

## **A CRITICAL REVIEW OF JOHN LOCKE’S PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION**

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### **ABSTARCT**

The purpose of the study was to make an appraisal of John Locke’s contribution to present education system and to identify the areas where John Locke’s method may be found relevant in present educational settings. Study found that Locke does not present a systematic theory of education, and the work reads more like an instruction manual than a philosophical text. Locke's is convinced that moral education is more important than other kinds of education. The goal of education, in his view, is not to create a scholar, but to create a virtuous man. Locke also stresses the importance of habit and example in education, while downplaying the role of rules.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Education is a systematic process through which a child or an adult acquires knowledge, experience, skill and sound attitude. It makes an individual civilized, refined, cultured and educated. For a civilized and socialized society, education is the only means. Its goal is to make an individual perfect. Every society gives importance to education because it is a panacea for all evils. It is the key to solve the various problems of life. Education in the broadest sense of the term is meant to aid the human being in his/her pursuit of wholeness. Wholeness implies the harmonious development of all the potentialities God has given to a human person. True education is the harmonious development of the physical, mental, moral and social faculties, the four dimensions of life, for a life of dedicated service. Generally, at the start of a very young age, children

learn to develop and use their mental, moral and physical powers, which they acquire through various types of education. Education is commonly referred to as the process of learning and obtaining knowledge at school, in a form of formal education. However the process of Education teacher, one can learn and receive knowledge from a parent, family member and even as acquaintance.

John Locke's views on education are based on his empirical theory of human knowledge in his famous work. When born, the mind of the child is like a blank slate to be filled later with the data derived from sensory experience. It logically ensues that education plays a crucial role in the moral development and social integration of any human being. Education means shaping according to each individual's temperament and skills, exercised without brutality, but in a rigorous and pragmatic manner.

In a world that considered children miniature adults, Locke discovered the child: John Locke look at education is contemporary in its advice for motivating students: Cherish curiosity, gently rub away innocence, spare the rod, secure attention, provide recreation, treat children as rational, and explain the purpose of instruction.

#### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

**Li & Xie (2014)** explored Locke nurturance education aims at the training of gentlemen, emphasizing the health of the body and mind, and focusing on the cultivation of good virtues. Locke's nurturance education provides a reference for China's quality-oriented education: Quality-oriented education should pay attention to physical and spiritual education, pay attention to the role of family and role of models, early cultivation, more practice, and pay attention to the subjectivity of the educated.

**Gregory Lewis Bynum(2015)** studied Locke and Dewey together can provide today's childhood educators with a helpful and empowering sense of intellectual heritage to support educational practices that better respect the intellectual and experiential lives of young children. Further, examining the two philosophers' differences can stimulate us to illuminating debate on possible, varying approaches to childhood-intellect-respecting education that we might use today.

**Han (2016)** analyzed Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* and uses it as the research medium to analyze the moral education thoughts it conveys, and some inspirations of these thoughts for the primary school children's family education.

**Sherlyn A. Layesa (2017)** studied John Locke's fondness in the field of science has greatly influenced his methodologies and viewpoints when it comes to educating children. He established the importance of how we should take care of our physical bodies, because for Locke, what we must aim for is not only a sound mind, but also a sound body. By keeping the body in strength and vigor, the young master as used by Locke to termed children, will have the ability to obey and execute the orders of the mind. Underpinning, vis-à-vis health and education, is the significant role of parents to their children.

#### **JUSTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEM**

Educational philosophies of all the various thinkers of the world have attracted the attention of the researchers.

It is essential to know the practical utilities of education of Locke. His educational thoughts have great valuable ideas which have the relevance to the modern society. With his ideas an educational system has been incorporated directly or indirectly into the educational system of modern India. Locke was well trained as social scientist and became a philosopher and a statesman by practice and vocation. He is known for his social, religious and political thoughts; investigator has made sincere effort to study the educational philosophy of John Locke.

#### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To study the evolution of John Locke's educational ideas.
2. To make an appraisal of John Locke's contribution to present education system.
3. To identify the areas where John Locke's method may be found relevant in present educational settings.
4. To make suggestions for improvement in Indian Educational System.

## **RESEARH METHOD**

Historical method was used to conduct this qualitative study.

## **JOHN LOCKE’S EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY**

### **Aims of Education**

- The aim of education, according to Locke, is to produce virtuous and useful men and women, whatever their station in life. Education must be practical, and, of course, that will vary depending on the pupil. What will be useful for a gentleman’s son in his adult life is not the same as what will be useful for the son of a laborer. But even the gentleman’s son is to be educated to be able to actively manage his affairs, not for a life of luxury and idleness. Locke had no patience for idleness or waste; everyone ought to lead a useful life, each in his own way
- Locke was acutely aware of the importance of education for morals and politics. In an entry in his commonplace book titled “Labour,” he wrote that gentlemen and scholars ought to spend a few hours of every day in “honest labour” while manual labourers ought to spend a similar portion of their day studying. This scheme would have the twofold benefit in morals of curbing idleness and luxury among the upper classes while delivering the laboring classes from “horrid ignorance and brutality.”
- First and foremost, Locke’s education aims at developing character. What matters is not what the child learns, but who he becomes. Locke presents this advice on education as the counsel of reason. We must ask what supports that claim. The aim of education, according to Locke, is to produce virtuous and useful men and women, whatever their station in life. Education must be practical, and, of course, that will vary depending on the pupil.
- “The true secret of education” is to secure obedience without servility, and Locke offers an alternative method to accomplish this goal. He relies on praise and blame, esteem and disgrace. Children want to be well-regarded by their parents and by others around them. They should be encouraged in this and come to associate all good things with good reputation.

- Locke proposes a series of educational methods that flow from the principle of respect for the child. The education should be adapted to the individual temperament of the child. It should be appropriate to his stage of development: in particular, children should not be punished for “faults” which are nothing more than age-appropriate behavior that they will soon grow out of. Learning should be done through games and with pleasure.
- The tutor is also the source of the child’s education in breeding, which cannot be learned from books. The child will learn good breeding through observation of the tutor’s conduct. Breeding is conducting oneself always with self-respect and respect for others.

## **Curriculum**

### **Student centered approach**

What concerned Locke, both as a psychologist and a philosopher, and certainly as an educator, was the concept of the mind, how the individual self identifies with it, and the power of learning that can come from one’s own understanding of it. In many ways, he advocated for the earliest forms of student-centered learning, of the idea of the whole-child approach to education, as well as the educational ideal of differentiation. Quite essentially, he put the student’s learning experience on par with, if not above, the teacher or subject-matter’s needs, wants and values; in his world, the teacher’s responsibility is to help students find themselves within their learning first and foremost, and to learn the content second

### **Basic and simple methods**

Locke had an overall view of the curriculum which was permanent with teaching methods. He believed in starting with the basic and simple, and of building, as far as possible, upon children’s accessible knowledge, of emphasizing the interconnections and unity of subjects.

### **Emphasis on reading and writing**

Children should be trained to read at the initial promising age—as soon as they can

speak. But the learning should not be tiresome; on the contrary, Locke believed that it would be better to lose a whole year rather than to give a child an extreme dislike to learning at this early stage. Locke commented upon how much energy, practice and repetition children happily put into play, and therefore suggested ‘dice and play-things with the letters on them, to teach children the alphabet by playing’

Writing should start with accurate holding of the pen and the copying of large letters from a sheet. Writing would go ahead naturally to drawing, with due attention to viewpoint, a most useful skill for those who would connect in travel, so that buildings, machines and other interesting phenomena might be quickly sketched. Locke believed that a good drawing was more useful in transmission of an idea to the mind than several pages of written description. Locke also recommended the value of shorthand for the purpose of making quick notes.

### **History as main subject**

Other subjects which Locke commended for a gentleman’s son included geography, arithmetic, astronomy, geometry, chronology, and history, and generally in that order. Locke was particularly keen on this last: ‘as nothing teaches, so nothing delights more than history’ History would naturally lead on to a study of law and government, subjects of importance for future gentlemen who might be required to assume public office, either locally as Justices of the Peace, or at Westminster as Members of Parliament.

### **Extracurricular activities**

The curriculum should also include other types of accomplishment. Dancing was recommended from an early age, though learning to play a musical instrument was not encouraged as ‘it wastes so much of a young man’s time’ Locke also advised that every gentleman’s son should learn at least one manual trade, and preferably two or three. Such a skill might be useful in itself, should the gentleman fall on hard times, but also promoted physical well-being and was a useful antidote to too much bookish study. Locke, who was himself a keen gardener, recommended ‘gardening or husbandry in general, and working in wood, as a carpenter, joiner or turner, these being fit and

healthy recreations for a man of study, or business’.

### **Discipline**

The trick to education is to get the child to go away from that which they will want and get them to go to something that they would not naturally want. They have to be disciplined to suffer hardships of the mind. He asserts that discipline has to begin at birth. Once the child has been allowed to grow up thinking that they can have everything they want, it is too late to apply discipline. The damage is done when they are still babes. On the subject of discipline, Locke warns that there are two methods that are to be avoided. First is disciplining your child through violence. “Beating them, and all other sorts of slavish and corporal punishments, are not the discipline fit to be used in the education of those we would have wise, good, and ingenuous men; and therefore very rarely to be apply, and that only in great occasions, and cases of extremity.

### **EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

1. Locke does not present a systematic theory of education, and the work reads more like an instruction manual than a philosophical text. Locke's is convinced that moral education is more important than other kinds of education. The goal of education, in his view, is not to create a scholar, but to create a virtuous man.
2. Locke also stresses the importance of habit and example in education, while downplaying the role of rules. Children generally do not understand rules, Locke claims, nor can they remember them. Teaching by rules, therefore, is counterproductive. The child will either end up being punished constantly and then giving up on the attempt to be good, or else the rules will not be enforced and the child will lose his respect for authority.
3. In the last third of the book, Locke finally turns his attention to academic learning. Here, Locke takes a strong stand against the schools. Where the schools stress Greek and Latin grammar, Locke thinks that these languages should not be a strong focus of the child's education, and that when they are taught; it should be through conversation rather than through memorization of

- rules.
4. Locke says that every child should learn a manual skill. He thinks that a manual skill is useful because it helps to relax and refresh the mind after it is worn out from study. It is better to have such a skill, he thinks, than to be idle.
  5. Locke begins his thinking with the opinion that the mind is a sort of blank tablet upon which the world of matter writes by means of feelings. This mind does not have innate or inborn ideas, but it does have the power to arrange impressions in such a way as to produce a reliable system of thoughts. Mind and body, for Locke, exist as real things, but they interact. Bodies act upon the mind and produce sensations.

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