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Postmodernist Reading of Alternative Education in India

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Abstract : *Alternative Education in its widest meaning refers to the 'enhancement of education'. It provides the ways in which children can discover their own talents and interests at their own pace, in their own ways, assisted by the teachers, parents, friends and others. It is in contrast to the mainstream education which can be defined as the system support by national governments and society in general with stipulated goals and methods of their achievement. Postmodernism, on the other hand, is perceived as a system of ideas; a way of theorising; a way of understanding contemporary social and*

cultural trend and a way of practising—there is a postmodern architecture, art, literature etc. Historically it was generated as a general term for critique of modernism particularly in art and architecture. This study is an outcome of our suspicions regarding alternative schooling and practices in India. We suspect that the alternative education that is spread across India is the "postmodernist moment" in education. With the understanding of the postmodernist education we try to read the experiences of alternative education as postmodern experiences. We suspect that the alternative education is turning the education system into a site of conflict. At least there is one similarity between alternative education and postmodernist perspective of education : they are posing challenges to existing concepts, structures and hierarchies of knowledge.

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