



Comparison between the Educational thoughts of Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi

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ABSTRACT

India is a sacred land. It is a country which is great in many ways. It is, however, essentially a land of philosophy, religion, spirituality and the most notable of India's builders have been its thinkers and men of God. Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi are two great sons of India who contributed to every sphere of the nation as well as its total education system. They have influenced the Indian education system greatly by their intellectual inputs and inner voice. They offered their best in building Indian philosophy of education and to make the whole nation enlightened through education. The present paper has intended to express these two great educators' thoughts and ideas on education in a comparative way.

Keywords: Indian's Builders, Thinkers, Men of God, Indian Education System, Philosophy of Education, Intellectual Inputs, Inner Voice.

1. Introduction

Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi were two great Indians of the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Century. Every nation has its own system of education which is shaped either by the greatest souls of its own or by the famous educational thinkers and philosophers. India has given birth of numerous numbers of great sons, like Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore Sri Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. ZakirHossen, Dr. S. RadhaKrishan, J. Krishnamurti, etc. Among them Rabindranath and Gandhiji are two unparalleled thinkers who enriched our national education system through their restless efforts and practical thinking. In this study, the researcher has decided to explore the educational thoughts given by Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi in a comparative manner.

1.1 Objectives of study

The objective of the study is-

To compare the educational thought of Rabindranath Tagore and M.K Gandhi in respect of –

- a) Concepts of education.
- b) Aims of education.
- c) Curriculum.
- d) Educational methods.
- e) Role of teacher.
- f) Medium of education.

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1.2 Delimitation

The study was limited to comparative study of educational thoughts of Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi and content analysis was taken to achieve the objectives of the study

2. Methodology

The study was based on historical work. Only qualitative method was used to analyze the data.

3. Analysis & Findings of the Study

a) Concepts of Education:

- I) **Rabindranath Tagore** : “The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence”. - **Rabindranath Tagore**. Tagore’s philosophy of education is based on naturalism, humanism, internationalism and idealism. According to him – “education is a permanent part of the adventure of life.” To him, the object of education is freedom, though it had its risk and responsibility too. Education should be natural in content and quality. Through contact with nature, the child will be introduced to the great world of reality easily and jointly.
- II) **Gandhiji** : According to Gandhiji – “By education I mean an all round drawing out of the best in child and man- body, mind and spirit.” He maintained that education must be based on ethics and morality. Ethics and morality are integral to Gandhi’s life. All his thoughts, actions and speeches are based on these two concepts. He said – “True education is that which draws out and stimulates the intellectual and physical faculties of the children.” A sound education, he believed, should produce useful citizens, complete men and women. The function of education is to bring about a harmonious development of all four aspects of human personality – body, heart, mind and spirit.

b) Aims of education:

I) Rabindranath Tagore:

- To make a composite man.
- Self-realization is an important aim of education. Manifestation of personality depends upon the self-realization and spiritual knowledge of individual.
- The main aim of education should be Intellectual Development.
- Education should aim at the fullest development of the body, mind, soul and society.
- Tagore's educational philosophy also aims at the physical development of the child.
- Education should enable the mind of India to find out the truth of the problems of existence and how to solve them.
- “The best function of education is to enable us to realize that to live”.
- Education should encourage creativity and harmony with love.
- Education should promote national pride and internationalism.

II) Gandhiji:

- Physical development.
- Self-supporting aim
- Cultural development.
- Character building
- Cultivation of higher values of life
- Moral and Spiritual development.
- Intellectual development.
- Harmony between social aim and individual.
- Utilitarian aim.
- Development of international understanding.
- Harmonious development.

c) Curriculum:

- I) **Rabindranath**: Tagore was in favour of comprehensive curriculum, which should satisfy child’s aesthetic, creative, spiritual and vocational needs. To him –
- Curriculum should be holistic and useful to the students and society.
 - Co-curricular activities should be given much weightage in order to make the students’ life joyful, creative, harmonious and enjoyable.
- II) **Gandhiji**:
- Activity centered.
 - Productive Craft centered, can lead to highest development of mind. The craft should be manual and productive.
 - Sufficient opportunities for self-expression.

- Gandhiji included Basis crafts, Arithmetic, Sociology, General Science, Art, Music and all those subjects concern our own country, our people, our life and our physical & social environment.
- Drowing, music

d) Educational methods:

I) Rabindranath:

- Teaching through Tours and Trips.
- Learning by activities like climbing tree, drama, jumping, plucking fruits, dancing etc.
- Rabindranath Tagore introduced heuristic method as an important method of teaching in his educational institution.
- Education should be imparted according to the nature of children.
- There should be harmony between work and play in education.
- Education should be imparted through nature study.
- Debates and question answer should be used educating the students.
- Cramming should be totally discarded.

II) Gandhiji:

- Learning by doing, learning by experiences, training of senses.
- Speak about the development of child according to his nature.
- Wanted to translate his ideas and values to practice through planning and craft centered teaching methods.
- Correlation method should be employed.

e) Role of teachers:

I) Rabindranath:

Tagore laid great emphasis on the attitude of the teacher. Tagore's concept of good teacher is stated in these words: "A teacher can never truly teach unless he is still learning himself." "A lamp can never light another lamp unless it continues to burn its own flame".

According to Tagore, the first important lesson for children would be that of improvisation. They should be provided constant opportunities to explore their capacities through surprise of achievement.

II) Gandhiji:

- A teacher should be devoted to the profession.
- He must be well trained, knowledgeable and faith, zeal and enthusiastic.
- "The true text book for the pupils is his teacher."
- Education of the heart could only be done through the living touch of the teacher.

f) Medium of Education:

Both Rabindranath and Gandhiji think that medium of education should be mother tongue at the primary level and at higher level as well as far as possible.

4. Conclusion

The analysis and interpretation of the data enabled the researcher to conclude that Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi contributed to the Indian education system greatly. Their views are very sound. They synthesized education and significance of life.

Rabindranath is a wonderful creation of the creator. Rabindranath Tagore, a true philosopher developed an ideal experimental education institution in Santiniketan. Tagore was a great advocate of spiritual education and also stressed on harmonious development of the child with equal emphasis on mental, social and emotional growth. Tagore was the greatest prophet of modern Indian renaissance who sought to bring change through education.

Rabindranath and Gandhiji differ in many aspects but both the educationists were idealist, Naturalist and Pragmatist at the same time. An idealist they wanted the child morally and spiritually sound. As Naturalist they wanted to give full freedom to child and self discipline. As pragmatist they wanted practical and activity based purposeful education.

However, the practical oriented approach of Rabindranath & Gandhiji to education is highly suitable for modern age and time. If we want to look forward to the future, we have to make a synthesis of ancient and modern education. For this we have to fall back of Rabindranath & Gandhiji and their ideals of education.

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