

Q. 3 Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions that follow.

(20)

Philosophy of Education is a label applied to the study of the purpose, process, nature and ideals of education. It can be considered a branch of both philosophy and education. Education can be defined as the teaching and learning of specific skills, and the imparting of knowledge, judgment and wisdom, and is something broader than the societal institution of education we often speak of. Many educationalists consider it a weak and woolly field, too far removed from the practical applications of the real world to be useful. But philosophers dating back to Plato and the Ancient Greeks have given the area much thought and emphasis, and there is little doubt that their work has helped shape the practice of education over the millennia. Plato is the earliest important educational thinker, and education is an essential element in "The Republic" (his most important work on philosophy and political theory, written around 360 B.C.). In it, he advocates some rather extreme methods: removing children from their mothers' care and raising them as wards of the state, and differentiating children suitable to the various castes, the highest receiving the most education, so that they could act as guardians of the city and care for the less able. He believed that education should be holistic, including facts, skills, physical discipline, music and art. Plato believed that talent and intelligence is not distributed genetically and thus is found in children born to all classes, although his proposed system of selective public education for an educated minority

of the population does not really follow a democratic model.

Aristotle considered human nature, habit and reason to be equally important forces to be cultivated in education, the ultimate aim of which should be to produce good and virtuous citizens. He proposed that teachers lead their students systematically, and that repetition be used as a key tool to develop good habits, unlike Socrates' emphasis on questioning his listeners to bring out their own ideas. He emphasized the balancing of the theoretical and practical aspects of subjects taught, among which he explicitly mentions reading, writing, mathematics, music, physical education, literature, history, and a wide range of sciences, as well as play, which he also considered important.

During the Medieval period, the idea of Perennialism was first formulated by St. Thomas Aquinas in his work "De Magistro". Perennialism holds that one should teach those things deemed to be of everlasting importance to all people everywhere, namely principles and reasoning, not just facts (which are apt to change over time), and that one should teach first about people, not machines or techniques. It was originally religious in nature, and it was only much later that a theory of secular perennialism developed.

During the Renaissance, the French skeptic Michel de Montaigne (1533 - 1592) was one of the first to critically look at education. Unusually for his time, Montaigne was willing to question the conventional wisdom of the period, calling into question the whole edifice of the educational system, and the implicit assumption that university-educated philosophers were necessarily wiser than uneducated farm workers, for example.

Questions:

1. What is the difference between the approaches of Socrates and Aristotle?
2. Why do educationists consider philosophy a 'weak and woolly' field?
3. What do you understand by the term 'Perennialism', in the context of the given comprehension passage?
4. Were Plato's beliefs about education democratic?
5. Why did Aquinas propose a model of education which did not lay much emphasis on facts?

Comprehension

Q1) The difference between the approaches of Socrates and Aristotle is that Aristotle felt the need for repetition to develop good habits in students. Along with this, Aristotle emphasized on paying attention to human nature as well. On the other hand, Socrates felt that students need to be constantly questioned to enhance their creativity. Moreover, he emphasized that practical application of subjects should also be taught. In this way, both presented a different approach of education.

Q2) Educationists consider philosophy a "weak and wolly field." Because the philosophical education is based on mere memorizing of facts with theoretical explanation of various subjects. However, such approach of education is not suitable for the practical applications of subjects. Hence only learning facts of a subjects cannot guarantee success in practical field of that subjects due to which philosophy is considered as a weak and wolly field.

Q3) In the context of given passage, the term 'perennialism' reflects the skills and things of never-ending importance. It states that as the facts are liable to change with the passage of time so principles and reasoning should be taught to all people. A holistic educational system

Should include the learning of understanding the behavior of human nature. Such a comprehensive scheme of education sees as mean of constant importance to all people.

Q4) Plato's **beliefs about education** were not democratic in nature. He stated that only the rich have the right to acquire education. Moreover, they are the ultimate guardians of the state. While presenting a comprehensive educational system, he included arts, music, and discipline in the scope of education. He substrated the majority of the population from the right of seeking knowledge. All this what makes his model non-democratic.

Q5) Aquinas proposed a model of education which laid a little emphasis on facts. He was of the view that facts do change with ~~time~~ changing time. For a holistic educational system, facts have little to do with the practical applications. So, instead of facts, there is a need to inculcate the skills of reasoning, questioning and human nature. Due to this reason, Aquinas laid a little importance on facts.