

## CHANGING SCENARIO OF EDUCATION IN THE LIGHT OF HUMANISTIC APPROACH: A REFLECTION

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Imparting meaningful and significant education, in the changing landscape to the students has been considered as one of the thrust area in the field of educational and psychological research in recent years. Education is no more only a matter of cognitive development rather it is equally important to develop the affective domain of the individuals and here lies the significance of humanistic approach to education which was propounded by Carl Rogers. The human qualities like, feelings, emotions sentiments etc. which lead the individual to be a man among men- are required to be given prior importance as opined by Carl Rogers. In a nutshell, affective and cognitive developments should go hand to hand for the development of the students which is found a mismatch in the existing system of education. In this approach, teachers should be the facilitator in the significant learning and the goal of education is to make a whole person who has learned how to learn.*

**Keywords:** *Humanistic Approach, Whole person, Significant learning, Affective development, Facilitator.*

### **INTRODUCTION:**

There is a ceaseless change in the society and the process of education and creation of knowledge is carried on from the very first day of human history. With the changing landscape, education through the ages has been playing the role of pathfinder for the upliftment of individual as well as of the society. But the goal of education, the method to impart it, the role of teachers and the students, curriculum etc. have been redefined with the change of social structure, political scenario and socio-economic structure.

Like globalisation and technological changes which have accelerated in tandem over past few years have created a new global economy “powered by technology, fuelled by information and driven by knowledge”. The emergence of this new scenario has serious implications for the nature and system of overall education system

too. There is an exponential growth of access to information so the educational institutions like school, college, university cannot remain mere a venue for the transmission of prescribed set of information from teacher to taught. Rather the institutions might be promoted as the learning organisations that can react more quickly to changing environment and make possible continuous learning for life time.

In short, learning organisation has the capacity to change and adapt constantly to new environments and circumstances as its members, individually and together, learned their way to realise their vision.

For the purpose there is a need to give equal importance on cognitive aspect as well as the affective and co-native aspects simultaneously i.e. involving the total person. Here lies the importance of Humanistic approach to education, propounded by Carl Rogers, an American psychologist, personality theorist and a renowned councillor. This humanistic approach is often considered as the third force in psychology, the other two being psychoanalysis and behaviourism. According to psychoanalysis, man is basically biological being, an animal; at the most, he is a domesticated animal; the goal of education is to socialise him, make him fit to live as a member of society. According to behaviourism man is a sophisticated machine; education must provide required software to regulate his behaviour. But according to humanistic psychologist man is more than an animal; He has special characteristics that are not found in animals. He is not a machine; he is the creator of the machines. Education should try to help him to become what he can become, to realise his potentialities and to reach the maximum development.

The term 'humanistic psychology' was coined by Maslow to describe a position that focuses on the creative potentialities inherent in human beings and that seeks ways to help them realise their highest and most important goals and to give a personal meaning to his existence.

The humanistic theories postulates the existence of an innate growth mechanism within individuals that has been termed as the drive to self-actualisation, self-realisation or self-hood by different proponents which may help to attain the personal fulfillment and by proper education may do so.

## **BACKGROUND:**

Rogers was basically a psychotherapist and the founder of a form of counselling called client-centred therapy, the most widely known and practised technique of counselling all over the world. His interest in learning and teaching developed during his later years, especially with the publication of his book, Freedom to Learn (Rogers, 1969). His views on learning and teaching may be seen as an extension of his theory of psychotherapy. If his

theory is client-centred, his theory of learning is student-centred or person-centred. His theory of learning is predicated on the hypothesis: “If I can provide a certain type of relationship, the other person will discover within himself the capacity to use that relationship for growth and change, and personal development will occur”.

According to Rogers, today educational practices at all levels are basically authoritarian and coercive; teachers are perceived as possessors of knowledge and students as its passive recipients; education is merely the process of transmitting information from teachers to students; educational settings are typically impersonal, with too much emphasis on performance and its evaluation through examination; too little attention is devoted to issues of importance. There is greater emphasis on acquiring of cognitive skills than on developing affective skills.

Rogers through his humanistic approach has tried to find out the ways to meet the above challenges of education in changing scenario which have been discussed through this paper.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

In this paper the following objectives have been framed to study Rogers’s view of humanistic approach to education –

- I. To study the importance of humanistic approach in the changing scenario of education today.
- II. To elucidate the goal of education.
- III. To study the concept of significant learning and its principle.
- IV. To study the teachers’ role and To understand the student part
- V. To study the place of evaluation in meaningful learning
- VI. To study the implication of meaningful learning in teacher education.

### **METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY:**

The present study is mainly analytical in nature. The data has been collected from various publications, reports, monographs, books, journals etc. Further internet sources and websites are consulted for the purpose.

## ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS:

This section is focussed on discussion following the objectives of the study.

### 1) Goal of Education:

The goal of education in humanistic approach must be the facilitation of change and learning, it includes the education of whole person; it involves personal growth and self-directed learning. In short, the purpose of education is to make the students healthy and fully functioning person.

The characteristics of fully functioning persons as envisaged by Rogers are –

- a) They are open to experience.
- b) They are creative.
- c) They are honest and open.
- d) They are caring persons.
- e) They trust their fellow human beings.
- f) They will live with others in the maximum possible harmony and
- g) They are characterised by existential living.

### 2) Significant Learning:

For Rogers, learning must be meaningful, significant and experimental which gives equal weight to cognition as well as feeling.

Learning may be conceived of as falling along a continuum of meaning. At one end is meaningless learning – rote learning. It does not involve the whole person.

The learning which takes place in everyday life has meaning and personal relevance reside on the other end and termed as significant learning influencing the total person.

So, significant learning is not non-cognitive in nature; it combines cognitive elements with the affective elements involved in personal meaning. It recognises that meaningful learning even of a cognitive nature involves the total person.

The chief tenets of significant learning are –

1. It has a quality of personal involvement: the whole person – both feeling and cognitive aspects – is involved in the learning process.
2. It is self-initiated although the stimulus comes from outside, the comprehension, the grasping comes from within.
3. It is pervasive: it makes a difference in the learner's behaviour and experience – his attitudes, opinions and even the personality of the learner.
4. It is self-evaluated: the locus of evaluation resides in the learner, not in an external criterion.
5. Its essence is meaning: when learning occurs, the elements of meaning is built into the whole experience.

**Principles of Significant Learning:** Significant learning leads an individual in beginning a fully functioning person. It is predicated on permitting the learner to be free to engage in self-directed and self-reliant learning where the motive is self-actualisation.

Such learning involves certain principles and in this regard Rogers' view can be summarised as below:

1. There is an innate potentiality for learning. This potentiality and desire for learning can be realised under suitable conditions. The teacher, as a facilitator of learning, must work around the individual's natural desire to learn.
2. Learning that is threatening to self-organisation is resisted. When the external threat is minimal, assimilation of learning is facilitated. Learning proceeds smoothly under conditions of low threat to self.
3. Significant learning occurs under conditions in which the material to be learned is perceived by learners as significant and relevant to their own purposes. Under such circumstances, learning occurs speedily.
4. Learning is easily facilitated when the learner actively and responsibly participates in the learning process. Passive learning is less effective than active, participative learning.
5. Learning is more effective when one is placed in experimental confrontation with everyday problems. Learning by doing is among the most effective techniques of promoting learning.
6. The facilitation of independence, creativity and self-reliance is possible through self-criticism and self-evaluation rather than by external evaluation. Freedom is the atmosphere for viable learning. In creative effort, criticism from outside is fruitless. A self-reliant and independent atmosphere is most suited for significant learning.
7. Learning the process of learning is the most useful learning in the contemporary world. It involves a continuing openness to experience, and incorporation into oneself the process of change.

8. Self-initiated learning is the most lasting and pervasive. It involves the whole person – feelings as well as intellect.

So, significant learning involves the whole person and requires a change in focus for cognition to a combination of the cognitive and the affective and from the teaching to teacher, to learning and learner. The important thing in learning is learning how to learn in order to cope effectively in a changing landscape of the world.

### 3) Teacher as the facilitator of learning:

Teaching as usually defined is ‘to make to know’. But is it necessary for significant learning? – As it is a unified learning; it does not separate the mind from the heart, from feelings. Then what is the role of teacher in this regard?

According to Rogers, the teacher should be a facilitator i.e. the function of a teacher is to facilitate the learning process. As significant learning causes forth through the process of facilitation by involving the total person.

So, in the present approach of education, the teacher should not only be the possessor of knowledge, he might have the humanistic qualities which helps to build a personal relationship between the facilitator and learner and provides the conditions for self initiated learning.

The objective is to develop a community of learners including the teacher where curiosity is freed, sense of inquiry is opened up and such a community facilitates learning or learning how to learn.

There are three major conditions to facilitate such learning –

- a) Readiness in the facilitator: learning is facilitated when the teacher is genuine, authentic, and honest. It means he is being himself, not denying himself. The teacher should establish a personal contact with the learner.
- b) Prizing, acceptance, trust: the second major attitudinal characteristic is prizing the learner, prizing his feelings, his opinions. The learner is accepted as a person of worth, a unique individual and is respected. Her or his feelings and opinions are prized. The learner is seen as trust-worthy. All this is unconditional; there is no demand that the learner be different or conform in some way to be accepted and respected.
- c) Empathetic understanding: the third attitude of the facilitator contributing self-initiated experiential and meaningful learning is empathetic understanding. It is understanding which comes from putting oneself in the

place of the student to understand her or his reactions, to experience the student's perception and feelings about what is happening. Viewing the world through the student's eyes, is almost unheard of in the classroom. Rogers suggests that if teacher were able to make even one non-judgemental empathetic response to a student's expressed feeling, she or he would discover the power of such understanding.

#### **4) Students – the active participants:**

If the teaching learning process is a relationship of teacher and learner then the learner must be a participant in this process. There are three conditions which are necessary for learning to occur.

##### **i) Perception of the facilitative conditions:**

If prizing, realness and acceptance and empathic understanding are to be effective in facilitating learning, they must be perceived by the students and which leads to the self-directed learning.

**ii) Awareness of a problem:** Real learning occurs in response to a situation perceived.

**iii) Motivation:** In this approach, the basic motive for growth and development in all human is self-actualising tendency. So, the teachers do not have to motivate the students rather they are self-motivated and which is the key factor for meaningful learning.

#### **5) Evaluation in meaningful learning:**

In significant learning there is no place for examination system as it is practised in our schools and colleges. Rogers asserted that examinations are set by life and the learner must confront the examinations of life. The learning experience must be so structured that learners organise to contend with life tests more effectively.

This learning proposes programmes of self evaluations. The learner is the final judge; he selects a course of study commensurate with the motivation of self actualisation. He reads the book for their intrinsic value to learning rather than for their importance to sterile classroom examination.

In brief, self-initiated learning becomes responsible learning when a student evaluates his own learning. Goals and criterion are established by the individual who decides to what extent he / she achieved them; self evaluation thus must be a part of meaningful learning.

## 6) Teacher education and meaningful learning:

Teachers are the architects of future generations. So a combination of the cognitive and affective domain in education and a focus upon the interpersonal conditions for facilitating the significant learning require changes in the preparation of teachers.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS:

This paper has attempted to throw a light on the humanistic approaches to education in relevance to the present changing scenario.

Rogers from his experience proposed an approach to education which focuses on teaching as a facilitative interpersonal relationship. In doing so, he has provided a systematic psychological foundation which is known as humanistic education. It provides an understanding of the psychological conditions of learning, of cognitive and affective development leading to self-actualisation or fully functioning persons. The conditions are the attitudes of respecting, prizing and trusting others; of realness, genuineness or honesty in dealing with others and of empathic understanding of others. So, to educate an individual towards a fully functioning person requires the whole person to be educated and learning related to the development of the whole person is called significant learning.

In significant learning the learner perceives the subject-matter as relevant for his or her own purposes and the teacher becomes the facilitator of learning by providing the conditions for self-initiated and self-directed learning. The evaluation in self-directed learning should be done by the learner; one's locus of evaluation is internal rather than external.

Rogers' assumption that students should be allowed to make their own goals, because they know best what is right for them. Several people do not agree Rogers on this point. They assert even if the students could choose the goals that are right for them they exist in a society that may not recognize the worth and usefulness of their aims. People have the right to pursue whatever goals they wish, but society also has the right to express its priorities and reward those it considers worthy. It does not mean that Rogers' views have been rejected. There is almost universal acceptance of his ideas that:

1. students need to be treated with consideration and respect by their teachers,
2. teachers and students need to communicate and cooperate and
3. teachers need to encourage students to maximise their creativity.



To conclude, the necessity of adapting to a world of rapid change poses a crisis in education. In this situation, the goal of education must be the development of person who can adapt and change, who knows how to learn.

### **SUGGESTIONS:**

It is the concern of the educators and also of the institutions to delve out the way to reach the goal keeping in mind that the individual is whole and his or her cognitive and affective development intermesh and must be developed together. The same psychological conditions are essential for cognitive and affective development.

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