

Comparison of the Eastern and Western Education Perspective

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Abstract: Education is an ongoing learning process where individual broadened their knowledge and skills. There are various ways of learning which support children to be educated. The environment provided around helps children to learn in everyday life. Therefore, education varies from place to place and it is dependent on social context and individual learning processes. The major purpose of this paper is to discuss on the central concepts of education from the eastern and the western perspectives. This paper discusses the different aspects of education process in reference with the eastern (Vedic) and the western (pragmatism) practices. These two education perspectives of east and west are discussed on the basis of the socio-cultural approaches since these two perspectives are often associated, resulting in confusion about their similarities and differences. As the educational perspective has been shifted from spirituality to the materialism with the scientific and technical revolutions, both in eastern and the western perspectives emphasizes on the social, mental, and spiritual development. In conclusion, both the perspectives supported to self-cultivation for perfect human beings and creation of a harmonious society.

Key words: education, Veda, pragmatism, pedagogy

1. Introduction

Learning is an ongoing process as we develop and grow as humans. There are many ways for young children to learn in the world, and it is through formal and informal settings. Schools are the institutions which provide opportunities to learn and enhance knowledge in children. There are many informal ways to learn to acquire knowledge. The role of the family and community plays equally important parts in the learning of the children. There is a traditional African proverb, which says “It takes a whole village to raise a child”. This shows learning takes place in the social environment. Therefore, learning is the means for acquiring education.

Education cannot be limited to one specific environment. It can be obtained from the schools or there are other natural ways of learning which support children to be educated. The opportunities children get from other people and the environment around helps them learn in everyday life. Therefore, education varies on according to the people, context and their cultures. Such learning becomes more meaningful and applicable. Hence education is dependent on social and individual learning processes where everyone involved in the co-construction of knowledge.

The major purpose of this paper is to explore the central concepts of education from the eastern and the western perspectives. This paper analyzes the different aspects of education process in reference with the eastern and the western practices. This discourse is emerging from the eastern perspectives of education (Vedic) and the

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western perspectives based on John Dewey (pragmatism). The understanding of the different perspectives of east and west are discussed on the basis of the socio-cultural approaches since these two perspectives are often associated, resulting in confusion about their similarities and differences.

This paper consists of three main sections: in the first a brief overview of different approaches for education is given; which briefly discuss on the eastern and the western educational perspectives. In the second part, the distinctive characteristics of two education perspectives will be analyzed in relation to pedagogy, curriculum and the process. And lastly a comparison will be made between the two perspectives, their similarities and differences and its impact on the overall education process.

2. Overview of Education

Education has been taken as a source of inspiration in the ancient period. The primary aim of education was the development of a holistic personality. The aim of education is not to achieve a practical end, but that it is the means and also an end itself. The content of education is different according to the contexts and is widely diversified throughout the region, countries and communities as well. Therefore, the education of an individual has been influenced with the culture and guided by specific education philosophies.

There are many different philosophies which have influenced on education, its theory, policy and practices over the world. Generally, philosophy of education comprises of two schools of thoughts, which we may call traditional and modern. We may call it western and eastern as well, and both have their own strong philosophical roots. Today's western education is based on the roots from Athens, Rome and Judeo Christianity, whereas eastern philosophy is derived from Veda, Islam, Confucianism, Taoism and Mahayana Buddhism (Hassan & Jamaludin, 2010). This, has fundamentally influenced the system of life, and thus considered a strong education system in the east. If we look closely both the eastern and western countries, both countries have distinct differences in their ways of developing and shaping an individual, in terms of skills and attitudes. Thus, different cultures will have different philosophies of education depending on what has worked for them and what has contributed in shaping their nations.

In the traditional way of education, children learn from their family. According to Dewey (1929) "all education proceeds by participation of the individual in the social consciousness of the race" thus it is the society which will determine the aims of education consist of three poles; the teachers, the child and the society. Hence the question is whether family and the societies are being responsible for the education of the child? Because the social and cultural background shows the learning patterns of the children and emphasizes the interdependence of social and individual processes in the co-construction of knowledge (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996).

There are some similarities and the variations in the perspectives of the education in the east and the west. The eastern philosophy claims that it is the oldest philosophy in the world giving emphasis in social, moral and spiritual aspects, whereas the western philosophy believes in the social consciousness and the source of freedom and independence of the individual. Though the central concept of both the perspectives is self-cultivation and harmonious society, this paper discusses on the three specific similarities and differences in the two educational perspectives. Firstly, this paper will discuss on the key objectives and aims of the both education perspectives. Secondly, it will discuss on the pedagogy and thirdly it will discuss on the curriculum of the two perspectives.

2.1 Rationale

Education can be broadly defined as a form of learning where knowledge and skills of a group of individuals are widened. Education philosophy worldwide aims to develop student (individual child) into all-rounded and competent citizens and help them become creative problem solvers, independent thinkers and innovators (Iyer, 2015). Although many educational reformations were made based on these philosophies, the processes for educating are fundamentally different in both the eastern and western educational approaches.

This paper initiated the discourse on the central concepts of education from the eastern perspectives of education (Vedic) and the western perspectives based on John Dewey (pragmatism). As the goal of the education in both east and west is holistic development of the child, this paper helps to understand the perspectives of East and West, on the basis of the pedagogical approaches.

2.2 Philosophy of Education

This section describes the educational philosophy based on the review of two major perspectives. The Vedic perspective generated in the eastern construct was selected because it considered the oldest philosophy and provides overall foundation of the education (Prasad, 2004; Agrawal, 2007; Kumar, 2012; Mehta, 2011), whereas the Dewey's perspective was taken as the foundation of the modern education (Samkange & Samkange, 2013), specially the schools. Both the perspectives have specific characteristics typically applied in the overall education system. However, this paper focused on the aims and objectives and the ways of teaching learning (pedagogy) of the two perspectives.

3. Eastern Education: A Vedic Perspective

Eastern philosophy includes as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Taoism. Among them Hinduism is based on the Vedic philosophy. Veda is a Sanskrit word which means "to know" is the source of knowledge in which eastern Vedic education relies. Vedic perspective advocates knowledge as the source of education and the education is characterized as awakening, humility, modesty (Kumar, 2012).

In the Vedic perspective, education is regarded as the source of light (enlightened) and the knowledge is considered as the 'Third Eye' (Prasad, 2004). Eastern philosophy believes on knowledge opens (hu)man's inner eye, with spiritual and divine light. The holistic development of the person is only possible with knowledge and the education. The focus is to develop good moral characters and values in the individuals. Vedic education stands for the democratic and secular values and traditions emphasizing on tolerance, non-violence, freedom, equality, justice, brotherhood and harmony (Prasad, 2004). The **emphasis is given to the knowledge and experience where** students exhibit the knowledge obtained through discourses and discussions conducted in a concourse of scholars.

3.1 Key Objectives and Aims of the Vedic Perspective

The objective of education is to sublimate these instinctive tendencies, to turn the mind away from material knowledge, and center it upon the spiritual world, thus establishing control over materialistic and base tendencies. The education has given importance for the development of qualities such as discipline, obedience, performance of holy duties, rendering help to others, fulfillment of social responsibilities, etc. Through such education social skills were developed in the students. The key elements of the Vedic education are discussed below.

In the Vedic period, education had an idealistic form, in which the teachers (Acharyas) place stress upon

worship of god, religiousness, spirituality, formation of character, development of personality, creation of an aptitude for the development of culture, nation and society (Kumar, 2012). It means the purpose of education was to develop the “inner eye”. Here are some purposes defined specifically so that it could be understood.

Chitta-Vritti Nirodh: It is the state of self-fulfillment. When person is a state of knowledge all misconceptions (*vrittis*) that can exist in the mutable aspect of human beings (*chitta*) will be disappeared. Education must aim at self-fulfillment and provide freedom from material desires and attachment.

Education of mind: Education is the knowledge for creativity and pursuit of culture and civilization making living worthy, purposeful and relevant.

Tama so ma Jyotirgamaya: Knowledge should dispel doubts, dogmas and darkness.

Religion centered: Religion dominated every aspect of life in all national, personal, social and educational procedures and practices. Hence education should be wedded to religion, giving unanimity and oneness to the educative process without any contradiction.

Individual centered: Education was for individual’s overall development.

Natural oriented: The centers for education were located in the peaceful environment close to the nature.

Child centered: Students were given special attention and treatment by the teachers depending on their interest, aptitude, proficiency and performance, thus acting as the fore-runner of the modern theory and practice of education. The teacher has focused on allowing more freedom to the child, giving them the ability to use their own individual approach.

Education is the means of development in every aspect of human life. “Education is the key factor which can elevate the status of the people and promote their socio-cultural identity” (Lalchharliani, 2014). It is believed that a person without knowledge is incomplete. So, in the eastern education, to acquire knowledge one has to follow the elements of it. One of the aims of Vedic education is the self-fulfillment with knowledge. Therefore, education should make life worthwhile, purposeful and relevant while knowledge is used for the holistic development of the personality, being freedom from material desires and attachment (Chitta-Vritti Nirodh) (Tirtha, 1997). Education also brings spirituality emphasizing tolerance, nonviolence, freedom, equality, justice, brotherhood and harmony (Prasad, 2004).

3.2. Teaching Learning Approaches: Pedagogy

In the eastern world, the society is formed with traditional norms by providing support with each individual member of the extended family according to needs and each is made to contribute according to ability. The family system itself has some “customary education” in which each and every member is a teacher at some point or other (Kisanji, 1995). So, family is regarded as the education institutions to provide education to the children. However, schools in the Vedic periods were not an isolated institution, it was the teacher’s resident (Gurukul). Teacher (Guru) is the supreme and children are like the family members supporting teachers as well as learning together.

3.3 The Ways of Teaching and Learning Process

The Vedas are considered the earliest literary record of Indo-Aryan civilization. “Veda” means wisdom, knowledge or vision, and it manifests the language of the gods in human speech (Agrawal, 2007). In the Vedic education, teaching learning activities were followed by recitation of the religious verses and spiritual knowledge with the direct support of the Guru (teacher). The Guru (teacher) must have the knowledge about the Veda, spirituality, musical and architectural. Such knowledge is imparted to the student (*Shishya*) developing a good relationship.

The relationship between the teachers and student (the learners) is important in education. It is believed that the teachers are seniors because of their knowledge and the age in an ancient period in both eastern and western education. However, in the Vedic education the relation between teacher and student (*Guru and Shishya*) was described as in the mutual trust and cooperation. It is claimed that there was no hierarchy in teachers and the students.

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May he protect us both (teacher and student). May he cause us both to enjoy the bliss of Mukti. May we both exert to find out the true meaning of the scriptures. May our studies be fruitful. May we never quarrel with each other (Prasad, 2004).

3.4 Curriculum: The Student Involvement within Classroom Activity

According to Dr. Radhakrishnan, the objective of education is the discovery, and development through proper training, of an individual's inborn qualities. The present neuroscience research also revealed that the children develop their innate potential in the positive environment. They learn naturally. In the ancient period, therefore, children were with their parents and no formal teaching till the age of eight. Home in the presence of family was considered as an early institute of learning. After *Upanayna* (a ceremony to make child ready to learn) the parents used to send children to the teachers called Guru — means an expert, to get education (Agrawal, 2007). It was a kind of formal process of teaching and learning in the close supervision of the teachers (*Guru*). However, children are educated at home while listening to their parents reading/ reciting (holy books), holy stories, memorizing Sloka (such as *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana*, *Bhagavat Geeta*) in an informal way.

The teaching learning in the Gurukul (a school) is based on the religious (*Holy*) books. It was believed that the teaching learning process followed with three steps have greater impact on the lives. The first step *Shravana* (listening), followed by *Manana* (understanding) and the third one is *Nididhyasana* (reflection) (Prasad, 2004). *Shravana* is actively listening to the text through a teacher. *Manana* is reflection on the teaching, with a view to resolve all doubts or gaps in logic. *Nididhyaasana* is meditation and constant contemplation, with a view to assimilate that teaching completely. The Vedic education encouraged for two ways of teaching and the learning, oral (a self-study) and meditation (with reflection). The oral self-study focused on the right pronunciations. The efforts are made to pronounce sound (*Dhwoni*), words (*Shabda*) and verses (*Chhanda*) as an original form (Gautam, 2006), whereas the meditation reinforces to understand with self-reflections.

The discourse and discussions based on the holy books are the activities followed in a classroom. The eastern believes on knowledge will be produced when people discuss and engage in different levels of discourses (Agrawal, 2007; Luintel, 2006).

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Also, knowledge comes from materialistic action and the perception. These are the matters of faith and logical reasoning (Prasad, 2004). Eastern believes knowledge also comes from non-materials things like feeling i.e. transcendental (Dalai Lama, 2509 B. E.). Such knowledge is based on the faith and reached on with meditation. It comprehends the absolute nature of things.

During the Vedic education period the knowledge (learning) was examined with the discussion on the issues, called *Sastrartha* -zf:qfy{_. The learning outcome (knowledge) is measured with the help of verbal expressions.

The teaching and learning process through eastern education philosophy stresses on the major outcomes from the teachers. It means that, teachers are fully responsible on the class effectiveness, by preparing and planning all

the activities for their students. For instance, the students are not trained or required to do anything, but every material are given by the teachers. The major tasks are to recite the Vedic verses and understand it. Usually, they do not carry out any research on the topics that are going to be discussed in the next lesson, but only responsible to receive input from their teachers.

4. Western Education: Dewey's Pragmatism

In the west, however, various philosophies such as idealism, realism, pragmatism, and existentialism have prevailed (Smith & Hu, 2013). These philosophies were introduced by Aristotle, Plato, Dewey, Lock and other contemporary philosophers. These philosophies guided and influenced in the education of the children not only in the west but also the east. The education, based on the principle of Plato and Aristotle is focused on self-cultivation and being perfect human beings. They are called classical philosophy. However, John Dewey is considered as a modern and pre-contemporary educationist. Dewey's central concept of education has greater emphasis on broadening intellect and developing problem solving and critical thinking skills (Zainulabideen, 2015).

Dewey's pragmatism (Shrivastava, 2003) is considered as a modern education. Pragmatism implies a method which is concerned with functional and experimental approach to knowledge. "The function of education is to help growing of helpless young child (individual) into a happy, moral and efficient human-being" (Shrivastava, 2003). Pragmatism is also known as experimentalism because pragmatists believe in the experiment. To them truth, reality, goodness or badness are all relative terms and can only be proved with experiment and experiences. Pragmatism regards there is no absolute truth. According to them truth always changes in relation to time, place and situation. Also, pragmatism has given importance on activities rather than on ideas. Pragmatism holds the view that ideas are born out of activities. The activities s/he performed are the foundation of education. Thus, the greatest contribution of pragmatism to education is the principle of learning by doing.

Dewey advocated relativism the doctrine that knowledge, truth, and morality exist in relation to culture, society, or historical context, and are not absolute. He also supports positivism the theory that laws are to be understood as social rules, valid because they are enacted by authority or derive logically from existing decisions, and that ideal or moral considerations should not limit the scope or operation of the law. According to Dewey relativism and positivism are destructive ideologies that bring people to the ordinary world. Humanism would make everything relative. Dewey introduced the ideas of multi-values it means that there are no absolute values; the values are related with context where it exists. Country, family, and god are no longer the goals to be achieved but are instead seen as causes of bigotry, narrow mindedness, prejudice, and intolerance: thus, deserving to be done away (Rice, 2002). So, Dewey's perspectives advocated against the spiritual belief instead, it promoted humanistic individualistic way of education (Samkange & Samkange, 2013).

According to the Dewey's philosophy, children learn by experimentations. Children solve their problems through the interaction with the physical and social environment. Learning takes place only when children are involved in the four stages of experimentation. These are identification of a problem, coming up with a hypothesis, experimental testing and inductive argument (Samkange & Samkange, 2013).

According to Darling (1994), progressivism in education emphasizes a number of qualities that are important for the development of the child (Samkange & Samkange, 2013). These include experimental learning, emphasis on problem solving and critical thinking, group work and development of social skills, education for social

responsibility and democracy, accommodating each child's personal goal and placing emphasis on different resources rather than textbooks. According to Dewey knowledge is a social construct and the duty of teachers and society is to help children construct their own learning. The teacher is therefore a member of the community who should assist in the development of the child without being authoritarian (Wong & et al, 2001). The curriculum should reflect the values of society and these should be continuously developed. Dewey was therefore concerned with participatory learning. Dewey as cited by Vashishtha et al. (2011) argued that action must precede knowledge and that knowledge is a result of the child's activities with the environment (Samkange & Samkange, 2013). Furthermore, they note that the function of education according to Dewey was to help children grow into happy, moral and efficient human beings.

The western perspective follow Dewey advocate the mass education and the school is the authorized institution for the education. It explains the aim of education should be to secure a balanced interaction of the practical and the theoretical attitudes. The educator should guide the child according to the potential they have. Dewey believes that "the school must represent present life as real and vital to the child as that which s/he carries on in the home, in the neighborhood, or on the playground (Shrivastava, 2003)".

4.1 Key Objectives and Aim of the Dewey's Perspective

School, as an institution, should simplify existing social life. Western perspective fostered the growth of individual, promoted social justice, and strengthened the democratic way of life (Smith & Hu, 2013). Dewey started to bring children in a school and also divided group as according to their age. He outlined a definite scheme of three stages of the elementary school: (1) The play stage from 4 to 8 years; (2) Stage of spontaneous attention from 8 to 12 and years (3) Stage of reflective attention from 12 years onward (Simpson & Jackson, 2003).

According to Dewey knowledge is a social construct and the duty of teachers and society is to help children construct their own learning. There are some elements emphasized by Dewey is discussed here.

Education is life: Dewey believed that education is not a preparation for life but they are facing problems similar to those faced in life. School provides training for 'co-operative and mutually helpful living'.

Education should combine theory and practice: The aim of education is to secure a balanced interaction of the practical and the theoretical knowledge. He always insisted that action and thought should go side by side. This combination of theory and practice in the school can be achieved through occupations like wood work, cookery, sewing etc.

Education for the development: "The entire process of growth and development which is caused by learning from experience is called education." The educator should guide the child according to the abilities and powers he/she observes in it.

Creating democratic individual and society: Every individual has freedom to develop his/ her own ambition and every one is the equal member of the society. Thus, education must create cooperation and harmony among individuals.

4.2 Teaching Learning Approach/Pedagogy

Dewey advocated that the schools should not be isolated from the family. Student learned by interacting within the environment, therefore school has to be developed as an enlarged/extended family. The children continue their learning without hesitations and improve what they have learnt at home with, of course, better support and proper guidance. Speaking about the general principles of school, Dewey says, (1) the primary object

of the school is to train children in co-operative and mutually helpful living, (2) educative activity lies in the instructive and impulsive attitudes and activities of the child, and not in the preparation of subject matter and (3) the individual tendencies and activities are organized and directed through co-operative living (Pfeiffer, 2003) and placing emphasis on different resources rather than textbooks.

Though the present education system focuses on class room based teaching learning, Dewey advocated the naturalistic model of teaching and learning, and practical education. The informal ways of teaching learning with greater freedom to the children and focus to the activities help children to learn better and faster. Activities like discussions, drama, music and arts help children broaden their understandings.

The relationship between the teachers and student (the learners) is important in learning. The Dewey's education kept in mind the teachers are the facilitators and they play supportive roles for the learning of the children. Reflective inquiry is as central for education, in Dewey's view. His focus on teacher's role is to create problem solving and experience based learning environment in the class room activities.

Apart from his concern for the curriculum, Dewey was equally concerned with the role of the teacher, methods of teaching and discipline. Under the philosophy of progressivism, Dewey recommended three methods of teaching. These were learning by doing, learning by integration and learning through productive and creative activities (Wong et al, 2001). The teacher was there to guide the children and discipline would be derived from the activities the children engaged in.

In the modern education, the source of the knowledge that child are expected to learn is considered as the teachers and the schools. The teachers are expected to teach and inculcate 'the knowledge' and are expressed as the children at specific grade ought to know. This knowledge is validated by society and is included in the school curriculum, organized in the schools.

4.3 Curriculum: The Ways of Teaching and Learning Process

On the curriculum, Dewey noted that it had to grow out of the child's interests. Vashishtha et al. (2011) identify the main characteristics and principles of the curriculum, which include the need for the curriculum to reflect the social life and social activities (Samkange & Samkange, 2013). As such, the curriculum should follow progressive organization of knowledge based on the educative experiences and problems of the learner, which should be flexible.

From the view of western education philosophy, the roles of students are recognized, by giving them the rights and respects within the teaching and learning process itself. They have the freedom and rights to take charge of their own learning, as they are given the opportunity and freedom to manage their own learning process. Therefore, the teachers play their role as a facilitator than the knowledge producer to their students. Teachers are responsible to help and guide the students in their learning process rather than teaching them what to do. In this way, students are given the opportunity to take control of their own learning process. Furthermore, schools also support and encourage students in self-management and in controlling their own learning process. This is where teachers come in to lead and guide the students by giving them guidelines in managing their learning process. In the classroom, children share more responsibility in their leaning process and evaluation and assessment is conducted to see their capability and also how they will apply into it (Hassan & Jamaludin, 2010). Teachers of the western education do play a role in guiding students to discover and develop their abilities and potentials.

The teacher, said Dewey "As a stage manager is more powerful than the teacher as a player strutting and fretting". The teacher is a directing force and an organizer of the environment. The teacher, therefore, should not

impose fiats or try to form rigid habits in child. Society is a best judge to test a teacher. Competence of a teacher should be judged from the quality of the product the teacher gives to the society.

4.4 The Student Involvement within Classroom Activity

Students of the western education philosophy appear as active learners in the classroom, as the teaching and learning process not focusing on teacher-centered, but more on are active learners in the classroom. It encourages the students to be active in giving and sharing the ideas, which is maximizing their role as students than the teacher in creating the effective learning and teaching activity (Lin, 2008). Children are encouraged to think and voice their views whenever they are involved in group discussion or carried out the given assignment. The students are then required to present it to the entire class. This enables them to participate not only during class time, but also to help them to be actively involved in the learning process even out of the classroom.

According to Dewey analysis of a problem is the key for education and learning. Therefore, students are also has been given an opportunity to express their ability and talent by analyzing and solve problems on their own. As according to Thornton (1995), the problem-solving process becomes one of the bases on children for their critical mental development (Hassan & Jamaludin, 2010). Thus, it can be said that education development in the west including thinking skill, problem solving and communication skill which has been integrated well in the western philosophy itself. Dewey suggested some methods for the education for the child centered approach. Whatever the activities planned and implemented in the class room must be of the child's interest. He focused on the "learning by doing" by which the child learns best. The educators have to guide the child to those activities by which the child can develop its own natural abilities and qualities. He also emphasized on the "integration". The class room activities need to be integrated with the subjects and the knowledge the child need to be acquired which is only possible with the project method. Dewey's idea on educational method later on led to the evolution of the project method in which the child was made to indulge in those activities which helped in the development of enthusiasm, self-confidence, self-reliance and originality. Thus, pragmatism advocates practical skills promoting creativity and freedom among children.

5. School Implication

Education is the process that occurs in an everyday context of the children. Children, at any time, learn through the environment and the people they interact with enabling themselves to do a specific kind of action. This makes learning an essential and natural process which is necessary for development of the social and cognitive skills of the child (Vygotsky, 1978). Two principal agencies, the family and the school are powerfully providing the education to the children. Therefore, the influence of these two agencies is constrained by the wider social and cultural systems into which they are embedded. One of the important schools of thought is that the family culture plays an important role for the educational achievement at the school (Bassis, Gelles, & Levine, 1998). Though the children are not at school they are gaining knowledge (in terms of education) in many ways.

In the modern day, the structure of family system has been changed from joint and complex family to nuclear isolated family. In the isolated families, almost all the family members are engaged in jobs which require places for the children where they could remain safe and do something productive. The alternatives emerged in the forms of preschool and kindergarten that looks after and provide learning opportunities to the children. Parents shift the responsibilities to the teachers and the schools. Whatever the process and the activities, the aim of education is to develop overall personality and is based on the faith in holistic education. Hence every individual must be given

the opportunity to develop his/her personality through education. Though the early education is a social necessity, but it aimed at the development of both the individual as well as the society (Sharma, 2002). According to Dewey, “Education is a process of living and not a preparation for future living. Hence school must represent real life” (Sharma, 2002). And which is the foundation of the Vedic education.

As Illich mentioned schools make learner, passive recipient and manipulate them providing with an institutional treatment (Gibbs, 2012). The learning is both the individual’s consciousness as well as the ambit of cognitive psychology (Sarangapani, 2003). Therefore, it is important to analyze and discuss the education and learning in relation to the world within and out of the school. The components of the learning, in the socio-constructivist learning process are the children’s ability to test and, synthesize their ideas of others, and build deeper understanding of what they are learning. The education also provides children to develop the skills for self-regulation, self-determination, and a desire to keep on with tasks (Young, 2002; Sohel, 2010). Children’s motivational, collaborative and problem-solving skills, and ability to argue their opinions persuasively, and it respectfully helps them to understand each other’s culture and supports in learning (Sohel, 2010). These skills can be enhanced in and out of the formal education structure. According to Vygotsky “... learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when a child is interacting with people in his/her environment and in cooperation with peers ...” (John-Steiner & Mann, 1996, p. 196). Therefore, the culture of an individual child reflected on the course of learning, and the socio-constructivist pedagogy supports it.

“Learning is sum total of all what is known, as that which is handed down by learned men. It is something external, an accumulation of cognitions as one might store material commodities in a ware house” (Dewey 1916).

The truth exists in society and we come to know them through social processes and interactions with older members of society. This is the real forms of education (Sarangapani, 2003).

According to Vygotsky (1962) “our social environments influence the learning process”. Learning of the children takes place through the interactions with their peers, teachers, and other external environments (Vygotsky, 1978). The teachers are responsible for creating learning environment to increase the ability and interest of the learners. Children learn through the cultural experiences by interacting with others and following the rules, norms, values, set by the culture they brought in. Therefore, teachers play important role in developing learning environment and the activities to facilitate learning. The quality of teachers is directly related with its teaching learning activities. In everyday life, knowledge is created and exchanged not only with the purpose of forming beliefs and acting on the world but also as a conversation or social interaction. The pedagogy is developed based on the curriculum framework in the schools however the cultural way of learning provides ground for the experiences as a curricular framework in the traditional way of education.

5.1 Comparison between Vedic (Eastern) and the Dewey’s (Western) Education Perspectives

Education is a means of transformation. Present day education is accepted as a powerful means of social revolution. People having education (formal) represent themselves as a power and modern in the society. “Modernization doesn’t mean that the social, moral and spiritual values be neglected and not given due importance” (Amala, Anupama & Rao, 2004). On the other hand, educational perspective has been shifted from spirituality to the materialism with the scientific and technical revolutions. However, the foundation of education is based on eastern education as Max Muller said, “Vedic education is the mirror of all the education.”

Both in eastern and the western perspectives the ultimate aim of education appears to be social, mental, and

spiritual development. In both the perspectives, “the individual’s aim of education is self-cultivation for perfect human beings, while the socio-political aim of education is the creation of a harmonious society” (McLoughlin & Lee, 2008).

5.2 Similarities

Vedic Education system is focused on the development of intellectual capability and characters. It emphasized on development of civics, social, moral and spiritual values and personality (Prasad, 2004). The teaching learning methodology based on ‘hearing, chanting and memorizing’. Relationship between teacher and student were very cordial during Vedic period. A great importance was given to self-study “Swadhyaya”. However, the Dewey’s education has focused in the holistic education with the aim to develop overall personality and individual growth (Sharma, 2002). Both eastern and the western education perspectives follow the notion of the cultivation if moral values and personal development creating a harmonious society.

Compared to the western education, eastern education philosophy holds on to the concept of teaching. Students receive full knowledge from the teachers inside the classroom. Students receive knowledge in a rigid way in both the perspectives as they only seem to learn and study straightly from the teachers. Thus, it is no doubt that a good teacher need to be very hardworking in delivering ideas, teaching and maintaining good relationship with their children (Gurney 2007 as cited in Hassan & Jamaludin, 2010).

Education systems need to be developed beyond the socio-cultural barriers to promote creativity and holistic development of the children. The guidance of ancient Vedic philosophy is similar to the present neuroscience findings. Both scientific and Vedic understanding shows the similarities as children are in a developing phase. Early stimulation needed them to prepare for formal education and home is the best place for it. Children need love and affection and mother is the first teacher who can teaches children understanding his/ her mental and physical requirements.

5.3 Differences

Despite the fact that education in the Vedic era was comprehensive with the development of intellectual, physical, spiritual and moral values, modern education has overlooked its significance. Dewey’s education however focused in the moral and intellectual development, it has denied the absolute knowledge. In the process of development, education is gradually replaced by the school which is specialized for the production of the knowledge, limiting the essence of overall personal development. Therefore, the modern age represented as the age of conflict of culture, materialism and ethical values (Amala, Anupama & Rao, 2004).

Vedic education is the oldest philosophy. “Vedas have been accepted as the bedrock of human principles all over the world” (Kumar, 2012). Vedic education talks about knowledge, inner self respect, love, belief, spirituality and the power. It believes in absolute truth and ignores the materialistic perceptions. The education supported to develop good characters in the individual and inculcates tolerance, nonviolence, freedom, equality, justice, brotherhood, harmony and Chitta Vritti Nirodha (free from materials world).

The Dewey’s pragmatism believes in humanistic and individualistic way of education. It denies absolute knowledge and values. It emphasizes experience, ideas, interest and habit of the individuals. It relies on experience based education and problem-solving approaches (Gribov, 2001; Smith & Hu, 2013).

Pragmatic philosophy does not treat truth as permanent and objective (Gribov, 2001; Smith & Hu, 2013). It does not follow the single truth as in Vedic philosophy. The aim of education is also absent in the pragmatism (Pfeiffer, 2003). For Dewey education is life and it is not possible to set any goal or objective for it. Children

create their own goal and objectives for them but this may alter the purpose of education.

The child centered approach emphasizes on the interest of each individual child. Though the process is important and effective, there must be difficulties to address individual differences of children and their individual and unique interests and inclinations.

6. Conclusion

The learning takes place both in and outside of the schools. But more specifically there are variations found in the learning and the nature of cognitive activities between in school and outside school. Briefly, school focuses on the individual's performance, independency and unaided thought. However out-of-school focused on socially shared cognitive tools directly related with objects and situations. School cultivates symbolic thinking, aims to teach general skills and knowledge, whereas situation-specific competencies dominate outside learning. Then the question raised is what the difference in school learning and the out of school learning and which one is important? This can be analyzed from three points of view: "the role of schools in preparing people for direct economic participation, its role in preparing people to learn effectively over the long course of their work lives, and its role in preparing people for civic and cultural participation" (Resnic, 1987). The learning outside of school has no recognition whereas the formal school has established its legitimization though "schooling and school learning enjoy a very ambiguous status" (Resnic, 1987). People take for granted that formal education is good, helps for personal and professional growth and support enhance economic prosperity. People in general show unconditional faith in schooling, "a source of power, that defends all sorts of oppressions, employment and economic opportunities" (Parajuli, 2008). However, the education in the modern Dewey's perspectives identified eight key factors that student must learn.

The objective of education was the formation of character and personality of children. It was achieved through an appropriate environment, lessons on right conduct, and teachings based on the life, character and ideals of great persons. Education aimed at developing the virtues of self-control, self-respect, love, cooperation, sympathy, etc. in the students.

The eastern education is based on Vedic system of education (Premendra, 2014) and is the means of transformation of the person to the socially acceptable citizens. The aim of Vedic education is to develop spirituality, personality, intellectuality, and good characters for the preparation of better living with knowledge and acceptable attitudes. In the eastern philosophy knowledge is taken as a form of power. The power of knowledge protects individuals from ignorance, ego and anger. So, for the ancient eastern world, education is understood by gaining knowledge. The process was devoted to acquire knowledge and the knowledgeable are always respected.

The Dewey's pragmatism advocates on the progressive education (Smith & Hu, 2013). The aim of progressivism in education is to enhance number of qualities that are important for the holistic development of the child. The process aims for enhancing the problem solving and critical thinking skills, group work and development of social skills, education for social responsibility and democracy by accommodating each child's personal goal. Based on the opinion of Dewey, it is recommended that the educational objectives need to be unanswerable. If a definite aim is ascribed to education, it may do great harm by compelling the teacher to guide the education in a particular direction, not in keeping with the innate abilities of the child. In reviewing eastern and western philosophies and how they have influenced education, it is best to examine their specific influences in how they perceive the child. Both western and eastern have evolved, re-examining the holistic development of the

child in the context of culture, language, and community.

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