

CHAPTER -II

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLING: A RAINBOW CONCEPT

2.1 INRODUCTION

Life is a continuous education process in which everyone learns something every moment or is adding something new to the existing knowledge. Such kind of acquiring knowledge is known as informal education. Here, one acquires knowledge, skills, attitudes and insights from daily experiences and varied kinds of exposure—at home, at work, at play; from the example and attitudes of family and friends; from reading newspapers and books, travel; or by listening to radio or viewing television. This school of thought has been widely acclaimed and accepted and, therefore, informal/ non-formal education centers are a common place.

Every country has its own interpretation of the concept of non-formal education. For some, non-formal education means all educational programme provided by the Ministry of Education apart from schools and colleges (e.g., adult literacy classes). For others, it means educational programs like schooling that is provided by non-governmental agencies. Some consider it to be every educational activity apart from schools and colleges, including the print media and non-print media by many; non-formal education is considered to be the 'ideal' form of education, far better than formal education in all respect. George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Woodrow Wilson, Thomas Edison, Winston Churchill, Agatha Christie, Margaret Mead, Charlie Chaplin, Albert Einstein, Andrew Carnegie, Charles Dickens and Mark Twain, all of these notable people were beneficiaries of non formal/ alternative education in their early days before they went through the system of mainstream education.

One of the most significant and modern symbol that marks change in education has been the arrival and growth of the alternative or continuation schools. Beginning with the progressive movement that was inspired by John Dewey, the alternative school

Purohit, S.(2014); An Analytical Study of Alternative Education Programme Run by Digantar

movement took an intellectual form. However, it was not until the late 1960s and early 1970s that the alternative schools began to gain acceptance and to achieve a widespread physical presence in the educational scene. Mary Anne Raywid, one of the alternative education's foremost researchers, traces the term "alternative" to the 1960s when the first alternative schools began to appear within the public school system.

The term "alternative education" was novel, but for Indians, the concept was not new. Social reformers had begun exploring alternative education by the late nineteenth century. Vivekananda, Dayanand Saraswati, Syed Ahmed Khan, Jyotiba Phule, Savitribai Phule, Rokeya Shekhawat Hossein and others promoted the idea of education as a force for social regeneration, and set up schools/ institutions towards this end. Vivekananda and Dayanand Saraswati combined religious revitalization with social service/ political work, through the Ramkrishna Mission and Arya Samaj schools, respectively.

Significant educationists in the first half of the twentieth century included Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi, Jiddu Krishnamurthy, Gijubhai Badheka, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. By the 1920s and the 1930s, these stalwarts had created a number of viable models of alternative education.

Rabindranath Tagore pointed out limitations of schools set up by colonial authorities, in his writings Shikshar Her Fer (1893) and Shikshar Bahan (1915). In Shikshar Bikiran (1933), he favored Mahatma Gandhi's call for non-cooperation with contemporary education, saying 'there are times when it may be more educative to boycott schools rather than joining them', a thought echoed a half-century later by Ivan Illich in Deschooling. Society (1970) Tagore set up his own alternative to the prevailing educational system: Vishwa Bharti in Santiniketan, Bengal. Classes here were, and still are, held in the lap of nature.

Gandhiji developed Nai Taleem or Basic Education – students devoting a few hours daily to academic pursuits, and the rest of the day to the performance of 'bread labour' – craftwork, agriculture, and cooking, cleaning and related tasks. His approach to education aimed at strengthening village life and communities. Educationist Gijubhai Badheka

² Tagore, R. Shikshar Bikiran (1933)

emphasized children's need for an atmosphere nurturing independence and self reliance. He gave this idea an institutional basis by establishing Bal Mandir in Gujrat in 1920. Gijubhai showed how to teach history, geography, language and other subjects through stories and rhymes, in a way that appealed to children.

J. Krishnamurti too thought of education in connection with the entire life, not something isolated. Krishnamurti set up two schools in 1930s, Rajghat Besant School in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh and the Rishi Valley School in Andhra Pradesh. Over the decades, the Krishnamurti Foundation of India (KFI) has kept alive its commitment to meaningful education, expanding its network of schools to Chennai, Uttarkashi, Bangalore and Pune. In 1986, the Rishi Valley Educational Foundation began setting up small rural schools, Valmiki Vanam, Rishi Vanam, Sundar Vanam, Vidya Vanam and so on. These are multigrade, one-room one-teacher schools.

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother inaugurated the idea of 'integral education' in which all dimensions of the growing child, physical, vital, mental, psychic and spiritual are addressed. Sri Aurobindo International Centre for Education (SAICE) was established in Pondicherry in 1943. Also known simply as the Ashram School, the Mother's work here laid the foundations for practicing integral education, and free progress. Assessment of children is multi-dimensional, and no child fails as there is never any need. Every day, the students make a unique pledge, 'It is not for our family, it is not to secure a good position, it is not to earn money that we study. We study to learn, to know, to understand the world, and for the sake of the joy it gives us'.

Many schools and teachers are engaged in exploring new ways of thinking about educating children and education. Anyone can make a shift from traditional methods and take a new look at education and ask how to affect true learning. Alternative education is an organic and constantly evolving approach to learning. It makes the child the center and the focus of learning, using a variety of methods and strategies. In summary, alternative education philosophy endeavours to fit the process of learning to the child's inclinations, interests and abilities.

Even today, millions of Indians do not get the opportunity to learn. Education is more than mere literacy. How many children actually go to school? The sad truth, then, is that even those who have the opportunity to go to school do not always relish it. Our rigid schooling system seems too dull for children and stifles their creativity and originality.

Education cannot be a static endeavor. With the philosophy of being child-centered as almost non-negotiable, alternative schools continuously remolds themselves so as to bring their students closer to leading a holistic life. It is found that alternative schools generally have one or more of the following features:

- The approach is more individualized than that of the mainstream schools. There is no one model, and so, the approach of alternative schools defines pigeonholing.
- Respect is accorded to the students, parents and teachers irrespective of socioeconomic status and (special) abilities. Integration of children of mixed abilities and/ or different socio-economic groups, and sometimes even of mixed ages, is a key element.
- Learning that is more experimental and interest-based is encouraged, rather than learning out of a textbook or from a class lecture.
- Disciplines are cross-linked so that the boundaries of knowledge are diffused and the child is able to see connections across various fields of learning.
- Class size is kept small. Typically, one teacher does not teach more than 25 to 30 students.
- Class structure is experimented with, by allowing flexibility in the spread of ages
 or even interflow between different 'grades' or 'standards' for different subjects.
 Physical classroom spaces are also broken free so that the walls of the
 conventional classroom dissolve even as they allow learning to take place
 outdoors.
- Administration is conducted in a democratic and somewhat flexible manner. With hierarchical structures being less and less prevalent, these schools experiment in

rotating responsibilities, arriving at major decisions through consensus and taking collective ownership for the institution and what it stands for.

- Evaluation methods are explored in various ways, not always relying on the conventional tests and examinations.
- Affiliation to the most popular Board may not be sought. These schools attempt to
 explore new topics and syllabi that are not prescribed by conventional Boards.
 However, this does not mean that such schools do not prepare their students for
 government-approved examinations to complete schooling and enter universities.
- Success rate is not measured only by the performance of the students in competitions, examinations and other such external benchmarks. Their learning outcomes are a blend of measurable and immeasurable parameters.³

Alternative education in India has been influenced by currents flowing in from other parts of the world, such as Montessori's work with orphaned and handicapped children in Italy. Montessori designed very precise teaching materials, allowing each child to explore her/ his inner world and capabilities, gradually unfolding at one's own pace. In this scheme, the role of education is to provide appropriate environment and stimulus for the progressive development of each child's capabilities (Montessori, 1912). During World War II, because of her anti-fascist views, Dr. Montessori was forced into exile from Italy. She came to India, and here she developed her work further.

Montessori's methods continue to directly influence educational experiments in India. Drawing on the expertise of Montessori educator Amukta Mahapatra, Gramashrama's programme is integrated within ordinary government schools. It is graded for different developmental stages, the method reflecting a spirit of democracy and collectivity, and helping address the everyday situation of government schools such as multi-grade learning and the needs of special groups, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Started in 1995, by 2003 the programme was being run in 50 schools in Karnataka.

³ (Vittachi, Raghavan, Raj. 2007)

Shri Gijubhai Badheka (1885-1939) evolved a system of education in which the major components were freedom and love for children. He brought the child in the center of the educational process. He gave the child a prime position in relation to the other components, the teacher and the subject. He argued in favour of the freedom of the child and was totally against the use of fear and corporal punishment in schools. He started a pre-school called Bal Mandir in 1920 where he put his principles into practice. It was a major breakthrough from the conservative environment. The core of his process of educating the child was to help him become independent, to develop self-control and to become self-reliant. His book 'Diva Swapna' (Daydream) is the road map for bringing about a revolution in the process of elementary education.

Other educationists including Rudolf Steiner, John Holt and Paulo Freire have had a discernible impact on alternative education thinking in India. Due to a number of these alternatives a picture of hope emerges out of the chaotic present. This is despite the fact that mainstream schooling has declined, from bad to worse, with government schools sometimes dysfunctional, and the private sector increasingly commercialized.

In Bangalore, a school called 'Vikasana' was started in 1978 to cater to slum children. It was inspired by David Horsburgh's methods in Neel Bagh – a small, experimental village school that demonstrated extraordinary results in terms of rigorous learning. David Horsburgh worked with very limited number of students, all from local rural areas. Neel Bagh provided an open atmosphere for learning.

Rama and B. Ramadas have set up the Vidyodaya School in Gudalur, Tamil Nadu. It is an unusual learning centre for the children of some 30 odd tribal communities who live in the area and have their roots in the forest belts.

The 'Centre for Learning' (CFL), Bangalore, was set up in 1990 by a group of teachers, with the intention of creating an environment conductive to awakening awareness in children. They keep the school small, believing that it is the relationship between a teacher and a student that is important in creating the right environment. The school has no competition, no examinations. Working with the hands is considered important.

The landscape of alternative schooling is certainly fertile, there are people scattered across different parts of the country, dreaming of a different kind of education, and many who are actually living out their dreams. Most experiments are small, but fundamentally replicable. They reach out in meaningful ways to diverse children, from different economic backgrounds, in diverse social settings. It is instructive to remember that sometimes, there is no hard and fast line dividing the mainstream from the alternative.

Yet, mainstream education still dominates the lives of the vast majority of Indian children. Its philosophical foundations rest on large-scale, centralized, examination-oriented teaching, with inflexible daily schedules and rigid syllabi.⁴

Parvarish is the museum school operates in different museums of the Bhopal city with strength of 100 students per year or 3500 student in total (as on April 2018). Though the school has a very small number of students by contemporary standards, it gains prominence by having a reputation of being popularly known as a Museum school and recognition for its innovation by UNESCO in 2016. This study focused on the innovation for which the school is known and bringing out pedagogical practices that are being followed in the museum.

2.2 MUSEUM AND SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP AROUND THE WORLD

Education is one of the key activities of museums, together with keeping, research and presentation of museum objects. Today, with the permanently growing information flow, society needs, more than ever before, to get targeted, verified and comprehensible information. Museums, which have, have been accumulating civilization experience of the humankind for centuries along with universities and scientific and research institutions, represent valuable sources of such in-formation. As a unique intermediary between the object of historical and cultural heritage and recipient of cultural codes — the visitor — museums offer almost unlimited possibilities in the area of education. The social mission of museums in the educational sphere can be defined as follows:

Keeping and transferring to the fol-lowing generations the cultural experience and humanitarian traditions of human mankind, developing axiological, moral and

⁴ Vittachi.S. Raghavan.N. 2007. Alternative Schooling in India

philosophical principles regarding tolerance for natural, ethnical, cultural and religious diversity, as well as developing the creative potential of personality (including communication skills) through specific forms of educational work and use of museums as a unique carrier of historical and cultural memory of the humankind coded in authentic objects of its heritage.

In addition to educational activity, museums have a significant, though not always fully developed, role in cultural tourism. The role of cultural tourism is closely related to educational, although it varies among museums with different work profiles. Art, history, and local lore museums are traditionally attractive for both local and foreign tourists, whereas most natural history and technical museums are oriented towards the local visitors as well as students.

During last 20 years, CIS countries museums have managed to achieve substantial success in implementation modern standards and innovative forms of museum educational work. One of the most significant results is the development and implementation of a number of in-house interactive museum educational projects, including in the framework of governmental programs, taking into consideration the best international experience in this area while at the same time meeting the peculiarities of a specific country and the needs of certain target groups. Illustrious examples in this area are the programs "Hello, Museum!" developed by the Rus-sian Center of Museum Pedagogy and Children Crafts of the Rus-sian Museum (Russia), "Museum as a class for study, protection and preservation of biological and cultural variability of Narynsk Oblast of Kyrgyz Republic" (Narynsk State Oblast K.Mambetalieva History and Ethnography Museum, Kyrgyzstan), "In Search of Fern Flower" (State Yanka Kupala Museum of Literature, Belarus).⁵

The partnerships with museum and school across the world may differ in, it may be in the form of school in museum, as a project in the museum or it may be an educational programme, but the purpose of the partnership remains same i.e. enhancing knowledge

⁵ Role of museums in education and cultural tourism development policy brief (2012), p.6

and preserving culture. Following are some of the museum-school partnerships across the world:

2.2.1 Museum schools in UK

- i. The Langley Academy is the UK's only Museum Specialist School, and was established in 2008 by the Arbib Foundation. The Langley Academy view museums as gateways to real things, real stories and real people and utilize museum collections to make learning meaningful and memorable. They believe that museums and their collections develop students':
 - Love for learning
 - Curiosity and creativity
 - Ideas and critical thinking
- Self-esteem and identity
- Communication skills
- Understanding of context and links
- Knowledge of the past
- Hopes for their future

Where is it? - Slough, in the South East of England.

How does it link schools and museums? — The school has a Museum Learning Manager, and learning with the help of different museums and galleries is a core part of their curriculum, integrated across all subjects throughout the school. The Langley Academy has their own changing temporary exhibitions in the atrium space within the school, along with a museums club.

Who is it partnered with? - There are a number of partner museums on the Museums Advisory Group to The Langley Academy, who offer support and guidance to the school, and aid in the strategic development of museum learning.

⁶ http://myschoolatthemuseum.site

Some of the core museums that they work with include Maidenhead Museum, and the London School of Economics (LSE) archive.

ii. Cheney School is a large comprehensive school which is working towards accreditation status, and is developing a museum specialism, which also extends to its feeder primary schools.

Where is it? - Oxford

How does it link schools and museums? — Cheney School hosts the East Oxford Community Classics Centre, which is a vibrant classics learning venue accommodating people of all ages for events, workshops, lessons, and exhibitions. This is run by The Iris Project in association with the University of Oxford's Faculty of Classics. Pupils at the school engage with the Centre in a number of ways, including projects on Roman Mosaics and Ancient Cookery. The Classics Centre is in possession of original artifacts including Roman pottery and weaponry. The Centre also works with the Arts Council Museum Accreditation Scheme, which means that Cheney students can participate in archaeological enrichment and project activities.

Who is it partnered with? — Cheney School is partnered with Oxford University Classics Centre, The Iris Project and the Arts Council Museum Accreditation Scheme.

iii. The Stronger Together Project was a project which ran between July 2014 and February 2015. Eleven partnership projects took place in three counties in the south of England, which linked museums with secondary schools.

Where is it? - The project occurred across Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, and Oxford shire.

How does it link schools and museums? — The programme linked eleven secondary schools with museums. The Langley Academy participated in the programme, linking with Waddesdon Manor in an aim to provide students with a greater understanding of the functional benefits of mathematics within the food

industry. Students developed numeracy skills through purchasing and menu planning, food experiments, and food service and presentation skills.

Who is it partnered with? — Eleven museums partnered with eleven schools, including Waddesdon Manor and the Langley Academy, and the Soldiers of Oxford shire Museum which partnered with Cheney School.

iv. Kendal Museum have a commitment to an active education policy, providing visits to all self-led pre-booked classes.

Where is it? - In Cambria, in the North West of England.

How does it link schools and museums? – The museum provides visits to all self-led, pre-booked classes, meaning that it can become the learning space for the delivery of a whole module or curriculum if the school desires. It costs £2 per child, which allows the class to gain access to the museum for a whole year, with free rein amongst the exhibits as long as the sessions are self-led and preorganized.

Who is it partnered with? — Any local school can use the museum. They also further children's learning through the Young Archaeologists' club.

v. Eureka Children's Museum houses a nursey school, which was established in 2003 and caters to children aged zero to five years. The learning at the nursery is closely linked with the museum. There is also holiday childcare available at the museum for those aged 5-14.

Where is it? - Halifax, North England.

How does it link schools and museums? — The nursery school and the museum itself have forged very close links. The nursery attendees frequently visit the museum's under-fives galleries, which include a miniature town square complete with shops and a garage. Children also learn in the museum classroom and theatre, and take part in art and craft activities and workshops in the museum itself.

Who is it partnered with? - The museum and nursery themselves are partnered, and during school holidays there is also a forest school partnership.

2.2.2 Museum schools in US

i. New York City Museum School is museum learning based school, and was the inspiration for The Langley Academy. This is a high school, for pupils aged 14-18, and utilizes the rich resources of New York City's historic, scientific, artistic, and cultural institutions. The school was established in 1993 in collaboration between a group of museum administrators, and one of New York City's most progressive superintendents. It has consistently ranked amongst the city's top high schools since 1994.

Where is it? — The school is in New York City, on the east coast of the United States.

How does it link schools and museums? — The school's very core values explain that when students experience the real things that exist in the world as primary resources, they have a much better chance of understanding the value of history, language, sciences, and mathematics, and applying them to everyday life. The school curriculum is reinforced by specialised courses at the school's partner museums, and various other museums and cultural institutions around the city. There are weekly museum visits as a part of this diverse curriculum.

Who is it partnered with? — The school has a range of partner museums and institutions. At present these are the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of the City of New York, the Japan Society, and the Robin Museum of Art

Bank Street College of Education has two excellent programs in Museum Education and one in Leadership in Museum Education. These programs exist to prepare graduate students for two professional roles: a museum educator knowledgeable about children and schools, and/or a classroom teacher with specialist skills in integrating museums and museum teaching methods into the classroom.

Where is it? - The college is in New York City, on the east coast of the United States

How does it link schools and museums? — Within the college there exists Bank Street School for Children. The combination of school and college working alongside one another creates a unique synergy between children and teachers. The School for Children is a working model of the college's approach to learning and teaching, with a diverse curriculum which is also responsive to children's needs. The curriculum is 'real world' based, including learning about literacy with integrating learning about libraries. The college students, upon graduation, will be well-equipped museum educators.

Who is it partnered with? — Each of the museums within the Smithsonian Institution Group work together in partnership.

ii. School in the Park is a multi visit museum programme which caters for elementary and middle school students. The programme blends formal and informal learning using the resources of museums and other institutions in the park. The curriculum is integrated so that the programme complements classroom learning. School in the Park alters the normal educational setting and methodologies for students by moving the school out into the wider community, and focuses on authentic learning activities. The programme focuses on academic excellence, setting students on a path to achieving their current and future academies goals.

Where is it? - Balboa Park, San Diego

How does it link schools with museums? — It is a programme for two local schools, in which they can have out of the classroom learning experiences. The programme also supports the education departments of Balboa Park institutions.

Who is it partnered with? — It is a partnership between the Balboa Park institutions, such as Fleet Science Institution, the Museum of Photographic Arts, or the San Diego Mineral and Gem Society.

iii. The Museum School is a tuition free, public charter school, for elementary and middle school students. Pupils here learn the basic curriculum, including reasoning, writing, mathematics, and science, alongside skills in "learning to learn", supported by community goals of becoming responsible citizens, productive workers, creative healthy individuals, problem solvers, and self-directed learners. Arts are infused into the curriculum wherever possible.

Where is it? - San Diego

How does it link schools with museums? — The school takes advantage of the wealth of local resources

Who is it partnered with? — It is partnered with local educational institutions including the Centre for World Music, EduDance, Museum of Photographic Arts, and The Old Globe Theatre.

iv. The Museum School of Avondale Estates is a public charter elementary and middle school, which opened in 2010 as the product of a grassroots effort on the part of dedicated parents to bring an innovative education opportunity to the area. The school has created a curriculum integrated with a varied programme of out-of-school experiences in partnership with a number of institutions. Their curriculum meets children at their individual levels of skill and readiness, rather than implementing a 'one size fits all' curriculum. The museum school has seen an outstanding level of success, and pupils at the school are among the top performers in the state.

Where is it? - Decatur, Georgia

How does it link schools with museums? – The school has partnered with a number of established learning and cultural institutions. Pupils visit the partner institutions several times a month, and in addition to this, partner institutions come to the school to work with pupils to acquire feedback on projects or programmes in development. The school also hosts an exhibition evening at the end of each semester, which offers children a chance to demonstrate what they have been learning. They not only showcase their work, they are also taught how to effectively explain and discuss what they have learned with exhibition attendees.

Who is it partnered with? —Institutions including the Atlanta Botanical Garden, Atlanta History Centre, Fernbank Museum of Natural History, the High Museum, Zoo Atlanta, and the Michael C. Carlos Museum.

V. The Ogden Museum of Southern Art creates partnerships with Charter Management Organisations, which operate several schools under one administration. Their most recent partnership was the Studio Classroom Programme, which was a multi-visit curriculum, inviting students to the museum on multiple days which involved experiential, hands-on learning. The classroom moves from the school to the museum for one week of intensive arts experiences and immersion in the museum environment, combined with instruction of traditional subjects in the afternoon.

Where is it? - New Orleans, Louisiana

How does it link schools with museums? — This varies by partnership, but in the last partnership, the classes visited the museum on multiple days. The museum feel that there are many benefits to this, including students' ability to observe the relationships between the art in the museum and what they themselves can make, empowering students who struggle with classroom learning, and students being able to share thoughts, ideas, and knowledge, with family members and the wider community to increase engagement with the museum and art in general amongst the community.

Who is it partnered with? - A number of Charter Management Organizations.

Any one class of up to 24 students can participate, of any age.

2.2.3 MUSEUM SCHOOL IN INDIA

i. The Museum School, India, follows a curriculum which is designed to provide holistic education to underprivileged children through museum learning. In India, there is a large disparity in quality of education between rich children and poor children. The Organization for Awareness of Integrated Social Security (OASIS) is a social innovations lab in Madhya Pradesh, and they embarked on a mission to remove the disparity in quality of education in urban areas. OASIS found that cities with a high number of slum children not in education also have a high

number of museums and similar institutions. Museums in these cities each have a subject focus, and in these museums there are a wide range of exhibits for people of all ages. Thus, OASIS collaborated with the Museums to make them the setting for a school, using student teachers from local universities.

The school takes on a number of slum children who are not in education, and teaches them enough so that they might enter mainstream school. This has worked successfully with over 2500 children since 2005, some of whom are now studying at universities or have started their own businesses. Some children graduate from school and then go on to join the Museum School as regular teachers themselves. In addition to helping children, the Museum School takes on a number of educated girls from slums and trains them as literacy teachers, which not only empowers the girls, but also helps to create a safe community environment which parents feel comfortable sending their children to school.

Where is it? - Bhopal, India

How does it link schools with museums? — The Museum School collaborates with a number of museums in the surrounding cities. At the museums, the students are allowed to touch, feel, and experiment with the day's exhibits and then answer questions from their teachers, providing reasoning and evidence behind their answers. Children will ask questions at the end of class to fill their understanding gaps. Museums are used as the sole classroom of The Museum School, and teaching in such an environment encourages and nurtures children who have been let down and disenchanted by the traditional education system.

Who is it partnered with?

The primary museum partners are Bhopal Regional Science Centre, Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya (or, the National Museum of Humankind) in Bhopal, Regional Museum of Natural History in Mysore, State Museum, Bhopal, and the Madhya Pradesh Tribal Museum.