



BIOLOGICAL LIBERTY AND PEDAGOGY: EXPLORING MARIA MONTESSORI'S 'FREEDOM WITH LIMITS'

Anasuya Adhikari¹ & Dr. Birbal Saha²

¹Ph.D. Researcher, Department of Education, Sidho-Kanho-Birsha University, India

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0388-3545>, Email: anasuyaajpg@gmail.com

²Professor, Department of Education, Sidho-Kanho-Birsha University, India

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4103-6283>, Email: birbalsaha@gmail.com

ABSTRACT :

Children in a Montessori classroom learn and employ a variety of unique construction. They apply methods in order to build and apply knowledge and talents. According to the Montessori Method, children actively participate in their own development. They are greatly impacted by internal, organic, dynamic, self-correcting forces that provide doors for learning and progress. Education must be seen as the active support provided for a child's proper development of life. The kid is both a growing body and a developing soul; life itself is the one constant source shared by the two forms, physiological and psychological. A major focus of the Montessori approach is individual learning. In a Montessori classroom, children are grouped into three-year multipage classrooms that help in promoting closer peer relationships. This also helps in carrying out continuity between adults and children. This study aims to examine the Montessori Method, its guiding principles, the learning environment, and the ways in which biological liberty is implemented in teaching.

Keywords: Maria Montessori, Pedagogy, Montessori Method, Education, Biological Concept, Teaching-Learning Process.

Introduction :

Considering the history of women (Abrams, 2002) and education (Saha, 2023; Sen, 2023), this approach can be traced back to the early 1800s, with Maria Montessori being the most important educator of that era. She became the first female doctor of Italy and an educator who dedicated her life in enhancing the educational system just like many other female educators (Adhikari & Saha, 2021d; 2021e; 2023; Saha et al. 2023). Her observation of the teaching of mentally challenged children throughout the war-torn and impoverished years created the groundwork for a globally influential educational approach (Ansary & Ansary, 2023; Sutradhar & Roy, 2023). In 1907, she established the *Casa Dei Bambini*, often known as the Children's Home, in Rome (Roy, 2023). Her educational approach is currently regarded as one of the most popular and is used in Indian public and private institutions (Roy et al. 2023).

Foundation of Montessori Teaching Approach

The foundation of the Montessori teaching approach is the belief that a child's innate abilities should be supported by their education rather than compromised (Adhikari & Saha, 2021a; Adhikari, 2023). Education should therefore be based on scientific studies on children and an understanding of how learning and growth occur as also propagated by Mary Wollstonecraft centuries ago (Adhikari & Saha, 2022; 2023). The experience is brought about by a psychic energy or ability that is active through bodily organs. From one angle, the action of the structure functions as a suitable origin and determines the force; from the other, the action of the feeling captures the real and formally establishes experience. The Montessori approach places a strong emphasis on the use and development of the senses (Montessori, 1912). By doing this, a child is watched while new concepts and techniques are applied to help the child's senses grow. Montessori employed in her Children's Houses to help kids develop their senses as a way to enhance biological engagement in pedagogy (Saha & Adhikari, 2023b). An improved basis for the development of executive functions is offered by a Montessori setting. The Montessori educational approach, which emphasises student-centered learning, intrinsic motivation, and active participation, is one of the most well-known and extensively utilised approaches in education to integrate a range of components of personalised instruction (Gentaz & Richard, 2022). This research work demonstrates that customised instruction deviates greatly from the Montessori methodology and suggests a range of implementation strategies (Montessori, 2004). The many tenets of personalised instruction have been realised in the well-established field of Montessori education (Adhikari & Saha, 2021b). Additional research might examine whether the Montessori method adequately incorporates personalised learning concepts and how to apply some of these ideas and techniques (Marshall, 2017), especially for older students, i.e., adolescents, as envisioned by Mary Wollstonecraft and Nel Noddings (Saha & Adhikari, 2023e; 2023f; Adhikari et al, 2023).

The Biological Concept of Liberty in Pedagogy

The idea of liberty according to Britanica Encyclopaedia can be taken as, “a state of freedom”. “Freedom puts the question to the relationship between human beings and nature by means of a question concerning determinism and, similarly with the relationship between one human being and another, by means of a question concerning duty or obligation” (Facchini, 2014). From a biological perspective, the idea of liberty in a child’s early education must be seen as requiring those circumstances most suited to the fullest possible development of his uniqueness (Saha & Adhikari, 2023a). Thus, from both a physiological and mental perspective, this involves the brain’s unrestricted development (Smith, 1912). The educator needs to be deeply inspired by a deep regard for life and show respect for it while observing the growth of a child’s life with human interest. Child life now refers to the lives of specific children rather than an idea (Saha & Adhikari, 2023c). Education must focus on observing single individuals one by one since there is only one true biological manifestation – the live individual. Education must be seen as the active support provided for a child’s proper development of life (Saha & Adhikari, 2023d). The kid is a growing body and a developing soul, and life itself is the one constant source that unites these two forms – physiological and mental (Colgan, 2020). The enigmatic forces that reside within these two forms of growth must not be disturbed or stifled; instead, we must watch for their expressions, which we know will follow one another. Without a doubt, the environment plays a secondary role in life’s events; it can help or hinder, but it can never produce (Montessori, 2014).

From Naegeli to De Vries, contemporary theories of evolution have viewed this internal element as the primary driver of both the evolution of the individual and the evolution of the species during the development of the two biological branches, animal and vegetable. The beginnings of development are found within, in both the species and the individual. The child grows because of the potential life within him manifests itself, not because he is fed, breathes, or is placed in a temperature to which he is acclimated. Rather, the fruitful germ from which his life has come develops itself in accordance with the biological destiny that was fixed for it by heredity. Adolescence develops when a child has reached a specific physiological state rather than because he laughs, dances, performs gymnastic exercises, or is well-fed. Life manifests itself, creates, and gives, and in return, it is constrained by unbreakable laws and restrained inside set bounds (Adhikari & Saha, 2021). The species’ fixed traits are unchanging; they can only differ. This idea, which De Vries presented in his Mutation Theory (1901) so eloquently, it also highlights the boundaries of education. We are able to influence differences that are related to the environment and whose bounds differ significantly between species and individuals, but we are unable to influence mutations. The mutations’ power surpasses that of the environment’s modifying agents since they are connected to life itself in an enigmatic way. While a great human intellect cannot be stifled by any limitation or erroneous type of schooling, a species, for example, cannot mutate or shift into another species through any phenomenon of adaptation. The more flexible and robust an individual life may be, the more the environment influences it. However, the environment has the ability to both support and stifle life. Because of the suitable climate for their growth, many palm species, for instance, thrive in tropical climates (Foschi, 2008). However, many animal and plant species have gone extinct in areas to which they were unable to adapt. Life is a magnificent goddess who never stops moving forward and conquering the barriers that the outside world erects to stand in her way (Montessori, 2024). This is the core or basic truth: no matter what species or individual is involved, the victorious ones who possess this enigmatic, powerful life force continue to march forward. It is clear that the care, or perhaps we should say the culture, of human life, is a crucial and pressing concern in the case of humanity, and particularly in the case of our civil humanity, which we refer to as society.

Maria Montessori used the term “freedom with limits.” She held the opinion that a child can develop his will and, consequently, his capacity for obedience, if he is allowed to exercise his freedom of choice in a setting that has been meticulously planned, controlled, and subject to natural consequences for his actions. This environment of freedom with boundaries nurtures an inner desire that leads a child to start working appropriately or obeying. In a Montessori classroom, discipline is neither applied to the child or used as a method of behaviour control. Our main concern is the growth of the internal locus of control, which empowers the person to make moral decisions based on what is best for both the community and themselves. This is the point at which observation becomes crucial. The capacity to make the right decisions may vary amongst children. Some kids could require guidelines or limitations while others don't. Some could constantly challenge rules that their colleagues ignore. There are numerous approaches to striking a balance between freedom and order. Setting up ground rules or other explicit guidelines is a fantastic place to start. When kids do not understand the expectations for their behaviour, they get frustrated. The secret is to progressively expand their freedom and liberty over time. Little steps, that is. A six-year-old is capable of managing a certain level of independence, whereas a ten-year-old can do significantly more. It is crucial that the ten-year-old was allowed some independence when they were six, seven, eight, etc. years old so that when they are ten, they can manage making wise decisions. It varies depending on the child.

Conclusion :

Montessori method has been an apt method for centuries now. Recalling the length of time required to strike a balance between leisure and discipline is quite helpful. It takes time to become flawless. It cannot be done in a day, a week, or a month. Keeping an eye on the big picture helps us focus on the daily decisions we make. Children are evolving, just as adults. The advantages of a Montessori education, which imparts critical skills for success in the future, are supported by recent studies. According to the biological model, a child’s early education should be provided under the conditions that would allow for the broadest potential development of his individuality, creativity, communication, teamwork and critical thinking. She was able to refine the teaching methods through this approach, making it suitable for teaching students with a variety of learning styles and skill levels. Maria Montessori’s systematic and methodical approach in creating the Montessori Method ensures that her lessons are still applicable today.

REFERENCES :

1. Abrams, L. (2002). *Making of modern woman. Europe 1789-1917*. Great Britain: Pearson Education Limited.

2. Adhikari, A., & Saha, B. (2021a). Maria Montessori: An Intellectual Biography, *EPRA International Journal of Research and Development (IJRD)*, 6(9), 242-245.
3. Adhikari, A., & Saha, B. (2021b). Rationalizing Maria Montessori's Teaching Methods in Global Contexts: 'When Education met a femme reformatrice', *European Academic Research*. 9(2), 1431-1439.
4. Adhikari, A., & Saha, B. (2022). Contouring Education: Ruminating Mary Wollstonecraft's Thoughts. *IAR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 3(4), 12-17.
5. Adhikari, A., & Saha, B. (2023). The Three Epochs of Education: Outlining Mary Wollstonecraft, Maria Montessori and Nel Noddings. *International Journal of Research and Review*, 10(1), 698-703.
6. Adhikari, A. (2023). Socio-Educational Perspectives: A Study on Human Adjustment, *EPRA International Journal of Research & Development (IJRD)*, 8(1), 97-101.
7. Adhikari, A., & Saha, B. (2021c). Demystifying Social Taboos in Indian Milieu: A Critical Study on Arundhati Roy's 'The God of Small Things', *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Educational Research*, 10(3(4)), 151-155.
8. Adhikari, A., & Saha, B. (2021d). Lesser known Indian Women Educators and Reformers, *International Journal of Research and Review*, 8(9), 442-447.
9. Adhikari, A., & Saha, B. (2021e). Life, Works and Philosophy of Nel Noddings, *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Educational Research*, 10(8(2)), 61-64.
10. Adhikari, A., & Saha, B. (2023). Mary Wollstonecraft's Reflection on Life and Society: A Vindication of the Rights of Woman. *International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews*, 4(11), 1338-134.
11. Adhikari, A., Saha, B., & Sen, S. (2023). Nel Noddings' Theory of Care and its Ethical Components. *International Research Journal of Education and Technology*, 5(8), 198-206.
12. Ansary, K., & Ansary, S. (2023). Socio-educational Perspectives of Women Education and Educationalists. *International Journal of Progressive Research in Engineering Management and Science (IJPREMS)*, 3(09), 17-19.
13. Colgan, A. D. (2020). The Epistemology Behind the Educational Philosophy of Montessori: Senses, Concepts, and Choice. *Philosophical Inquiry in Education. The Journal of the Canadian Philosophy of Education Society*, 23(2), 125-140.
14. Facchini, F. (2014). Liberty. *Encyclopedia of Law and Economics*, 1-9.
15. Foschi, R. (2008). Science and culture around the Montessori's first "Children's Houses" in Rome (1907–1915). *Journal of the History of the Behavioural Science*, 44, 238–257.
16. Gentaz, E. & Richard, S. (2022). The Behavioral Effects of Montessori Pedagogy on Children's Psychological Development and School Learning. *Children*. 9(133). 1-11
17. Marshall, C. (2017). Montessori education: a review of the evidence base. *NJP Nature Partner Journals*. 11. 1-8.
18. Montessori, M. (1912). *The Montessori Method, Scientific Pedagogy as Applied to Child Education in "The Children's Houses" with Additions and Revisions by The Author.* (A. E. George, Trans.; 2nd ed.). Frederick A. Stokes Company (Original Work Published 1912).
19. Montessori, M. (2004). *The Montessori Method: The Origins of an Educational Innovation: Including an Abridged and Annotated Edition of Maria Montessori's The Montessori Method.* (G. L. Gutek, ed.) Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. Inc. UK. (Original Work Published 1912).
20. Roy, S. (2023). A Study on Women and Society in the Light of Education. *Galore International Journal of Applied Sciences and Humanities*, 7(2), 32-36.
21. Roy, S., Sutradhar, A., Mohanta, R., & Ansary, K. (2023). Collected Thoughts of Great Educators: The Weapon of Social Advancement. *EPRA International Journal of Environmental Economics, Commerce and Educational Management (ECEM)*, 10(4), 1-4.
22. Saha, B., & Adhikari, A. (2023a). Anthropological Consideration and Infrastructure in 'Children's Houses': An Explanation to the Montessori Method. *International Research Journal of Education and Technology*, 5(5), 805-812.
23. Saha, B., & Adhikari, A. (2023b). The Montessori Method of Education of the Senses: The Case of the Children's Houses. *International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews*. 4(5), 6671-6673.
24. Saha, B., & Adhikari, A. (2023c). The Montessori Method: A Constructivist Approach? *International Journal of Scientific Research and Engineering Development*. 6(3). 768-772.
25. Saha, B. (2023). Feminism in Society, Art and Literature: An Introspection. *Galore International Journal of Applied Sciences and Humanities*, 7(1), 1-5.
26. Saha, B., & Adhikari, A. (2023d). The Montessori Approach to the Teaching – Learning Process. *The International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 11(3), 574-578.
27. Saha, B., & Adhikari, A. (2023e). Educational Philosophy and Practices of Mary Wollstonecraft and Nel Noddings, *International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews*, 4(10), 664-667.
28. Saha, S., Adhikari, A., & Sen, S. (2023). The Perspectives of Noddings' Theory of Care: Critically Analysing Iconic Works. *International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews*, 4(9), 1349-1352.
29. Sen, S. (2023). Functionalism, Socialism and Feminism in Education. *EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR)*, 9(4), 115-117.
30. Smith, A. T. (1912). *The Montessori System of Education.* United States Bureau of Education. 17(489). Washington Government Printing Office. USA
31. Sutradhar, S. M., & Roy, S. (2023). Socio-psychological aspects in educational process. *International Research Journal of Education and Technology*, 5(6), 55-67.