NATURALIST PERSPECTIVE ON A CHILD-CENTERED CURRICULUM

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The essence of naturalism as a philosophy of education is focused on providing natural environment to the child. According to naturalists, curriculum must be child centered according to the present and future needs of the child (Pathak, 2007). In this, a child must be given maximum freedom so that development takes a natural direction.

In naturalists' view, the chief aim of education is the fullest development of the child. In the opinion of Rousseau, education aimed at the inner faculties, capacities and powers of the child (Shahid, 2000). The curriculum should be divided into two levels – training with the senses and linking physical and natural environment. In general, curriculum should be based on the study of the mind and behavior of the child.

Teaching methods in a child centered curriculum are important. Giving to the child a chance to learn everything through direct experience, experimentation, and observation is considered as a best method of teaching. Naturalists condemn note-learning and encourage learning by doing. They emphasize auto-education and self-development, and learning through personal experience of the child (Shawal, 2015). As a method of education, playway is also utilized wherein teaching is incorporated to playing games.

Since naturalist view of education is child-centered, teacher's role is a peer, a philosopher, a psychologist and a guide. He/She should not interpose in the natural development of the child and should not establish ideals or ideas on him/her. An educator is there to support the child in the discovery of truth and see that the child develops freely. He/she must be a critical thinker and a keen-observer to the child’s
development rather than a giver of information. So, the place of the educators are secondary and the primary focus is the child.

Having a child-centered curriculum in a naturalistic curriculum helps to develop the fullness of the child. It is also great help in discovering his/her innate capabilities. On the other hand, the fullness of the child is not totally fulfilled. Naturalists ignore the spiritual and moral aspects of human nature. Since the teachers are the one who will adjust to the needs of the child, it throws the teachers' professional knowledge and experience in the field. Also, this kind of curriculum only focuses on the child's present needs, not considering the future needs and the ultimate goals and purposes of man's life (Shawal, 2015).

References:

