

Siddheshwar Rameshwar Bhatt

# Philosophical Foundations of Education

Lessons for India

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*Dedicated to  
seers, sages and thinkers who  
have shown the way to Reality,  
Knowledge, and Values*

# Foreword

प्रकाश जावडेकर  
*Prakash Javadekar*



मंत्री  
मानव संसाधन विकास  
भारत सरकार  
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HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

The objective of the present book is to provide a philosophical foundation to the theory and practice of education from the Indian perspective, which is the need of the times in the contemporary educational scenario of our country. The book is guided by the 'axionoetic' approach to education and therefore it deals with the epistemological foundation and value orientation of education. The Indian mind is intuitive as well as argumentative, descriptive of the nature of Reality and prescriptive of the norms and ideals of life in accordance therewith. Indian philosophical reflection is not just a love of wisdom but a love for life lived with wisdom. These have been the guiding principles in writing this book. The author has dealt with ontological, epistemological, logical, ethical and axiological bases of education in a holistic and integrated manner.

It is rightly maintained that knowledge plays a fundamental role in the system of education. Logical organization of knowledge keeping in view the psychological state of the learner, suitable and effective teaching learning strategies, appropriate techniques of assessment and evaluation and methodical pursuits of values are the focal points of this book. The author rightly maintains that education is a planned, methodical and purposive enhancement of human potentialities as a natural development. This presupposes a correct and adequate formulation of the objectives and goals of education as per the needs and aspirations of the pupil. Education is the hallmark of any civilized society and a robust, vibrant and holistic education has to ensure all-round development of an individual. It has to provide opportunities for fullest possible efflorescence of inherent potentialities and enhance capabilities to realize this. This is what is meant by personality development. This also implies needed character development. A system of education has not only to turn out learned people but also good and virtuous people. This apart, education is also meant to equip an individual to live a good quality of life. "Knowledge is power" and imparting 'life skills' education helps in the empowerment of an individual. So education has the twin purpose of ennobling and enabling good quality of life. In the Indian context the generic term *vidya* has been used to comprise information, instruction, skill, training, knowledge and wisdom or realization.

Education is also a medium through which a society transmits its heritage of past experiences and achievements. This is known as tradition. But it has to be a 'living tradition'. A living tradition is that which is deeply rooted in the past, firmly footed in the present and has a glorious vision of the future. A good system of education has to preserve and ensure such life-sustaining and life-enhancing healthy traditions.

Keeping in view the applied dimension of philosophy, the book analyses practical problems like loss of character, value-negativism, and spread of dis-values like violence, terrorism, and environmental pollution, etc., in the context of education. It also deals with issues concerning peace, sustainable development, sustainable judicious consumption, etc., which should have a bearing on educational policies and programmes.

I am sure that the book will be useful for educational planners and practitioners, educators, and educational researchers.



(PRAKASH JAVADEKAR)

Prakash Javadekar  
Union Minister, Ministry of Human Resource  
Development, Government of India

# Preface

It is universally felt that knowledge-based and value-oriented education is the need of the day. Gradual decline and loss of values and the menacing spread of vices have acquired the magnitude of global problem. An axionoetic approach to education can be one of the appropriate measures to address this malaise. It requires a valuational study of human nature, human needs and aspirations. For this, there is a need for a sound theory of knowledge with adequate apprehension of values. All forms of human pursuits, cognitive, affective, and conative, need such axionoetic basis. This necessitates the due application of a valuational theory of knowledge in the field of education in a gradual and graded manner at all levels and dimensions of education.

The present work enunciates a holistic and integral approach to Reality and life and delineates a symbiosis of knowing, doing, and being in individual, social, and cosmic spheres.

There is a well-acclaimed postulation that philosophy can and should provide a foundation to the theory and practice of education. No system of education can be meaningful unless it is based on the solid foundation of a systematic philosophical reflection. Though it has too often been declared that education is the dynamic side of philosophy, in contemporary times no sincere effort has been made to provide a genuinely philosophical basis to education. An attempt is being made here to analyse the various philosophical foundations of education—ontological, axiological, ethical, epistemological and logical—with a view to establishing the inevitability of philosophy for the entire gamut of the process of education. These have been the focal points of this book together with a discussion on the “axionoetic” approach to the entire process of education. Axionoetics means a valuational approach to knowledge.

In this book, the Indian cultural context has been brought in because it provides a holistic and integral viewpoint which to my mind is nearer to Reality. Almost all the contemporary Indian thinkers like Vivekananda, Dayananda, Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi, and Sri Aurobindo who wrote on education followed the Vedic-Upaniṣadic holistic and integral approach, and I adopt the same approach in this book. Keeping in view the applied dimension of philosophy in the Indian context, I have in the last



part of the book dwelt upon problems like violence, terrorism, environmental pollution, need for peace, sustainable development, and judicious consumption from the Indian perspective. While the book comes with an Indian perspective, it can suitably be adopted within other cultural traditions. For the sake of reiteration and emphasis, some themes are repeated across the chapters.

I am indebted to all my teachers and scholarly writers who have sharpened my ideas and helped me in the cultivation of my mind. I am extremely grateful to the Hon'ble Minister of Human Resource Development Shri Prakash Javadekar for obliging me with an erudite Foreword to this book. I acknowledge my thanks to Ms Shinjini Chatterjee, Ms Priya Vyas, Ms Jayanthi Narayanaswamy and other staff members at Springer for undertaking the publication of this book.

This work is based on and is a thoroughly revised and enlarged form of my earlier book *Knowledge, Value and Education* (1986). I hope that it will be useful to students and scholars of education as also to educational planners and administrators.

New Delhi, India  
June 2018

Siddheshwar Rameshwar Bhatt

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## About the Author

**Prof. Siddheshwar Rameshwar Bhatt** is an eminent philosopher and Sanskritist. At present, he is Chairman, Indian Council of Philosophical Research. He is also Chairman of the Indian Philosophical Congress and Asian Congress of Philosophy. He retired as Professor and Head, Department of Philosophy, University of Delhi, Delhi. He is internationally known as an authority on ancient Indian culture, Buddhism, Jainism and Vedanta. His research areas include Indian philosophy, logic, epistemology, ethics, value theory, philosophy of education, philosophy of religion, comparative religion, social and political thought, etc. He has lectured in many universities and research institutes in the United States, Canada, Finland, Trinidad, North Korea, South Korea, Japan, China, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Singapore and Thailand. He is a member of many national and international associations. He is a member of the Board of Advisors of the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, Washington, D.C., which has brought out several volumes on world cultures and civilizations.

# Table of Diacritical Marks

## Key to Transliteration (using diacritical marks)

	अ	इ	उ	ऋ				
	a	i	u	r̥				
आ	ई	उ	ए	ऐ	ओ	औ	अं	अःa
ā	ī	ū	e	ai	o	au	am	aḥ

## Classified Consonants

क	ख	ग	घ	ङ
k	kh	g	gh	ṅ

च	छ	ज	झ	ञ
c	ch	j	jh	ñ

ट	ठ	ड	ढ	ण
ṭ	ṭh	ḍ	ḍh	ṇ

त	थ	द	ध	न
t	th	d	dh	n

प	फ	ब	भ	म	म् (intermidate)
p	ph	b	bh	m	m̐

## Unclassified Consonants

य	र	ल	व	श	ष	स	ह	क्ष	त्र	ज्ञ
Y	r	l	v	ś	ṣ	s	h	kṣa	tra	jña

Anusvaraḥ-(◌)	⇒	m̐
Visargaḥ-(◌)	⇒	ḥ

# Chapter 1

## Philosophy and Education



**Abstract** The present chapter deals with the experience-centric, goal-oriented and practical nature of philosophy keeping the Indian context in view, which is holistic and integral. It delineates the nature of and need for education. It emphasizes the role of knowledge in education for personality enhancement, character development, and betterment of quality of life. The chapter highlights the contribution of philosophical reflections in the theory and practice of education.

**Keywords** Philosophy · Reality · Education · Holistic and integral approach  
Personality enhancement · Character development · Quality of life

### Introduction

It has been said about Hegelian philosophy that it died of being misunderstood. The same has been the case with general philosophy as well. So much has it been misconceived, mistrusted and misused that the word “philosophy” is more often than not used contemptuously to brand anything that is vague, confusing and abstruse. To a great extent, the so-called philosophers and the teachers of philosophy are responsible for this plight of philosophy. Therefore, before we embark upon our avowed task of establishing the correlation between philosophy and education, we shall do well to see the exact nature and function of philosophy, education and the philosophy of education.

### Nature of Philosophy

Etymologically, philosophy means love of wisdom, but functionally it means both the seeking of wisdom (process) and the wisdom sought (outcome). This wisdom, it must be made clear, is in no way mere abstract ratiocination or information seeking. It really means a prudent and practical orientation and a vision for use in life based on veridical knowledge. Philosophy, thus, stands both for the theoretical knowledge