
An Analysis of Ethical Perspective in J. Krishnamurti's Educational Philosophy**Dr. Geeta Pandey¹****Review: 15/03/2025****Acceptance: 28/04/2025****Publication: 16/06/2025**

Abstract

The modern world is characterized by science, technology, corporate influence, communication, and high mobility, all of which significantly impact every aspect of life. Education serves as a means to prepare future generations for current and anticipated challenges while preserving valuable past wisdom. In response to the intense professional demands of today, the importance of education has come to the forefront. The diverse range of professions, along with competitive markets and performance pressures, gives rise to numerous work force with different skills. This has accelerated the Knowledge and skill centric education system which can produced competent work force worldwide. But human development is lacking in such rat race environment. Jiddu krishnamurti advocates intelligence and sensitivity based education system with very unique interpretation of human intelligence that can shape more holistic human persons. This paper is an effort to analyse that how intelligence based education can shape morality in modern man with reference to krishnamurti's worldview.

Keywords: Education, Intelligence, Sensitivity, Morality, Knowledge, Skill, Truth

Introduction:

Jiddu Krishnamurti is a leading Indian philosopher of 20th century. He is also famous as a world teacher who travelled extensively throughout the world and taught humanity about living. He asserted that "Truth is a pathless land"¹ and advised against following any doctrine, discipline, teacher, guru or authority, including himself. He extensively talked about human conditioning, psychological freedom, awareness, meditation etc. He is also well known for his views on education that is regarded as his unique contribution. New education policy has been adopted in India and one of the major concerns of the policy is the development of human values in pupils. Therefore, it has become important that ethical perspective of different educational philosophers should be explored. Jiddu Krishnamurti has never tried to make any system of philosophy. Therefore it is very tough to elaborate any formal ethical ideas from his teachings. But there are sufficient ethical elements in his educational philosophy that should be highlighted. Krishnamurti has advocated intelligence based education over memory and knowledge laden education. Intelligence leads to sensitivity and insight which is the real field of love and compassion which is true ethical field.

Educational Philosophy of J. Krishnamurti :

Education, in general, is considered as the transfer of values, information, and skills from one generation to the next based on the collected treasures of the past that fit the modern world and get people ready for the demands

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and problems of the future. In order to equip our children to fit into the prevailing patterns of our day, we often instill in them a wealth of knowledge, ideas, moral standards, and common abilities. We strive to develop them into skilled fighters in a fiercely competitive setting so they may outperform others not just in the personal sphere but also in the societal and national spheres.

The primary goal is to teach kids "what to think" so that they become competent to conform to ongoing patterns mechanically. We try to make them good warriors of blind competitiveness. But Krishnamurti challenges this pattern of conformity – “Our education now is merely a process of conformity, helping the child to conform to a particular pattern of society in which he will get a job, become outwardly respectable, go to church, conform, and struggle until he dies. We do not help him to be free inwardly so that as he grows older, he is able to face all the complexities of life—which means helping him to have the capacity to think, not teaching him how to think.”² Aldous Huxley in his foreword of ‘The first and last freedom’ states- “An education that teaches us not how but what to think is an education that calls for a governing class of pastors and masters. But the very idea of leading somebody is anti-social and anti-spiritual.”³

The central theme of Krishnamurti’s educational philosophy is to focus on “how to think” rather than “what to think”. The human mind becomes estranged from Truth and itself when it is overloaded with "what to think." This is a memory based accumulation of information with very less use of spontaneous intelligence. The memory based intellectual knowledge may be efficient for creating a civilization of power but it cannot create civilization of harmony, peace and creativity. The outcome is various sorts of conflict, war and violence. “The vision of a new kind of education that emerges through Krishnamurti's writing sees traditional education as a servant of national, civic or economic interests, designed to produce efficient workers and patriotic citizens. He believed that education of this kind held the seeds of violence and chaos.”⁴ He complains- “Governments want efficient technicians, not human beings, because human beings become dangerous to governments – and to organized religions as well. That is why governments and religious organizations seek to control education.”⁵

There is a pressing need to focus on “how to think” in education. The goal should not be to fill the mind with thoughts and knowledge, but rather to create space for clear listening, observation, and learning. An alert and free mind is essential for developing self-critical intelligence, which in turn fosters the right relationships with oneself, nature, others, and the tools created by humanity. Thus, education should be viewed as a transformative process rather than merely a means of cultivating memory-based knowledge.

Intelligence, Sensitivity and Morality

The whole education system is mainly based on accumulation and analysis of vivid information. This is the domain of knowledge, and it makes us all pleased to be members of a knowledge-based society. The same attitude is applied to moral teachings as well. As a result, although educated people are aware of virtues, they do not live by them. Krishnamurti states- **“In our search for knowledge, in our acquisitive desires, we are losing love, we are blunting the feeling for beauty, the sensitivity to cruelty;** we are becoming more and more specialized and less and less integrated. Wisdom cannot be replaced by knowledge, and no amount of explanation, no accumulation of facts, will free man from suffering. Knowledge is necessary, science has its

place; but if the mind and heart are suffocated by knowledge, and if the cause of suffering is explained away, life becomes vain and meaningless.⁶

Krishnamurti was well aware of this problem. Therefore he differentiated between knowledge and intelligence and advocated the role of intelligence for humanistic output. The basis of moral life is intelligence and sensitivity rather than information or knowledge. He writes- "Intelligence is not knowledge. If you could read all the books in the world it would not give you intelligence. Intelligence is something very subtle; it has no anchorage. It comes into being only when you understand the total process of the mind—not the mind according to some philosopher or teacher, but your own mind. Your mind is the result of all humanity, and when you understand it you don't have to study a single book, because the mind contains the whole knowledge of the past."⁷

In actuality, intelligence is the ability of the mind to apply knowledge, whereas knowledge is the accumulation of past experiences that never stops adding to itself. While intelligence is built on mental freedom from memory-based conditioning, knowledge is based on memory. While intelligence concentrates on "how to think," knowledge concentrates on "what to think." "Intelligence is the capacity to think clearly, objectively, sanely, healthily. Intelligence is a state in which there is no personal emotion involved, no personal opinion, prejudice or inclination. Intelligence is the capacity for direct understanding Intelligence is the quality of the mind that is very sensitive, very alert, very aware. Intelligence does not hold on to any particular judgement or evaluation, but is capable of thinking very clearly, objectively."⁸ "Intelligence is the capacity to perceive the essential, the what is; to awaken this capacity, in oneself and in others, and that is the true education"⁹.

The primary flaw of our education system is it's over emphasis on knowledge and ideas. The body of theories, beliefs, and ideas has become so heavy that the mind is no longer able to look at and comprehend even the most fundamental concepts objectively. We lose the ability to observe the beauty of nature, our own experience structure, empathy for other people, and all other phenomena that manifest in their directedness. Our constant pursuit of intellectual prowess comes at the expense of human empathy. "Intelligence is the sensitivity to the situation".¹⁰ It is the ability to think with sensitivity. A sensitive mind is able to see, hear, and learn without the filter of the past or the internal pressure of emotions.

Now the question is that how intelligence can be cultivated? Krishnamurti states- "You are living here, being educated in all the various disciplines, in various branches of knowledge. Are you also being educated so that intelligence comes into being at the same time? You may have a very good knowledge of mathematics or engineering. You may take a degree, enter a college and be a first class engineer. But at the same time, are you becoming sensitive, alert? Are you thinking objectively, clearly, with intelligence, understanding? Is there a harmony between knowledge and intelligence, a balance between the two? You cannot think clearly if you are prejudiced, if you have opinions. You cannot think clearly if you are not sensitive; sensitive to nature, sensitive to all the things that are happening around you, sensitive not only to what is happening outside you but also inside you. If you are not sensitive, if you are not aware, you cannot think clearly. Intelligence implies that you see the beauty of the earth, the beauty of the trees, the beauty of the skies, the lovely sunset, the stars, the beauty of subtlety."¹¹

In fact, the very nature of intelligence is sensitivity, and this sensitivity is love. Without this intelligence there can be no compassion. Compassion and intelligence walk together; they are not separate. Compassion acts through intelligence. It can never act through the intellect. Compassion is the essence of the wholeness of life.¹²

Thus, the secret to a moral existence is intelligence rather than knowledge. Similar to the distinction between knowledge and intelligence, moral sensitivity and moral knowledge are also not the same thing. Ethics stands for moral knowledge. What is right or wrong, what should be done in certain situation of moral dilemma, what is good, what is right or wrong for particular profession etc. are questions around which ethical principals or analysis take shape. But the basic question is that if there will be no moral sensitivity then what is the use of all kind of moral knowledge? Ethics helps to support moral behavior but cannot create morality. Human sensitivity and intelligence, not moral knowledge, is the origin of moral consciousness. It is a fact that moral sensitivity discovers moral principles through its innate intelligence. Ethical theories are unnecessary for providing guidance. The primary aim of education should be to foster moral sensitivity instead of just imparting ethical rules or information. Having knowledge involves following ethical principles while intelligence triggers the development of moral values. So, intelligence, not knowledge (ethical), is what ultimately determines morality.

Moral Development through Insight Oriented Education:

Learning is commonly linked with the development of memory, acquisition of knowledge, information, and skills. However, Krishnamurti refrains from labeling this process as learning. He often emphasized that while the development of memory is crucial, it has limitations and tends to become mechanical. True learning occurs at a level where memory holds no sway, and that is the level of insight. Insight differs greatly from the additive nature of memory development, where blocks of memory are simply stacked upon each other. Understanding the nature of insight poses a significant challenge. The relationship between the whole and the parts is the first aspect of insight that would capture the interest of anyone involved in teaching or learning. All the parts are contained within the whole, but the whole is not merely the sum of its parts. Attempting to dissect the whole into its parts does not lead to learning, but rather to dissection. The whole, by encompassing the parts, is more than just the addition of the parts; it also includes the design function and the arrangement of space. This holds true whether considering a simple cycle wheel or human nature. The entirety is greater than the sum of its parts. If you painstakingly assemble all the parts, you might overlook the whole. However, if you perceive the whole first and then perceive the parts, that constitutes a type of learning that is quite distinct from cultivating memory. For instance, not all aesthetic experiences are limited to memory but encompass something that is excluded by it. All individuals learning music, especially artists, understand that there is a beauty in learning that cannot be captured by memory, but can only be interpreted by it.¹³

The human mind has always been split into two parts: the personal inner world and the external world of other people and events. Our actions are guided by our private emotions and self-interest, yet we also possess the capacity for empathy and altruism paradoxically. This division has led to both conflict and collaboration on various levels - from individual relationships to interactions between different groups and nations. According to scientists and philosophers, this duality is an inevitable aspect of human existence, as we are constrained by our biology. We cannot transcend the two perspectives, the personal and the external. Our ethical capacities, our

ability to discover values and to cooperate enable us, at best, to blunt the sharp edge of our violent biological dispositions. All we can do is to create the social conditions and values that promote peace and well-being. The whole education system stands on this paradox and further promotes it.¹⁴

Krishnamurti is adamant that we possess the insight necessary to resolve this conundrum. Non-personal contemplation and unbiased observation or awareness makes this feasible. Observing "what is," or the truth or actuality, without any mental movement that involves knowledge or the past, is known as choiceless observation. It is the observation that is considered without the observer, the center, the censor, the "me," or the thinker. It is awareness that is not separated into the roles of observer and observed. The observer 'is' the observed in this comprehensive observation. It contains no response, opposition, defense, or censure. It is a straightforward observation devoid of recognition, name, memory, or recollection. It is devoid of concepts, beliefs, and viewpoints. It is unbiased observation of likes and dislikes. It lacks a purpose and a goal in mind.¹⁵ An intelligence-based educational system shall stand on this kind of undivided form of unbroken consciousness. Students with mechanical personalities are produced by the modern educational system. Mechanistic personality refers to a personality that is restricted to narrow mental processes associated with achieving success, generating wealth, indulging in luxury, etc. They inhabit a little, insensitive bubble of heightened needs that is disconnected from the larger context of existence. According to Krishnamurti, an insensitive mind is incapable of becoming intelligent. The sensitivity is the key to not only intelligence but also morals. Morality is not something that can be learned externally rather sensitive mind explores it internally in the wholeness of life. "Life is not merely going to the office day after day. Life is extraordinarily vital, important, and for that you must be sensitive, you must have the sensitivity that appreciates beauty."¹⁶

What does being sensitive actually mean? According to Krishnamurti, "A human being who is aware of his environment, as well as aware of every movement of thought and feeling, who is a harmonious whole, is sensitive."¹⁷ A disjointed or incomplete attitude to life will not lead to the equilibrium of the body, emotions, and thought processes. The problem with modern civilization is that it overlooks the wholeness and rely more on partial, specific, specialized, fragmented etc. This is happening on both an emotional and a purportedly scientific level. This is the reason that technological knowledge, making money, becoming engineer, politician, specific expert etc. becomes so important for man that he limits the life in the narrow boundary of that particular. He becomes a marvellous human machine but insensitive being living in his narrow boundary of little world determined by his specific field. This results in an environment of sorrowful people living a life without any depth. This leads to a great moral and spiritual crisis.

Conclusion:

Education is a venture aimed at fostering sensitivity in individuals. Sensitivity arises from complete awareness of both our internal and external environment without any conditions. This awareness is the intelligence that makes us capable of realizing the entirety of life. In comprehending the process of the mind, which is the self, virtue comes into being. Virtue is not accumulated resistance; it is the spontaneous awareness and the understanding of 'what is'.¹⁸ Virtue cannot be cultivated by knowledge based system. It is not conflict and achievement, prolonged practice and result, but a state of being which is not the outcome of self-projected desire. Virtue is of heart and not of the mind, when the mind cultivates virtue, it is cunning calculation ; it is a

self defence, a clever adjustment to environment.¹⁹ Thus moral and virtuous life is spontaneous and integral part of mainstream life-world in sensitivity and intelligence oriented educational system

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