



Research Paper

Mahatma Gandhi and Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore: Shining Stars of Indian Philosophy of Education

Dr. Meenakshi Sharma

Assistant Professor, Department of Education

Kamal Institute of Higher Education and Advance Technology (Affiliated to GGSIP University, New Delhi)

Abstract

India is a country of wide variety. Here people live their life sophisticatedly with the knowledge gained by education. The knowledge is whether formal or informal, learned in the class-room or in the environment, learned through the books, teachers or through experiences. Education is proven as a solution of all kind of problems of life. Leaders as well as think tanks of the society or so-called intellectuals mold the theoretical aspects of a society whereas the rulers are responsible for implementing these theories and making them true in the real world. Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore are the prominent personalities who designed the nation and contributed in education and associated their philosophical thoughts in it. As a matter of fact, educational concepts and theories of this duo are the core draft of the educational policies implemented today even in this twenty first century. This paper is an attempt to analyze the Philosophy of Education, educational views of Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore, comparing the similarities and differences between them and the relevancy of their educational thoughts.

Keywords: Philosophy of Education, Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore's views on education, similarities and differences between their views, Relevancy of their Educational Thoughts

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I. Introduction

Education is a path of journey which goes till the end of life. This is why it is known as a life long process. This can be imparted or gained formally or informally, inside the class or anywhere at any time. Education in the earliest Vedic period was deep-rooted in the Hindu religion and subject taught were language, agriculture, science, logic, etc. The Buddhist period saw Gautam Buddha's teachings on right speech and right behaviour becoming the norm. During the Mughal era, the focus was to spread the development of knowledge along with spreading Islam. The British came to India as traders, set up English-medium schools, imparted western science and literature to prepare people for doing government clerical jobs. The Christian missionaries taught colonial education with the aim of converting people to Christianity especially so-called low caste people. During this phase of Education many Indian thinkers supported education according to their interest and need of the society. Their educational views are based on their philosophy. Whenever philosophy is being connected with the education this brings some valuable and fruitful education for all with some positive motif.

II. Philosophy of Education

"Philosophy and education are like the two sides of the same coin; the one is implied by the other; the former is the contemplative side of life, while the latter is the active side." – J. S. Ross.

Philosophy is the combination of two Greek words, 'Philos' and 'Sophia' that means love and wisdom or wisdom of love. So, search of wisdom or truth is called philosophy. Philosophy is deep thinking and meditation which concerns itself to God, the Soul and the Nature. This concentrates and deeply thinks for revealing truth, hidden and immortal realities of existence of nature of life, effect of nature and heavenly bodies on human life, etc.

"Education is the dynamic side of philosophy. It is the active aspect of philosophical belief." – Adams

Education is a live, dynamic and bipolar process of transformation. We need two poles for its operation as teacher and a student. Where the teacher is a philosopher, who tries to mould and develop the child to attain a desirable type of individual.

“Philosophy and education are like the two sides of a coin, present different views of the same thing and that one is implied by the other.” – Ross

Education is dependent upon Philosophy as philosophy determines the destination, values, and various aspects of education. A great philosopher has been a great educationist also.

Philosophy is dependent upon Education as this is dynamic side of philosophy, is a means to achieve the goal.

“True education is practicable only by a true philosophy.” – Spencer

III. Views of Gandhi on education

Gandhi said, *“By education, I mean all-around drawing out of the best in child and man-body mind and spirit. Literacy is not the end of education, not even the beginning. It is one of the means whereby men and women can be educated. Literacy in itself is no education.”*

Mahatma Gandhi's ideals were utopian and he aspired for a free society where all humans were treated with respect. He wanted to bring the Ram Rajya. According to Mahatma Gandhi, there must be an element of goodness that is present within every person in a good political system. He also believed that only a comprehensive education system could bring out this best element, enriching the body, mind, and spirit and he looks upon education as an instrument for socioeconomic progress, material advancement, Political evolution and moral development for individuals.

Philosophy of life: His philosophy of life is based upon the Idealism. He believes in God implicitly and advocated that soul is a part of God. Truth, Non-violence, Fearlessness, and Satyagrah are the four elements of his philosophy of education

Philosophy of Education: Mahatma Gandhi was a great genius of enlightenment who reached almost every household of the nation. Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of basic education is comprehensive enough because he looks upon education as an instrument for social economic progress, material advancement, political evolution and moral development especially of individual in society. His view of basic education is greatly influenced by his philosophy of truth, non-violence, firm belief in god and dignity of labour. He also emphasized on a key point that the educational philosophy should be sympathetic, friendly and deep feelings of love.

According to him the *Aim of education* are of two types, *Immediate* aims such as vocational, cultural, perfect development, moral/character development and of liberation and, *Ultimate* aim of realizing the God. *Curriculum* should be activity centered. Its aim is to prepare children for practical, research, and experiment by them self to develop physically, mentally, and spiritually by their own. He included mother tongue, basic craft, Arithmetic, sociology, General Science, Art, Music, and other like subjects. He said that Basic education should be from class 1-5, after that boys should learn craft and girls should study home science. Knowledge of the production processes challenging in crafts, such as spiraling, weaving, metal work, basket making and book binding had been the domination of specific caste groups in the lowest echelon of the traditional social pyramid. His concept was on production processes that manual works should not be seen as something substandard to mental work. What he really wanted was for the schools to be self-financing as far as possible. He wished that some local craft should be the *medium of instruction* to develop the body mind and soul of children. According to him reading should precede writing, training of senses, alphabets, art should be given. This should be learning by doing, learning by experience and more to be added like co-curricular activities, planning, realistic experiences, initiative and sense of individual responsibility with craft centered teaching methods.

He so far declared that “real freedom will come only when we free ourselves of the domination of western education, western culture and western way of living which have been ingrained in us emancipation from this culture would mean real freedom for us” as we have seen, Gandhi had not only disallowed colonial education but also put forward a radical alternative.

His basic education pattern sought to universalize education by making the school flatter to the home and participating value coordination with *Vocationalization*, while warranting the economic self-sufficiency of the school. His methodology to social problems, including religious and customary issues, was always precarious and he promoted the test of reason to prove the dependability of any doctrine or convention.

Discipline is something Gandhi regarded as the main ingredient of a responsible individual for a peaceful society. Discipline and education went hand in hand for Mahatma because he felt that it is a quality that was required for a human to lead an intellectually, morally, and spiritually uplifting life in society. He firmly believed that the goal of education was the character building of that individual. According to him, education does not end at any point but it is an ongoing process. He strongly felt that degeneration of the quality of education would lead to the absence of truthfulness, firmness, and tolerance from society.

For Gandhi, every noble thought like non-violence, truthfulness, spirituality revolved around education. He maintained that through education, world peace could be sought as ethics and morality forming an integral part

of education. He also felt that spiritual growth comes with education, and he considered non-violence as an indivisible, important, and essential part of education.

His philosophy of education is a harmonious blending of Idealism, Naturalism and Pragmatism.

IV. Views of Tagore on education

"Tagore's idealism is a true child of India's own past and his philosophy is Indian both in origin and development." – **Dr. S. Radhakrishnan**

Tagore was a versatile personality. He used to write articles in magazines, poems, songs, and plays and travelled the world. He opened Vishwa Bharti, a place of learning of Indian Philosophy, Art, and Literature for the whole world with the aim to bring about a synthesis of the east and west. Rabindranath Tagore's system of education emphasizes the intellectual, physical, social, moral economic and spiritual aspects of human life by which a man can develop towering personality.

According to Tagore, the universal soul was the root of our soul, and it was man's destiny to reach that and of which we are a part. The journey of attaining one's destiny could be achieved only through education.

Philosophy of life:

He was considered a saint as he had realized the universal soul in himself and nature. His poetic sentiments believed that this realization was the goal of education. His philosophy of life has a deep impression and influence of his religious, highly cultured and philosophy loving family. This has the highest ideals of Truth Beauty and goodness. He believed in the absolute and immortal exercise of God who is a super human and created this world beautifully. He was a great humanistic and regarded human as a reflection of God, so, he emphasized adjustment between nature and human soul. He wanted to inculcate self respect and dignity in manhood and elevate the soul for this mental and moral progress is essential.

He was a writer, a poet, a philosopher, a social reformer, a great nationalist and a best educator. He also emphasized on the need of economic and industrial development, integration and removal of untouchability together with social discrimination in all its forms, beliefs and actions.

"We should try to search for god and thus realized that truth which will be liberating on us from material bonds of existence and which is capable to illuminate the whole world with its divine light." **Tagore**

Philosophy of Education:

The educational policies of Rabindranath Tagore founded in his Santiniketan are more applicable and it can be described as follows:

Rabindranath Tagore emphasized *intellectual development* of students. It comprises skills of imagination and intellectual progress. Many poets and writers achieved their fame in the world by their imagination works. The self-learning of a child leads him to a new knowledge.

Tagore felt that the *aim of education* was self-realization. He was considered a saint as he had realised the universal soul in himself and nature. His poetic sentiments believed that this realisation was the goal of education. The emphasis should be on self-study in childhood rather than the rigid and limited discipline of the school education system.

Self-Realization means that every child must recognize their interesting fields and weak ended fields. As a solution spends more times in the field they feel non satisfaction and try upgrade it to higher levels. Self-realization helps children to make a manifestation of a good personality. It is required to empower students thinking ability and expand internal resources to a vast possibility. All skills should not be assembled in one human being. But, through self-realization there forms a way to brighten abilities. Tagore mentioned that the evolution of nature was driving us to the universal soul, consciously or unconsciously and this could be assisted only by education. The progression towards the Superhuman would anyway happen whether it is assisted or not but the individual will be deprived of self-realisation if not educated.

According to Rabindranath Tagore, educational philosophy is international sympathetic, *Love for Humanity*, and universal brotherhood. The feeling of singleness should be developed through the concepts like brotherhood of man. All creatures are equal on this earth.

Tagore's educational philosophy also greatly highlighted the *physical development*. In this, field Tagore gave much more importance to sound and healthy physique. In, santinikethan, Ashram of Rabindranath Tagore, it is prescribed that yoga, games, sports, and different kinds of exercise as an integral part of the educational system. However, according my perception, over significance for sports games and other moral arts may lead to a great dilemma while the student keeps diverged fully in to it.

Freedom is considered as an integral part of human development, whereas education is a man making process. He says "education has leaning only when it is imparted through the path of freedom". He argued that it comes for the development of the senses of the child through the freedom. In this era freedom is non-compulsory. If we give studies more freedom, they will change their attitudes of study to games and sports all time. So, less freedom can change the children to a correct study.

Mother Tongue as the Medium of Instruction Language is the true vehicle of self-expression. According to Rabindranath Tagore's educational philosophy mother tongue should be necessary as the medium of instruction for the child education. Every language has its own people. Students practiced the mother tongue than other language is important. But, according to new developed culture impression of mother tongue upon a child is foolish because, world grow thing through the social media and internet. So, we can talk any persons in the world and it's not practical through the studying of mother tongue only.

Spiritualism is the essence of humanism. This concept has been reflected in Tagore's education philosophy. It means that children have a maturity according their age. It's an important think it's not have from bookish studying. It can understand through occasionally. More educated students haven't maturity suited their age. It's a big fault. Students are learning much knowledge from books. On the contrary these maturities are received by seeing other person's character. So, educated people may be they haven't maturity according their education. So people did not give them their value of education.

The **social development** of senses was as important as the intellectual. We can see, all over the world many educated persons are working for high level companies and trying destroying low class people keeping the human right must be imported according to an educated parson. Rabindranath Tagore wrote, "In our country, in every village, let the cooperative principle prevail introducing and distributing wealth—this is my desire". Some part of the world we can see plethora of social development leading to family problems. Mother has a good thinking their children. If we do after education opposite that it wills a cruel acting to our parents.

Rabindranath's three principles of self-education

Tagore's concept of education depended on three principles of self-education:

Independence

He believed in complete freedom in every way for students. Students must practice equanimity, harmony, and balance. Freedom should not be confused with lack of control. Self-control is an integral part of independence.

Perfection

He felt that students must try to develop every aspect of their personality, power, and abilities that had been given by nature. Tagore realized that education is not merely passing examinations and acquiring degrees but the progression should be to earn a living by pursuing some profession. A child's personality, would develop when every aspect of their personality is given equal importance.

Universality

Tagore's concept of the universal soul and our progression towards it forms the third principle which is universality. This exists within each individual. Hence, education is not just based on simple development but the individual rises above their limitations of personality. He mentioned that the educator should create an environment in which a child's personality undergoes a free, perfect, and unrestricted development. The teacher should be more imaginative to understand the child so as to help him develop his curiosity. In his view, creative education can be encouraged only in the natural environment.

He also stressed on the need to provide science and technology education along with art, music and dance education in Santiniketan.

V. Similarities in the views of Mahatma and Gurudev on education

Gandhi and Tagore believed in God or the universal soul both pointed toward *spirituality*. Their views were child-centric, respecting the individuality of the child. Children should learn whatever they are interested in. Both insisted on education in mother tongues and they were against imposing the English language. They both were *idealists and humanists*.

Both believed that education is necessary as a means of integrated development of *human personality*.

Both believed that education should be linked with practical knowledge and special attention should be paid to the importance of *mother tongue* in education.

Both criticized the colonial education system.

The main similarities in their education theories are *social progress peace and tolerance*. Education is a most important thing for *social development*. It helps children make a good personality. Second theory, which has a similarity between them, is the deep *feeling of love*. Rabindranath Tagore said "at first, children must gather knowledge through their life, and it is their first love. All its colour and movement attract their eager attention, and then they will renounce their lives to gain knowledge" According to Mahatma Gandhi it was an education concentrating on the individual but, trusting on partnership between individuals. There is a conversant picture of the relation between educators and students. Third theory which has a similarity between them is *human educational system*. Tagore was one of the first Indian who argues for a human educational system. His desire was ninety percentage literacy of education in all part of India after one hundred years. Indian civilization of his imagination was essential in rural more than city-based areas. Gandhi also supports this concept. Gandhi is the first person who argues for an educational system. In the world, contenting works to fulfillment their desires. It reached about eighty percentages. I will rise to ninety percentages in remaining years.

VI. Difference Between Their Views On Education

Gandhi laid emphasis on the complete development of the child and eradicating casteism while Tagore was emphatic about self-realization through education.

Gandhi stood for educating a common man and making him worthy of the society whereas Tagore wanted to produce saints.

Regarding the national agenda for education, Gandhi's educational approach was more for promoting Indian culture and civilization, but Rabindranath Tagore wanted to integrate the best elements of Western education into the Indian education system.

Mahatma Gandhi was critical of machines and technology, while Rabindranath Tagore believed in the teaching of modern science along with traditional knowledge.

Tagore adopted Plato's method of creating curiosity as a means of education, but Mahatma Gandhi believed in 'learning by activity' through his concept of "Nai Talim".

The major difference between their theories is spiritualism. Mahatma Gandhi only focuses on education for moral development, but Rabindranath Tagore focused on education for moral development and life after death.

Rabindranath Tagore's idealism pervades with world brotherhood and love for God. His inclination towards spirituality tells that he was an idealist.

Mahatma Gandhi wanted to make activity as the centre of education, but Tagore advocated bringing out individual creativity through education.

Rabindranath Tagore was of the opinion of learning in close harmony with nature, but Gandhiji's views on education did not express about environment of education.

Mahatma always had stressed self-sufficiency for the future of India by earning money for the institutions the children studied at. But Tagore viewed children's education as acquiring unbridled knowledge. He sought complete freedom for children whereas Gandhi wanted to restrict only to creative freedom.

VII. Relevancy of both of their views on education

In this era the two brilliant persons' educational theories and teaching methods are more relevant. If we try to apply these wise policies in our educational system, it would be a milestone for a new turning point. According to a moral student Tagore's theories are most applicable. In the duration of study students' minds must be free. It helps children to concentrate in one subject only. The understanding and study of lessons and theories would be humble and easy one of the most theories of Tagore.

NEP 202 has also focused on the views of Gurudev and Mahatma directly or indirectly. Their views reflect in this policy when we find place of free and compulsory education up to the age of 16, place of mother tongue, holistic development as the aim of education, admission of EWS children in private schools as equality, equity, and inclusive classroom, vocational education, activity-based teaching learning process, globalization of education and use of technology, better assessment system, etc.

VIII. Conclusion

Both Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore saw education as a tool for the development of human mind and consciousness and believed that the process of being literate or simply reading and writing cannot be considered education.

Both Tagore and Gandhi looked at education from a post-colonial perspective. Their experimentations bore the stamp of India's national heritage – the Vedas and the Upanishads. Tagore's scheme was to transplant in modern India a slice of the ancient ashramic principles where students and teachers would live together in familial bondage. Learning would take place in a spirit of togetherness – both with human beings and the nature around. Gandhi also invoked the ancient Indian practices. In the past the child used to learn from the parent the trade practiced in the family. With this as the main learning activity, he/she would learn the arts, especially literature in a cheerful mode. Education is an important thing according to human beings. In all fields education is a necessary process. Tagore and Gandhi emphasized on mass education and wanted to bring out the creativity of a learner.

Gandhiji envisioned a national education system that would help Indians to realize their self-worth and dignity. For this reason, he wanted education to be imparted in local languages rather than English. Rabindranath Tagore also disapproved of Western education. Tagore believed the rigid education system of British schools killed the natural creativity in a child. However, there were some differences in Gandhiji's and Tagore's views. While Gandhiji was absolutely against Western education and culture, Tagore wanted to combine the best elements of Western and Indian education and culture.

Thus, there were both similarities and dissimilarities between Tagore's and Gandhi's views on education. His views in this regard were influenced by his different socio-cultural backgrounds, political views and life experiences.

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