

Educational Philosophy of Maria Montessori: A Coordination Between the Teacher and Child

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ABSTRACT

Dr. Maria Montessori is the founder of the Montessori Method of education. She was the first woman in Italy to receive a Doctor of Medicine degree. Maria Montessori approached education from a scientific standpoint because she was a doctor. Education, she believed, should prepare a person for all parts of life. She created resources and approaches to encourage child's natural learning growth. They're found in every Montessori classroom. Working with these materials and procedures establishes a pattern those youngsters naturally take over to reading, writing, and math. Each talent is designed to work in collaboration with the others. Maria Montessori was the first woman to enter the world of education as a result of his close involvement with the education and development of mentally challenged children. Her contribution to early childhood education, particularly for mentally challenged children, has transformed the educational world. In fact, practically every civilized country feels the impact of her unique style of teaching young children in some way. The world was taken aback by the apparently unbelievable actions of slum youngsters in Rome's first Casa dei Bambini (children's home). Her efforts and dedication in transforming mentally challenged children into normal children by teaching the 3 R's using didactic equipment have earned her indelible fame in the history of education. It was seen at the time of her demise when tributes to her life-long labour on behalf of appeared in the press from every part of the world. In fact, her selfless sacrifice and dedication has developed hope and courage in the life of mentally challenged children, which made her to be ranked among the forerunners of great educators. Today, Montessori Method flashes like a comet across the educational horizon. Montessori learning environments, also known as prepared environments, provide children the freedom to pick their own work and design their own learning. Because the child is in the centre and the teacher's tasks differ from those of typical school teachers, the direction of communication and coordination between the child and the teacher is defined accordingly. The purpose of this research is to look into Montessori teachers' coordination and teamwork with children.

Keywords: Method of education, Montessori classroom, children's home, didactic equipment, mentally challenged children.

INTRODUCTION

Dr. Maria Montessori, the founder of the Montessori Method, a well-known educator, and the first Italian lady doctor, was born in Italy on August 31, 1870. She aspired to be an actor and enrolled in a theatre school to achieve her goal. Then she planned to become an engineer, but after completing her education, she changed her mind and decided to become a doctor of medicine. However, no woman was admitted to medical school at the time. As a result, she devised a hoax to gain admission to a medical school. In the application form, she signed herself as M. Montessori. The officials admitted her, mistaking her for a male. As a result, she became the first Italian woman to receive the Doctor of Medicine degree. This demonstrates her talent and ability.

From 1900 until 1907, Montessori was an anthropology professor at the University of Rome. She was given the opportunity to supervise a ward of mentally challenged youngsters while working here. She investigated those youngsters thoroughly and came to the conclusion that mental inadequacy was caused by dullness of the senses. She believed that training the sense organs may produce amazing outcomes. As a result, she devised her own technique of instruction through experimentation. The Director of the Roman Association for Good Building appointed her as a school superintendent in 1907. There, she was responsible for the education of children aged 3 to 7, who had been neglected by their parents. She researched these children thoroughly, like a true scientist would, and devised a revolutionary technique of teaching through sense training. Her method drew the attention of the entire world. She was invited by many countries like England and to demonstrate her method. Though she was a doctor by qualification, she entered the field of education through her interest in mentally deficient children.

She studied child psychology and established a school for children. She named her school, Casa dei Bambini or children's house. She used a self-learning and self-correction apparatus known as Didactic apparatus. The government of Italy appointed her as the inspectress of Infant Schools in 1922. She began to train the teachers in her method. Teachers from several countries from Europe including England came to Italy for training. Montessori left for Holland and founded a school there. She came to India in 1939 and remained here until 1946. During her stay in India, she gave training

to teachers according to her method. Her headquarters is in Chennai. She spent some time in India in 1950-51 and returned to Holland in 1951. Dr. Maria Montessori, champion of education for the mentally deficient children, breathed her last in 1952.

Preschools now provide education that prepares children for elementary school as well as supports their growth in a variety of ways. These institutions fill the void by addressing the need to create a social environment that evolves in tandem with increasing life standards. With such an important purpose, various preschools use a variety of teaching methods in practise. The Montessori Method is one option in this approach to diversity. The goal of education, according to Montessori, is to produce free children who know what they want to accomplish and what they are doing (Wentworth & Wentworth, 2013). In order to reach this aim, Montessori created a child-based educational method. Schools adopting Montessori Method have specific features. For instance, teachers have some standards following the Montessori training. The teacher occupies a very important role in the Montessori Method. It is true that the success of the Montessori Method depends on the efficiency of the teacher and the spirit with which he undertakes the task. He should not be a dictator but he should be a sympathetic guide having an instinctive understanding of the needs and difficulties of the children. He should allow the children maximum educational freedom to secure their intrinsic and spontaneous growth. In the words of Robert R. Rusk, "The Montessori Method necessitates the employment of teachers who are possessed of a training in child psychology and in its application to young children". The teacher should be patient, loving children and identifying himself completely with children. He should neither be rigid nor dogmatic in his approach. He should help the child to cultivate a sense of real discipline which should grow from within and not imposed from outside by the authority of his teacher. Montessori Methods require teachers who possess a training in child psychology. There have been few studies that look at communication and collaboration between instructors and children in Montessori classrooms from the perspective of teachers. As a result, it was intended to close this gap by determining the preferences and experiences of preschool instructors who use the Montessori Method while sharing information with children.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of study are as given below:

1. To analyze the educational philosophy of Montessori and her basic conception of education.
2. To evaluate the contribution of Montessori to modern educational theory and practices.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study mainly takes the form of secondary data available on the education system. The researcher read a number of reports and papers in order to understand and conclude the emergence of innovative tools and strategies in the Indian education system in order to make it world class. This has the advantage of delivering extremely rich information while avoiding the impact of others on any one individual's opinion. The purpose of this research was to investigate the nature of Montessori educational theory and practice, as well as its impact on Indian education. The numerous studies yielded material for the research. The heart of Montessori educational theory places a higher emphasis on the whole harmonic development of the human personality.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF MARIA MONTESSORI

Dr. Maria Montessori, one of Italy's first female physicians, pioneered the Montessori Method of infant education in the early 1900s. Her personal interest compelled her to devote her professional life to finding a better approach to educate children. Dr. Montessori honed a presentation style and designed a set of learning resources that best fit the way children learn by observation and exploration. Maria Montessori's materials are being utilized in Montessori classrooms today. Their substantial quality, sensual appeal, and inspired knowledge transfer keep them alive and relevant. The Montessori Method of teaching embodies a deep regard for the child. It is a paradigm based on developmental stages as indicated by children themselves. It makes the most of the child's intrinsic intelligence. Dr. Montessori established phases of preparedness for concept assimilation, and she realized that infants have inherent curiosity and instinctive motivation to explore what interests them.

Her method recognizes that, while all children go through stages of preparedness, each child has a unique timeline that must be followed.

Maria Montessori was a proponent of a progressive educational philosophy. The Montessori philosophy is conceptually consistent with Rousseau's, Pestalozzi's, Seguin's, and Itard's schools of thought (Edwards, 2002). Montessori opposed punishment and reward approaches because she believed that a child's desire should be moulded by an external discipline (Montessori, 2004). Maria Montessori, who was a pioneer in the field of cognitive psychology, is progressive while also drawing attention to cognition (Ornstein, 2016). By reformulating the child's concept of school, the Montessori educational philosophy allows him to move autonomously and at his own pace within the prepared setting. Children in a prepared setting have the freedom to go around without being reliant on an adult (Montessori, 2004). An unbroken work cycle is offered to the child in a dynamic process in the Montessori learning environment, and the child's desire to learn is triggered (Greene, 2005). Classroom management in such a way differs from the perception of classroom management that demands pupils to sit collectively during schooling (Montessori, 2004). The Montessori learning setting emphasises a respectful classroom climate. In Montessori classrooms, desired good outcomes are reached through partnership between the instructor and the child (Estes, 2018). Collaboration-based learning and the communication style that youngsters develop with adults achieve the desired outcomes (Lillard, 2007). Furthermore, in Montessori classrooms when children of all ages interact, children are in solidarity with one another, especially older children helping younger children, and collaboration rather than rivalry occurs (Flynn, 1991). Rather of focusing on brain growth, Maria Montessori views education as a whole having moral, mental, and emotional elements (Duckworth, 2006). Thus, one of the focuses for instructors and students in Montessori classrooms is learning to communicate in a peaceful framework (Thayer-Bacon, 2011). As a result, Montessori teachers and the Montessori environment play an important role in shaping classroom communication and teamwork.

ROLE OF TEACHER IN MONTESSORI METHOD

In Montessori classrooms, the teacher serves as a guide, directing the child to self-education that is appropriate for the child's development (Montessori, 2004). Montessori teachers provide assistance and support to children based on their specific requirements. During the educational process, this assistance is limited to a bare minimum (Edwards, 2002). This shows that the teacher only intervenes with the youngster when absolutely necessary. The instructor, often known as the classroom manager, is the supervisor of a system in which students govern their own behavior while at work. During this self-education process, Montessori teachers collaborate with the children (Montessori, 2004). This necessitates the instructor opposing an external authoritarian figure who tells the youngster what to do and how to behave (Harris, 1995). As a result, the Montessori teacher's goal is to assist children in developing self-confidence and internal discipline (Edwards, 2002).

The teacher who takes on the position of guide is also responsible for maintaining a need-oriented atmosphere by constantly observing the children in the learning environment (Baynham, 2016). As a result, teachers should "create a prepared atmosphere based on the child's needs" (Bărbieru, 2016). Individual and social development of the child is fostered in the Montessori approach by the instructor, free work of the child, and a prepared environment. As a result, putting forward the communication and collaboration established between children, who are at the centre of learning by following their own preferences in a prepared environment, and Montessori teachers, who support the children as guides by observing them, will help to reveal the link between the Montessori thought and practice.

In the Montessori environment, the Montessori instructor is very significant. The instructor must develop a deeper feeling of the child's dignity as a human being, a fresh regard for the value of his spontaneous behaviors, and a broader and more thorough grasp of his needs. The most important aspect of a teacher is that he or she undergoes spiritual preparation. Moral preparation is required before one is fit to be entrusted with the care of children, a principle that has previously been mostly reserved for members of religious orders. According to Montessori, this type of preparation should be the first stage in the training of every teacher, regardless of nationality or creed.

Dr. Maria Montessori developed the Montessori Method of education, which is a child-centered educational method based on scientific observations of children from infancy to adulthood. It is a perspective of the child as innately eager for information and capable of beginning learning in a supportive, well-planned learning environment. It is a philosophy that values the human spirit and the holistic development of the child-physical, social, emotional, and cognitive. Montessori education allows our children to reach their full potential as they enter the world as engaged, competent, responsible, and courteous citizens who realize and appreciate that learning is for life. Montessori education is characterized by an emphasis on independence, freedom within limits, and respect for a child's natural psychological development. Some elements that are essential to a Montessori classroom are as below:

- **Every youngster is respected as an individual:** Montessori education emphasizes that children learn in a variety of ways and caters to all learning styles. Students are also allowed to learn at their own pace, with each student progressing through the curriculum at his or her own pace, led by the teacher and a personalized learning plan.
- **Montessori pupils learn order, coordination, attention, and independence from an early age:** Toddlers through teenagers benefit from classroom design, resources, and daily routines that assist their developing "self-regulation" (capacity to educate oneself and think about what one is learning).
- **Students are members of a close-knit, supportive group:** The multi-age classroom, which normally lasts three years, recreates a family structure. Older students benefit from their status as mentors and role models, while younger pupils feel supported and acquire confidence in the difficulties ahead. Teachers serve as role models for respect, loving compassion, and the belief in peaceful conflict resolution.
- **Students who follow the Montessori Method have independence within boundaries:** Students are active participants in selecting what their learning focus will be, working within boundaries provided by their professors. Montessorians realize that internal happiness fuels a child's curiosity and interest, resulting in joyful learning that lasts a lifetime.

- **Students are encouraged to become active knowledge searchers:** Teachers create environments in which students have the flexibility and resources to seek answers to their own questions.
- **Self-correction and self-evaluation are essential components of the Montessori classroom approach:** Students learn to look critically at their work as they grow older, and they become proficient at spotting, fixing, and learning from their mistakes.

Montessori students become confident, eager, self-directed learners when they are given the freedom and encouragement to question, dig thoroughly, and find connections. They have the ability to think critically, collaborate constructively, and act boldly—a skill set for the twenty-first century.

MONTESSORI'S DIDACTIC APPROACH

The term 'didactic' refers to learning that is enjoyable. Didactic equipment is a tangible substance used to educate mentally challenged young children. This is a significant addition made by Montessori that makes learning enjoyable. Montessori believes that self-education is the greatest technique for a child to learn in his or her own way and at his or her own pace, without interference from others. She suggests using didactic devices to control every effort and assist the youngster in naturally correcting himself. Thus, didactic apparatus serves as a substitute for teachers, allowing even the dullest and challenged children to get an education. After sensory training, children are taught reading, writing and arithmetic. Montessori suggests that writing should be started before reading. In this regard, she depends on the psychological principles of "Transfer of Training" She says, "Preparatory Movement could be converted and reduced to a mechanism by means of repeated exercise, not in the work itself, but in that which prepares for it".

CONTRIBUTION OF MONTESSORI TO MODERN EDUCATIONAL THEORY AND PRACTICES

Dr. Maria Montessori, an Italian lady doctor, rose to prominence as a world-renowned educator. She is regarded as one of the most important forerunners in the education of mentally challenged preschool children. Her work has had a significant impact on modern educational theories and

methods, particularly at the nursery school level. The Montessori Method of child education has grown so popular that the term "Montessori" has become synonymous with "child." As a result, the term "Montessori" is now linked with "child." Furthermore, her message of love, respect, patience, and humility for children has been welcomed around the world.

Montessori is both a physician and an educator. She develops her teaching style based on her observations, experiences, and experiments. In her teaching, she employs scientific methodologies. In modern education, the scientific approach to education has been acknowledged and implemented. Montessori believes that each child has a unique set of interests, aptitudes, capacities, and endowments. As a result, the youngster can learn at his or her own rate and pace. As a result, individual physical and mental distinctions must be respected and collective methods of teaching or group activities that squash individuality should be avoided. In this sense, she pushes for personalized training depending on the child's interest and abilities. Montessori's concept has been recognized by modern philosophers.

The most significant contribution of Montessori is the didactic apparatus. She uses this mechanical and artificial device for imparting sensory training, muscular coordination and instruction in 3 R's. Learning through practical life exercises is a notable contribution of Montessori in the field of child education especially that of mentally challenged children. Teachers are recognized as directresses in the Montessori educational system. The major responsibility of the directress is to direct and guide children's movements. She is a true guide and friend, who inspires them, stimulates them, guides them when they face adversity, and leads them to productive and worthwhile activities. As a result, the instructor must care for the youngster with love, sympathy, patience, and humility. "The teacher is a doctor cum scientist cum a missionary", as Montessori said. Thus, she has to play a different role altogether. R.R. Rusk says that instead of the facility of speech, she has to acquire the power of silence, instead of teaching, she has to observe; instead of the proud dignity of one who claims to be infallible, she assumes the vesture of humanity.

Montessori pays due attention to the muscular movements and exercises needed in the process of writing. Therefore, the exercises suggested by her for writing and reading are properly graded and correlated with one another. Montessori emphasizes the child's development from within through his own efforts. For this, she advocates auto education in an atmosphere of freedom, joy and activity. Montessori believes that discipline cannot be attained by way of commands, by sermons, by any of the disciplinary methods universally known. Therefore, she suggests that discipline should be fostered in the child indirectly by developing activity in spontaneous work. Montessori offers teacher training courses in her method of child education, particularly in pre-primary or nursery education. Teachers from all over the world flocked to her for training in the Montessori educational method. Montessori focuses on each child's personality development. As a result, the concept of free and obligatory mass education has gained traction. As a result, proper education for disabled and mentally challenged children is regarded as both human and socially vital. In this sense, Montessori is recognized as a humanist and a great thinker whose contributions to the field of child education are immeasurable.

CONCLUSION

Dr. Maria Montessori has revolutionized the concept of child education. Her impact on educational thoughts and practices is universal. In fact, the Montessori system of education has come to stay in all progressive countries. She ranks among the foremost of the educators who stand for an environment of love, freedom and sympathy for the child. In the opinion of Robert R. Rusk, "The permanent elements of her method are more likely to be practical activities and the exercises subsidiary to the didactic apparatus". Sir John Adams attributes to Montessori, the credit of sounding the death knell to class teaching. The most significant feature of the system is the individualization of instruction. Today, the word 'Montessori' is freely associated with schools meant for very young children.

Many of the ideas mentioned above appear too good to be true, but one of the best aspects of the Montessori philosophy is how well the philosophy on paper corresponds to the philosophy in action. Education, according to Montessori, is essential to a child's development. At the same time, it's worth

noting that the philosophy isn't limited to schooling. It is difficult to detect in a classroom. There isn't a grown-up at the front yelling facts. However, if you look closely, you'll observe someone moving among the students, quietly providing suggestions and assisting children in teaching themselves. Montessori deduced that a young child's mind is like a sponge from witnessing how easily a child learns to speak or walk - she named it "the absorbent mind." Because it is so absorbent, she considers the first six years of life to be "the most critical era of existence; the time when intelligence, man's greatest tool, is produced." As a result, classes frequently introduce pupils to difficult topics earlier than the public education system. And they appear to grasp such notions with the assistance of specialized materials. The great Italian educator lives on in new generations of youngsters through such inventive features of the classroom.

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