

Metta and karuna, a spiritual social work intervention approach in modern pedagogy, Transformative teaching – A focus on pedagogy

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Abstract: *Since centuries, education has been very important discipline in the human, animals, birds, other creatures and environment. Education inculcates knowledge, decision-making understandings, peace and calmness, smartness, rationality, and openness and acceptance (of research based on science) in a human mind. The adoptive nature of human beings is notable and leading to the search, research which is used for growth, benefit to the society, living creatures, and environment. Negative usage destroys. Everybody wants to be happy and learn more for their positive development.*

Spirituality plays an important part on human life and to the environment and all living creatures. Right utilization of spirituality in pedagogy leads to the good for all. It is important to educate people with having social interaction Metta and karuna, which is an applied concept of Buddha which is in brahmaviharas of Dhamma teachings. Spirits of Metta and Karuna in social interaction is as important as education is. Righteous approaches of astringent marg (eightfold path), is also applied education. Spirituality is applied science and is became part of social work discipline.

Teachers' Pedagogy with Metta and Karuna is very important for success in teaching and learning process and without Metta and Karuna, knowledge is not worth of. So Metta and Karuna is as important and knowledge in pedagogy. Pedagogy with right knowledge directly impact on student's physic development and growth of mind. There are some theories of social work to teach students as an organized group and as an individual student as well. Spiritual social work intervention is a tool to modern pedagogy in modern time.

Key Words: *Dhamma, Pedagogy, Spirituality, Knowledge, Growth.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

This method is used to teach multicultural class so it is a face to face teaching method in a school where students receive knowledge from teacher. In this method, teacher teaches etiquettes and social interaction method includes manners, respect to others, be open minded and accepting surroundings and to respond instead of react, and spirituality as well. As a teacher, it's a pedagogy that makes students, a knowledgeable student with Metta and karuna to remain egoless and spotless students.

In a social work methods, pedagogy seen in a few different methods such as police theory in which teacher's social interaction is strict and use stick to keep students quiet and in a discipline. Problem solution theory in which students feel free to learn and to clear doubts if any and teacher remains cooperative to all students. Participative method theory in which students bring their talents they learn from teacher and also both students and teacher participate in a learning and solving problems and create understandings by scientifically and logical approach. In this approach and theory, students gain knowledge and teacher keep himself or herself, an updated to the contemporary in different subjects. Language is also basic characteristics in pedagogy.

The definition of pedagogy by English dictionary of Merriam-webster is "the art, science or profession of teaching (M. Webster, 2022)." The word pedagogy came from Greek word *agogos* meaning 'leaders', a man named "paidagogos" who was a slave who led boys to school and back safely. He taught boys a manner, antiques and tutored after school. The word pedagogy meaning later on became teaching and pedagogic training is what everyone mostly in education receives. The very first known use of pedagogy was circa 1623 (M. Webster, 2023)". Cambridge university dictionary reveals pedagogy word as "the stud of the methods and activities of teachings (Cambridge Dictionary, 2023)".

Alexander defines pedagogy as:

“the act of teaching together with attendant discourse of educational theories, values, evidence and justifications. It is what one needs to know, and the skills one needs to command in order to make and justify the many different kinds of decisions of which teaching is constituted (Alexander, R. J. 2008).”

According to the Routledge handbook of critical pedagogies for social work, “the term ‘pedagogy’, as a number of the thinkers covered in this collection point out, is derived etymologically from the Ancient Greek *paideía* (*παιδεία*), which refers to the education or formation of a citizen fit to participate in the affairs of a democratic city or society, deliberating on the creation of a worthy life and a good society. This was in contrast to the older aristocratic education that served the interests of wealthy elite, trained to dominate others. According to Butts (1973, p. 86) *paideía*, as conducted in ancient Athens once it became a democracy, meant that education became more ‘broadly “civil” ... in the sense that it attempted to form the citizen for a life of full participation in the wide range of activities worthy of the city (Christine. Morley; P. Ablett; C. Noble; S. Cowden Ed.,2020)”

The concept of transformation connected to upgrading has been referred to in the writing of several researchers. For example, Lewin has referred to a transformative cycle that includes ‘action steps’ aimed at bringing about change (Lewin, 1948). Habermas has argued that reason, in part through discourse ethics, has the potential to transform the world into a more just society (Habermas J., 1972). Fuchs, arguably one of the greatest moral theologians of the twentieth century, has argued that right reason, ‘*recta ratio*’, supports human beings in making moral decisions. ‘Transformative pedagogy’ is aimed at bringing about improvement in language teaching and learning that is evidence informed, and based on democratic, moral values (Graham S, 2002).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Pedagogy and Social Work

According to social work researchers Steven F. Hick and Kate Murray, “a structural approach challenged the individual level focus of conventional social work and emphasized emancipation and social justice.” Steven’s ‘cultivating mindfulness’ is spiritual practical approach for pedagogy. In a structural social work, materialism emphasizes economic resources and material goods are at the central in defining relatives of power within capitalism whereas structural social work empathizes on client’s problems in accessing resources and enhances an understanding of how thoughts, feelings and behaviours are connected to conditions and providing basic needs. In a learning process, empowering students through personal change; in a structural social work practice, students and teachers’ contributions to problems are clarified within a structural context to foster a healthy understanding of ‘self’ and help both teachers and students change their feelings, thoughts or behaviours when their harmful to self, themselves and others in process of learning and teachings (Mel, G. and Stephen, A. W., 2009). This practice empowered learners and teachers both through personal change. Clients; learners and teachers are helped to identify the conflicts between thoughts, feelings, and behaviours as well to connect these social interactions method with the social context in relation to themselves and others.

Methods of Transformative Teaching

In an ancient time, classroom was on landscape which was in the palm of healthy nature and learning culture and linguistic learning experiences were worthwhile. Historically, the teachings were based on class in some part of the world and based on social stratification, while for majority of the population served to the marginalized, and oppressed (Freire,1970). Interaction among students and between students and teacher was personal and direct in which it was constantly feedback based meaning teacher was able to communicate and paid attention to the students. Students come to the school to experience the school, the teachers, to the surroundings, and to learn, and to develop their personality. However, both students and teachers come with perception and expectation that learning process is a process where organized system of action and experiences will occur. As Freire described,

“it is the teachers’ tasks to fill the students; with a predetermined set of cultural signifiers, socio-cultural norms and empirical knowledge (Freire, 1970).”

Bordieu and Foucault described,

“In this form of teaching the students merely play a receptive or passive role
(Bordieu, 1998; Foucault, 1980).”

They devour whatever the teacher has to offer. This “banking” concept of education opposes any form of free inquiry; students are rewarded by repeating verbatim what the teacher offers as the true knowledge of the world (Freire, 1970)”. In a traditional pedagogy was “ultimate power was with teacher and took an authoritarian position over what knowledge is appreciated and whose voice is heard, received and accepted by all involved. Courageous students got up the nerve to raise their notions and polished themselves for a reaction that experiences had taught them, they can expect. If they

completed what is expected, bring up the lessons of the day they are applauded and rewarded and envied by their teachers and peers (Kincheloe, 2004)”.

According to the United Nations Education Science and Culture Organisation’s document, the purpose of transformative pedagogy is;

“an innovative pedagogical approach that empowers learners to critically examine their contexts, beliefs, values, knowledge and attitudes with the goal of developing spaces for self-reflection, appreciation of diversity and critical thinking (UNESCO, 2017)”.

Definition of transformative pedagogy is very clearly gives opportunity and participation and brainstorming methods for all learners without any discrimination. Transformative pedagogy helps teachers in improving their identity connected with brining about transformation (self-awareness for self-direct) that is evidence informed and based on moral values (Patrick F, 2019).

Self-awareness: ontological and epistemological beliefs

Little D. in the chapter of 4.1 Self-awareness: ontological and epistemological beliefs has argued that “teachers need to become aware of ‘the assumptions, values and prejudices which determine their classroom behavior.’ He claims that the development of teacher autonomy is a ‘prerequisite’ for the development of learner autonomy (Little, D., 2021)”.

Breen and Mann suggest that autonomy is ‘a complex challenge’ that has limits but is worth seeking as an ideal. They draw implications from this for teachers and express them in terms of key attributes for autonomous teaching:

- i. Self-awareness: one’s beliefs and assumptions about teaching and learning; the ability to reflect on action and relationships in the classroom;
- ii. Belief in the capacity of each person to learn.

In this process, teachers will require to focus on their teaching attitudes, beliefs, and assumptions prior to create proper conditions to motivate learners. Here, according to Black and Wiliam. “More *open moves* of the teachers with learners will be determined by teachers’ epistemological, psychological and pedagogical beliefs. This includes teachers’ perceptions to interact students or leaners, and teachers understandings of syllabus and subjects. So, strategy to a ‘transformative pedagogy’ would be teachers’ beliefs and a range of other factors, including ontological, epistemological, and moral factors (Breen M.P., Mann S., 1997) ”.

Buddhist education system

According to the Buddha, everyone has rights to gain education with equalities among man and female. Buddha himself educated to Angulimall for his salvation and Angulimall himself got knowledge of life, of being human being and importance of panchasila, astringikmarg (eightfold path), and Metta and Karuna under Dhamma. Buddha also educated to all who came to him and Buddha’s Dhamma has no discrimination to gain knowledge to live peaceful and happy life. Forgiveness was Buddha’s spirits as a respond to bring peace and avoid hatred, anger, and selfishness. Dhamma is for all including Bhikkhunis and common persons called civilians (Narada, 1977). Emperor Asoka is the greatest example of inculcation of Dhamma who rose a period of happiness for all citizens and neighbouring states. Buddha’s teachings are for peaceful growth of individuals, of other living beings and environment. For advance education in Buddha’s period, his Ayurveda medicine practitioner name Jivakkumarbacca was sent to Taxila University for further study in medical treatment. Followers of Dhamma made Nalanda University where thousands got educated. Buddha’s teaching is non-violent form and teacher teaches all to the student and tripitak is Buddha’s teachings which is translated into various languages of contemporary and available on internet also. tripitak is in same text of Pali so it is a pure Buddha’s teachings(Narada, 1977).

Buddhist scholar Narada explained Dhamma, Metta and Karuna in his book Buddha and his teachings as;

Buddha is quality and Dhamma is “*a way of life*”. Siddharth Gautama discovered “*Buddha quality* and his teachings are *a way of life*. What Metta and Karuna are; one powerful destructive vice in a man is *anger* (dosa). The sweet virtue that subdues this evil force and sublimes man is loving-kindness *Metta* (Narada, 1977)”.

“Cruelty *Ahinsa* is another vice that is responsible for many horrors and atrocities prevalent in the world. Compassion “*Karuna* is, its antidote (Narada, 1977).”

And “Jealousy *issa* is another vice that poisons one’s system and leads to unhealthy rivalries and dangerous competitions. The most effective remedy for this poisonous drug is appreciative joy *Mudita* (Narada, 1977).”

Relationship between Buddha and his learners as students was open-minded to ask questions and Buddha remained as a guide to show right path and not as a teacher for his followers, or learners of Dhamma. In which Buddha did not keep anything secrete in his teachings rather Buddha taught everything he knew and discovered. Gaining knowledge was purely depended on learners or followers of Buddha.

Teaching or to be educated is to make person/individual an intelligent / smart, an honest, disciplineour, and a rational thinking person. Pedagogy by Buddha is to make individual to take care of self and other living creatures and

environment by learning and inculcating Panchsila, Eightfold Path of righteous approach, and having nature of Metta and Karuna. In a present era, Dhamma leads to kushal kamma in social interaction, in social and economic, and political, research and development discipline, so pedagogy of Buddha is for betterment of all living creatures, and sustainable environment and sustainable living by treating all equal, non-violently, and no discrimination including social hierarchical, class or any profession based discrimination through middle path (madhyam marg). By learning and implementing Dhamma, anyone can become teacher and anyone become a learner or student to gain knowledge based on science and logic. Bhavana, a mind training meditation is a base of inculcating Dhamma. Bhavana of Metta and vipassana meditation are described in satipatthan and majjhimikay. Being in Dhamma and Sangha is the main principles for socializing with self and others and taking care of others (Edwin A., 1879).

By learning and inculcating Dhamma, Metta and karuna, individual student can become good listener, non-argumentative but smart speaker through necessary analysis of situation or any dispute, every form of; verbal and non-verbal non-violent student so increase a patience and self-awareness and free from blind beliefs. Buddhist pedagogy of Dhamma, makes student or learner, an individual with qualities that accepted by all others. To give opportunities for positive changes and for self-motivation, be positive spirits and nature of jealousy and hatred have no place rather vanished by inculcating Dhamma; Metta and karuna and practicing bhavana. Metta – Karuna, Eightfold Path, Bhavana are spiritual the methods discovered of Buddha and taught free of cost by the Buddha that falls into the social work so these methods may fit as and into academic social intervention in social work education discipline (Narada, 1977).

In a Jatak Katha, a Buddha's tales, no. 249, in incidents, children took pravajya and were learning Dhamma and lifestyle of Buddhism and bhavana and were harassed by shramner. To not harm children as pedagogy, one story is about tamed monkey and his owner; in a story, a monkey named saaluk and his owner was a snake in which owner tied his tamed monkey around tree while owner was asleep. Meanwhile, tamed monkey used his tact and untied himself and went to play on mungo trees and ate mangoes. When owner saw this, and requested saalak tamed monkey to come to him and owner will provide monkey a healthy food and playing facility. When saalak a tame monkey came to his owner, owner beat with stick. Saalak monkey replied, "because of you love me so much that's why you are beating with bamboo stick. From now onwards, I am going to stay in this mango tree garden and you, go home happily" by sayin this, monkey a tamed saalak went to the mango tree garden to live freely and happily, his owner left with nothing. Now, the Jatak Tales conclusion and lesson called Dhamma desana is, the owner of 'saalak, a tamed monkey' who beat his tamed monkey though monkey was obeying his orders and owner was earning well, tamed money. The way tamed monkey left his owner for so much harassment and torcher, for freedom, and to play, pupil children also need to be teach with karuna and Metta in their teachers and not to beat pupils and not to kill pupils childhood by beating them as a part of pedagogy. So this story of Jatak tales teaches a lesson of Metta and Karuna while teaching to the school pupils and let them be free to think; brain storming, to play for understanding game and its discipline by following rules of play and to obey the individual and being with team as team members and to know how to lead team as well. So be patience with pupils, pay less attention towards some childish activities of pupils, and let their mind grow. The way tamed money saalak responded to his owner's call to find monkey, and monkey came to him politely that seemed tamed monkey was also waiting for him though monkey himself broke his rope and went to play and eat mangos. So balance is required in treating and teaching pupil, and not to beat or no any violence towards pupil of primary school but teach them with Metta and karuna and righteous approach Eightfold path (Francis, H. T. and Thomas, E. J., 1916).

Pedagogy in Pandemic and Its Impact among School Students

Due to lock dawn and social distancing and other protocol, school student remained at home and after lock down, they followed protocol of wearing mask and social distance. At home, they went on online study so no personal school class teachings. So here the pedagogy was opposite to routine pedagogy. In pandemic or natural calamity, maintaining continuous learning was become difficult because of students had to learn on their own and also distance learning on internet in a small mobile screen. So, students neither focused on everyday learning due to distance learning and fear of corona virus and concentrating on small screened mobile. When internet was not high speed, those students missed online learnings. These all disturbed students mentally and physically also so their parents. When students rejoined schooling after more than one and half year, they found difficult to refocused on personal learning in the class/ According to the stud of The effect of Covid-19 on education by Jacob Hoofan, and Elizabeth that during the corona virus time, primary schools students kept feared by seeing television news reports about patents suffering from corona virus or family member suffering of corona virus. Children affected negatively. Their mental health got down and went into depression, some primary school students spent time on playing games on mobile and other devices that made them short-tempered and lost their concentrations in study so post pandemic study showed that they were weakened in reading, and writing and memory also. Practice of seating for study at home also gets affected and students lost capacity to do so. Students also lost touch with Nature, Importance of nature in their everyday life. Nature has life; creatures, plants, air, sand, water all are living beings give life to human. Parents lost jobs and so their regular salaries and this



also got wrong affect to their children so this financial instability or lose lead to depression and anxiety and all these led to behaviour problems and social interaction. Virtual education was not successful in maintaining teachings of school so students did not focused on neither routine study nor home work. Stress lead to poorer meal in children (primary school students) but consumption (Jacob Hoofan: Elizabet Second, 2021).

Challenges and Opportunity in Global vision of pedagogy of 21st century

Though classroom learning from black board to project based learning in the classroom where teacher play computer and projector so, teacher does not need to speak nor to students need to speak textbook readings. So the practice of reading properly and concentrating on textbooks are missing and exam based learning was a new pedagogy. This was a one sided learning in a language of communication field. In textbooks, lesson is now renamed unit. In the primary school, pencil and rubber were used which was not costly to poor students. Now, ballpen is being used so stationary has become more expensive to poor students. Learning by reading and writing was very inclusive and helpful in concentrating on textbook so reading more pages at a time became habit and analytical skill improved. “Technologies can be used to support efforts to transform pedagogy, but it is essential to recognize that twenty-first century learning experiences must incorporate more than just technology also encompasses learning through peers, inter-generational partnerships and community relationships. Learning may take place outside of school in libraries, museums, community centres, local businesses or nearby farms, among others (Robinson (2006) and Leadbeater (2008).”

Buddhist spirituality, Pedagogy and modern world teachings

A few years back 2018, in a monsoon season, 12 students of primary school with 1 teacher –a football coach went into jungle but due to constant rain, they went into the cave (Tham Luang nang Non) deep 4 kilometers into the Thai jungle cave for shelter and remained deep inside the cave and found trapped into the cave for 18 days during those days, as water level increased, the temperature was very cold in the cave, their oxygen level went dipped to 15% of usual level of 21% deep into the cave. However, in the whole incident, a teacher who was a Bhikkhu, taught the boys bhavana, a Buddhist meditation method that helped students to handle stress and fearless. This Buddhist meditation practice calm down students and also make sure they all used as little air as possible in the cave. All survived safely and medically fit but Thai Navy Seal and driver Saman K. died during rescue operation and next year Beirut P. died of blood infection contracted during this operation. Cave rescue ten thousand people of hundred government agencies including hundred divers. This incidence is one of the incidences of spiritual success in highly critical conditions. Buddhist meditation as a pedagogy helped a lot for surviving without adequate food and drinking water and kept moral high. The Washington Post published news with the title “he loved more than himself: how a 25-year-old former monk kept the Thai soccer team alive (Mahtani, S., 2018).” South china Morning Post news line was “how a 25-year-old ex-monk kept the Thai cave boys alive-and won the hearts of their parents (South China Morning Post, 2018).”

Buddhist meditation as an intervention in pedagogy in a school is also allowed for 30 minutes per week of voluntary religion instruction in primary schools by school council and parents agreed to this by Victorian government policy. Buddhist meditation practice including the teachings of the Buddha and the practice of meditation is the major aim of Buddhist education program, it’s a program of Buddhist council of Victoria and represents committee members and teachers are all volunteers (Sue, E., 2013). This program in operation since year 2004 and now runs classes in several Melbourne and country primary schools. The objective was to create a curriculum which was inclusive of all Buddhist traditions which introduced primary students to the basic values of Buddhism the curriculum includes the life of Buddha, the Jataka Tales Katha, traditional festivals and of central importance bhavana (mind training). Teacher is from Sangha passed through careful process and all necessary security checks for working with school students. And Buddhist council provides all necessary methods. According to the students of Princess Hill Primary School and Mount View Primary School, meditation is important which calm mind and with calmness we can get along with others with different nature and feel no anger or jealousy to others, tolerance and capacity built, stay focused and aware so this method is try to clean mind and everyday meditation life is beneficial in life. Buddhist education program took two years by planning committee of Buddhist education program comprised of ten representative from Melbourne Buddhist temples and developed school’s curriculum and teachers training course. The program is appropriate and inclusive. Ethical training; individual and group of students activities under trained Buddhist teachers, there’s the training in wisdom and both of these come from practice of meditation and emphasis on Buddhist characteristics. Students gain some form of self-awareness, become harmless individual which teach them a great deal about social interaction with other students and with multiverse community, a sense of ethical awareness and more wisdom. Materialist life style is not very important. Money is not the happiness the happiness is important that is in our mind. This pedagogy developed in Victoria region (Australia), a social and economic welfare programs. This pedagogy under this program continued to grow (S. E. Smith, 2013).



3. METHOD: Secondary data collection and analysis of secondary data collections and participatory observation in families, civil hospitals and primary schools.

4. CONCLUSION:

From traditional to modern pedagogy, in modern times, relation between students and teachers are kept in distance and teachers are no longer personally linked with their students whom they are teaching to and students are not connected with their teachers personally to properly understand, learn and inculcate subjects, and their contents. Natural environment awareness used to be a part of socialization for the students, now relationship of humans with other creatures and environment seen in students and materialistic life style is molding students socialization in different way so do the personality itself. Distance learning or spending less time in the classroom is neither healthy nor positive or betterment for students and teachers. Spirituality in pedagogy is again become very important to keep pedagogy effective, positive and in organized manner to groom the present and future society.

Dhamma can be utilized in pedagogy. Dhamma is pedagogy for individual's development. Characteristics of Dhamma; middle way, eightfold path, Metta and Karuna, bhavana' mindful exercise can make human being happy, compassionate, selflessness, moral, being secular, clam listener, spirits of acceptance, and growing talents, and to live in and maintain a nature, live in a present moment by remaining aware. The characteristics of equality, democracy, and acceptance, spirituality in Metta bhavana with karuna are very important and practically useful in pedagogy and in social interaction in a materialistic lifestyle in every era. With the practice of bhavana, Buddhist pedagogy with Metta and Karuna (Kindness and compassion) can provide fundamental learnings for life to vanish hatred, any kind of violence; racism or bullying, or any discrimination mentality, and other destructive behavior.

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