



Great Thinkers of India: A Study of Biographical Sketch and Educational Implications on Education System in Modern India

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ABSTRACT

Education is the most powerful weapon for character formation and reconstruction of students and its reflection can be seen in every education in India today. Not only this, every side of education has the influence and contribution of Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda, Jiddu Krishnamurti, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. They have devoted their entire lives to the thought of reforming education and improving students or individuals and society. They are not only a thinker or a great person, but they are knowledgeable about every field of education and full of ideas for better education. They are constantly reflecting on their different ways of thinking in education. They always think of human welfare and educational reformation. They say rebuilding thinking is the key to rebuilding education and for this purpose, all these thinkers have always patronized their steps with gain and enterprising thinking. This reflection can be seen in Visva Bharati, Ramakrishna Mission, Integral Education System, Structural Restructuring of Current Education and Fundamental Approaches to Education System like basic education. This study mainly focuses on the educational implications of the philosophies of such great thinkers.

Keywords: Educational Implication, Great Thinkers, Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda, Jiddu Krishnamurti, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan.

Introduction

India's history is ancient and revolves around education. This education system is changing in a proper way with the times and this change usually happened through the high thinking of many academic philosophers and thinkers. This family of thinkers and philosophers through their every action and thought exerted the greatest possible influence on the development of the entire education system. Better action by every thinker and the ability to stand up against prejudice has raised the standard of education. Just as education makes people shape their overall behaviour and way of life, every step of these famous thinkers helps to shape the lives of people and students along with education. Notable among these great philosophers are Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda, Jiddu Krishnamurti, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. The hard work and tireless thinking of all these great educationists as well as philosophers and thinkers help to shape the entire people's life and even at the present time they are moving the life of every student from good to better and showing everyone the right path. Every action of these thinkers is important and effective in making the entire education world proud and make the citizens full of values. Although values have been lost throughout human history and in all civilizations, the current state of values deterioration gravely concerns our country (Gayen, 2023). But the preaching of such great philosophers and thinkers keep the hope alive for a better world.

Rabindranath Tagore

Rabindranath Tagore was a poet, educator, dramatist, musician, philosopher, painter, and writer. In a word, he is known as *Kabiguru*. Rabindranath Tagore was one of the natural geniuses of the Renaissance in the 19th century. His creations are equally applicable today. He is our inspiration, our guide that constants our pride. He will live forever in his immortal creation. Rabindranath Tagore, the bearer of religion work education culture. He was born on 7 May 1861 at Thakurbari in Jorasanko, Kolkata (Gorain & Roy, 2022). That Tagore family he was born into was a family that was glorious in education initiation culture in that era. He entered the Oriental Seminary at the age of six. He felt that children were deeply dissatisfied with the traditional mechanics of reading in school. He was admitted from the Oriental Seminary to the Normal School. In this way, it was the turn of the school to be caught. The show of the four walls of the school could not attract his mind. He was with his father Devendranath Tagore, visiting various places of mysterious nature, especially noteworthy was the Himalayan view. He enjoyed natural beauty up close. Nature increased the hunger of his mind, the desire of his mind. Then went abroad in September 1878 AD. After staying there for some time, he returned to his homeland and devoted himself to his pursuits. *Kabiguru* Rabindranath passed away on 7th August 1941 AD.

Flipping through the pages of Rabindranath Tagore's philosophy of life shows that he was essentially an idealist. So, he said, steeped in Upanishadic thought. At the root of the creation of the world is the all-pervading *Paramatta* or the supreme soul the spiritual power (Mondal & Gayen, 2021). Among all the things in the world is that great power, in whose magnificence this universe is full of various varieties. According to *Gurudev* or Rabindranath Tagore, we have to realize the universal consciousness of the world form through love, we must strive to get the touch of the god who is the manifestation

of life in us, and we must give up sorrow in his worship. Walking towards the goal of liberation from the materialistic world is the essence of his life philosophy. Educational philosophy was created in the context of his life philosophy.

The seeds of Rabindranath's educational philosophy and Rabindranath's life philosophy were planted in education philosophy. That planted seed has turned into a big tree and has delivered the essence of education to the door of the human being on the journey of time. So in the world of education, educationist Rabindranath Tagore is the winner. But by criticizing traditional education, he reminded us of the eternal nature of this holy land (Saha & Maji, 2012).

In the field of education, Rabindranath Tagore emphasized the complete independence of students. According to him, the physical, mental, spiritual, social nature of the student can be fully developed through this freedom. *Upanishads* can perceive loving forms. He once said, that is what he calls the best education, which is only through the development of the spiritual power, according to Rabindranath Tagore, the educationist who is passionate about information (Saha & Maji, 2012). It is education that acquaints the student with universality, education exposes the qualities of the substratum. These unfolding traits yield positive results through desire, creativity, and motivation (Das & Bera, 2020). Although Rabindranath Tagore was steeped in idealist idealism, he was largely a realist in the application of pedagogy. He used to say that in the calm environment of nature, the student develops his character, spiritual, moral and practical essence without taking pleasure. Nature's pure sky, and pure wind, bring pure feeling, a pure mind, a symbol of purity that serenity helps in developing the talent of the student.

Rabindranath had a deep affection and a deep passion for the *Tapoban*-based education system of that time. Driven by that passion, he established the *Ashramic Vidyalaya* in Santiniketan in 1901, which today is the Visva Bharati University, a world-renowned centre of learning (Das & Bera, 2020). *Gurudev* said about bridging the gap between Eastern and Western education to release his school of saints to the world, that kinship that is to spread to the world, I will place the seat of that kinship here. How far that dream of the teacher has been successful or how far it will be successful, the history of time is telling or will tell.

Swami Vivekananda

Swami Vivekananda is one of those who have shown the path of human liberation in the ever-changing world. Revival priest Yogi Vivekananda or *Sannyasi* Vivekananda, the preacher of *Sanatan Dharma* and ambassador of human liberation in subjugated India, sang in a sublime voice the one who loves life is the one who serves God (Roy & Saha, 2021). The epitome of divine wisdom, the religious message of the social reformer *Vedantic* monk, the message of renunciation, the message of peace, and the message of liberation are echoing in the air. It will continue as long as the coming and going of the human soul in the cycle of birth and death in the world.

Sannyasi Vivekananda, the epitome of *Shauryavira's* 'non-dualism-sanatanism' was born on January 12, 1863 AD in the famous Datta family of Simulia, Calcutta. His father was Vishwanath Dutta, a famous High Court Attorney and his Mother is Bhubaneswari Devi. *Vedantic* monk Vivekananda gave the great *mantra* of the Renaissance in the life of mankind. Countless children of subjugated India were initiated by his immortal *mantra*. The priest of Swamiji's great work was Ramakrishna Paramahansa Dev. Blessed Vivekananda of *Yugavatara* Ramakrishna preached the eternal message of India at home and abroad. It is particularly noteworthy that the words of the brave Swami Vivekananda at the *Mahadharma* conference held in Chicago in America in September 1893 will guide the people of this planet for ages, the path of religion, the path of human liberation. After the completion of many great works, he died on July 4, 1902, at the age of just 39.

Vivekananda's real name is Narendranath Datta. During his college life, he came to know the greatness of Guru Sri Ramakrishna, and as a result, he came close to him. After that, he realised everything in the world is a part of that Supreme Being. That Brahma or Supreme power can remove our sorrows and miseries.

According to Vivekananda, a believer in reincarnation, humans, animals, birds, and insects, that is, souls exist in all living beings, manifesting differences. So to serve living beings is to serve that formless Supreme Brahma. Swamiji founded the Ramakrishna Monastery and Mission in 1898 AD to preach Ramakrishna Dev's ideal world and show the way to liberation. These monasteries and missions are spreading the message of religion, the message of sacrifice, the message of peace to troubled hearts, and the message of liberation in this world and will continue to spread. Swamiji wanted unity between the East and the West, and harmony between *Paravidya* and *Aparavidya*. *Vedantic* monk Vivekananda, the preacher of *Sanatan Dharma*, had a dream of a densely beautiful India in his eyes.

Educational thoughts of Vivekananda and the spiritual father of the nationalist movement on education, monk Vivekananda's thoughts are significant and far-reaching. By removing himself a lot from the traditional education system, he said in the definition of education, "*Education is the manifestation of Perfection already in man*" (Roy & Saha, 2021). It is through education that wholeness exists, and through education, the sense of self is developed. Then it is through education that the perfection of man's pure being is revealed which is present in man. Since the development of this organism is socio-centric, the development of the inherent greatness of man naturally operates against the background of society. Vivekananda, the epitome of divine wisdom, said education is that education that mainly helps in character-building and man-making (Barman, 2016). He said that education makes the student human and that education makes a man the real one. In the words of *Vedantic* monks the end of all education, all training should be man-making. That is, according to *Sannyasi* Vivekananda, all education, the end of all learning, must be man-making. The Karma Yogi *Sannyasi* realized that the aim of education would be man-making by suppressing the evil forces of the mind, bringing in good forces to acquire virtuous character, and inculcating proper moral values (Roy et al. 2023). If you follow the path of man-making, which the enlightened *Vedantic* monk has pointed out, then one can have

an ideal character. So, one has to be a traveller on that path, only then will the human life bear fruit, the cloud of calamity will move away from fortune, the light will bloom in the pot of life and human life will see the path of liberation.

Jiddu Krishnamurti

He was born on 12th May 1895 in Andhra Pradesh (Martins, 2018). His father was an official person in the Department of Revenue. In his early years, he underwent training and education, befitting a budding world teacher. He developed an independent perspective both about the nature of inquiry and about his role in the pursuit of a good society. He rejected the view that teaching is something that has to be first studied and then translated into action. Actually, he expended his whole life speaking about education as actuality the manager not only of internal regeneration but also of social change. Jiddu Krishnamurti's viewpoint on education articulates that education must be in the direction of the completest improvement of human existence. Major point of his education is educating the complete person, educating the individual as a whole not as an accumulation of parts and educating the being inside a whole as a part of humanity, society, nature, etc. from which it is not expressive to extract that person. So, it can be said that education is not about preparation for only a part of life but is about preparation for the whole of life and the deepest aspect of living.

According to Jiddu Krishnamurti, the aim of education should be to understand life and constant searching for the mystery of life. Materialistic achievements can only be a source and not the aim of life, so the role of education should not be making people materialistic. Education does not mean only acquiring the knowledge of subjects, but to develop complete and responsible human beings. By complete education, he means love and compassion which can transform the present situation in its totality. Education has a duty to help and to determine permanent values in human beings and therefore, we do not merely adhere to methods or recurrence slogans, it has to help us to ruin our national and social blockades, in its place of highlighting them for they breed, resentment among human beings (De Vylder, 2022). The main purpose of education should not be to yield mere scholars, job hunters and technicians but to incorporate men and women who are fearless, for only among such human beings can there continuing peace. Education would not inspire the persons to obey society or to be undesirably harmonious with it, but help him to determine the true values which come with impartial examination and self-awareness. He further believed that education has to be a life-renovating process. The teacher himself has a duty to be a correctly assimilated human being. According to him, the teacher has to be careful, thoughtful and affectionate in the creation of the right environment for the development of understanding to enable the child to deal intelligently with human problems. In order to achieve all these, the education needs to understand itself. In order to deal with children, a great deal of patience and understanding are needed. For a teacher, teaching is not a technique but a way of life. Jiddu Krishnamurti further thought that education is a double accountability of teachers and parents. The curriculum should develop working efficiency. The development of a curriculum should encourage patriotism in students. The curriculum should give the knowledge to find the solution to problems. The curriculum should encourage interest in research and development in students. The curriculum should develop the self-expression ability of the students. The curriculum should encourage national integrity and harmony in the students. The curriculum should raise curiosity in the students. Teachers should use interactive resources for methods while transacting curriculum. The curriculum should be able to develop, praise and aesthetic opinion in students. Further, he alleged that the uppermost purpose of education is to transport integrated personnel who is accomplished in managing life as a whole. Education, according to him, was a transformation of the human mind and the creation of new culture. Education must free the mind and spirit of children.

Education should encourage self-observation and experiencing life as a whole not 'me' and 'mine' but to go above and beyond to discover the real. That's why education should be concerned with the immediate response to immediate challenges. The function of education is to help each pupil to discover inner-psychological resources and develop his own individual strengths, as well as to realise his weaknesses, without imposing upon him the teacher's notion of what he should be.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

One of those who have generously given away their wealth in this world, leaving no trace of stinginess, is the freedom-seeking, ever-luminous, eternal great Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. The people of India will forever remember him with gratitude for his great contribution to British India. As a politician, educationist, and missionary, he dedicated his entire life to the political, intellectual, work-oriented, and spiritual development of the people of India. So, he is our pride, the father of our nation. Glorious in his greatness, the world-famous scientist Einstein once said will scarce believe that such a person as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth.

Gandhiji, the epitome of non-violence and peace, was born on 2 October 1869 in Porbandar, Gujarat. His father was Karamchand Uttam Chand Gandhi and his mother was Putli Bai. Gandhiji travelled abroad in 1888 to study law. After returning home as a barrister in 1890, he started practising law in Bombay (Mumbai). He protested against the injustice of the British government. He preached the immortal mantra of non-violence and awakened millions of dormant Indians. In 1893 he went to South Africa to fight a legal case. There he got many bitter experiences under the storm of racism. After nearly twenty-one years with many feelings of happiness and sadness, the worshiper of truth-non-violence-beauty, Gandhiji returned to this country from South Africa. On his return, he declared rebellion against the British government, gave the words of his hungry mind to the wilderness, and awakened innumerable human children. He led various movements including the non-cooperation movement, and the Quit India movement (Abraham, 2022). Gandhiji established an ashram at Sabarmati in Gujarat in 1915 AD to educate in real education. Later in 1935, he established another ashram at Sevagram. His efforts to inspire people with the immortal mantra of non-violence to enliven the countrymen in the light of education will remain forever remembered. At this time various plans related to education arise in his mind. One of his education plans is basic education or *Nai Talim* education (Abraham, 2022).

Gandhiji believed in idealist philosophy. He was a worshiper of truth, non-violence, and monotheism. His concept of education is based on divine thought. According to Gandhiji, a devoted worshiper of truth and non-violence, in the world that sways in the boundless embrace of the tide, one must realize the Supreme Brahma through self-realization, one must believe in the Lord of creation, and remember that the living being is a special part of Him. Mahatma Gandhiji believes in the absolute unity of God and consequently humanity. For Gandhiji, God is Life, Truth, Light and Love. Devoted to God, Gandhiji said, God is truth and Truth is God. So he said to initiate in his immortal mantra that a society will progress on the path of justice, ethics, love, truth and non-violence, there will be no artificial barriers in religion or caste. He wanted to build an ideal society based on universal harmony. He believed that economic, social and moral changes in India can happen only through education; education is one of the steps of progress.

He believed that only through education our body, mind, and soul can be fully developed, the inner being can be ignited, and the country can progress on the path of overall development. In his words, "By education, I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man-body, mind and spirit" (Sahu, 2022). According to Gandhi, self-realization comes through good education. Gandhi worshipped spiritual power without looking at worldly wealth. In his words, education should result not in material power but in spiritual force. That is, the value of education is not in the growth of earthly power, but in the awakening of spiritual power. One of the principles of educational philosophy developed from his philosophy of life is to love living beings, to serve living beings, and to make his ideals a reality, the father of the nation Gandhiji established ashrams in Sabarmati, Sevagram and also in different parts of India.

Gandhiji believed in monotheism and humanism. According to him, the aim of education is the worship of the shadowless, formless, infinite, immutable Brahma. The awakening of the spiritual goal will be in the immortal mantra of non-violence. We will have more goals so that we can have all the mental energy to achieve individualistic as well as socialistic goals. According to Gandhi, the goal of education should be the development of religion. According to him, Life without religion is life without principle and life without principle is like a ship without a rudder. Although the development of spiritual power is considered the ultimate goal of education. Gandhiji spoke about some other goals while thinking about the social, political, and economic aspects of troubled India. Those goals are

1. Development of qualities such as character building, subordination etc.
2. Adopting the path of truth and non-violence and instilling a love for living beings;
3. Work-oriented education encourages students to develop an interest in labour and the economy of the country Strengthen infrastructure.

Mahatma Gandhi realized the urgent need for a new education system to awaken the people of India. At that time he got caught in the new magic of desire. A conference was held under his chairmanship at Wardha in the month of October 1937 for the realization of his great purpose. At that conference, the basic education plan was adopted based on the opinions of science educationists from different parts of India. This scheme held in Wardha is known as the Wardha scheme. According to the decision of the meeting held in Wardha, for the purpose of creating a complete structure of education, a committee was formed under the leadership of Dr Zakir Hossain. A full report was submitted by the committee on 2 December 1937, supported by Mahatma Gandhi. The educational document contained – (1) A Basic Art, (2) Mother Tongue, (3) General Science (4) Social Science, (5) Mathematics, (6) Music and Drawing and (7) Language of Hindustan – Hindi or Urdu. At the next stage, some changes related to education were made in the document. Finally, in January 1945, a conference was held at Sevagram for additions and exclusions to the basic education curriculum (Abraham, 2022).

In a developing country like India, though the education plan prescribed by Gandhiji is essential. But it is unfortunate that it is not functioning properly due to administrative errors, a lack of properly trained teachers and a lack of public awareness. Gandhiji presented us with his well-thought-out education plan thinking that labour-centred education would be useful to all. The usefulness of education through handicrafts is undeniable. As a result, along with physical development, mental development occurs and intellectual development occurs, as a result of which educational planning becomes meaningful. It needs to be remembered that in intellectual development, the personality of the students develops in the mental stimulation, thus the society moves forward on the path of development. So 'Basic Education' or 'New Education' introduced by Gandhiji is quite significant from the social, psychological and economic points of view.

Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan

Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan was the first Vice President and second President of independent India. He was a great teacher, philosopher and thinker. Due to his outstanding qualities, the Government of India honoured him with the country's highest honour 'Bharat Ratna' in 1954. He is the first person in the country to receive the highest award. The date of birth of this ideal personality is 5th September which is famous as Teacher's Day all over the country. As a philosopher, he presented the concepts of Western idealist philosophers into Indian thinking.

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan was born on 5 September 1888 in a Brahmin family in Thiruttani village (Madras) in Tamil Nadu. His ancestors lived in a town called Sarvapalli, so all members of Radhakrishnan's family used the name Sarvapalli in the beginning of their names. He is the son of Sarvepalli Veeraswamy and Sitamma. Radhakrishnan had four brothers and one sister (Perumal & Saravanakumar, 2017). His father opposed Radhakrishnan's education as he was born into an economically backward family. Young Radhakrishnan enrolled in a school in Tiruthani and eventually became the most well-known Indian. Radhakrishnan was a brilliant student from his childhood. He specialized in psychology, history, and mathematics but interested in Abstract Preconceptions of Vedanta Philosophy. Apart from this, he was also used to Buddhist and Jain philosophies and he was also influenced by the philosophies of Western thinkers like Plotinus, Plato, Kant, Bergson and Bradley.

In his early life, he taught philosophy at Mysore University in 1918. During this time he used to write for various notable newspapers. At that time he wrote his first book 'The Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore'. The second book 'The Rain of Religion in Contemporary Philosophy' was published in 1920 (Perumal & Saravanakumar, 2017). In 1921, Radhakrishnan started work as a Professor on the subject of Philosophy at Calcutta University. In 1923, Dr Radhakrishnan's book 'Indian Philosophy' was published which was hailed as a philosophical classic and an outstanding contribution to literature (Perumal & Saravanakumar, 2017). Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan was requested by Oxford University to give a lecture on Hindu philosophy. He used his lecture as one of the powerful tools of Indian independence counter to the British. He exhibited that Indian philosophy was translated into standard educational jargon and was no lesser than Western philosophy. Radhakrishnan thus placed the position of Indian philosophy in the court of the world. Discussing his contribution to the field of education, his recommendations as the chairman of the Radhakrishnan Committee regarding higher education or university education played a significant role in restructuring and improving the education system in India. India needed him in her own manner, so he served her with gratitude. Radhakrishnan demonstrated the adaptability of his talent by transitioning from a teacher to the administrator of the educational system and also to the administrator of the people of the nation (Paroi & Saha, 2013).

Conclusion

Finally, a review of the above-mentioned philosophers' biographies and implications of education shows that they spent every moment of their lives for the purpose of teaching and educating people. They have thought every moment about how to light the flame of better education in every house in India. They strove to place India and its people in a better place in the eyes of the whole world. And as a result, India and its social system have been freed from many superstitions. Besides this, a positive attitude towards the education of people has been formed. Apart from all these great thinkers, there are also some great thinkers like Sri Aurobindo, APJ Abdul Kalam, Vidyasagar etc. They have also made a great impact on the life of every Indian. As Kalam has brought innumerable changes by motivating the youths of India (Gayen et al. 2021). The present educated India was created that helped people realize the true meaning of life. Their educational thought and advanced thinking philosophy have influenced every people in India. Just as Jiddu Krishnamurti inspired the people of India, Rabindranath Tagore and Swami Vivekananda implemented their educational ideas and all these educational systems bear the imprint of Gandhiji's basic education and the structural management of the entire education system that has been provided by the structural recommendations of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan's University Education Commission.

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