. He has, on the one hand, shown sensitiveness to its social and psychological foundations and, on the other, has been deeply involved in its moral and spiritual implications. His views on work and aims of education are crystal clear. His contribution to education is no less than many other educationists by any standards.

8.14 UNIT-END EXERCISE

1. Explain Dr. Zakir Hussain’s philosophical views and aims of education.

Write short notes on the following.

1. Dr. Zakir Hussain’s views on university education.
2. The four essential values for the young people.
3. The concept of work according to Dr. Hussain.
4. Relationship between ‘freedom’, ‘discipline’ and ‘authority’.
5. Role of teacher according to Dr. Hussain.
6. Relationship between education and culture.
7. Salient features of Basic Education.
8. Characteristics of a good school.
9. Important contributions of Dr. Hussain to education.

References