

Rabindranath Tagore & Mahatma Gandhi: Their thought on education or A research perspective.

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to provide a comprehensive analytic perspective on Rabindranath Tagore as a thinker, taking on board his views education & this paper also provide Mahatma Gandhiji thought on education with reference to Nai talim.and will be discuss on spiritualism and integral development. Rabindranath Tagore & Mahatma Gandhi had many inherent contradictions regarding colonialism. Rabindranath Tagore & Mahatma Gandhi while working in the colonial societies of third world fragmented walls of racism and castism. Tagore grew up in the ambience of Brahmo religion a reformed off shoot of hindusim. Being a natural poet his poetic outpourings in Bengali began recreate bengali literature. Tagore's concept of education was vocational skill development and rural construction. In 1901 he established at Santiniketan a cluster of village away from Calcutta, his school called Brachmacharyasharm. There he started his experiment in education. Gandhiji grew up in a traditional hindu family. He was sent to England to become a barrister then he went to South Africa where he started his political, social and educational movement. His social philosophy particularly Swaraj, Sarvodya, Satyagraha etc, became powerful tools of the struggle all over the world.

Most of the educational writing & experiment of Tagore and Gandhi centered on education of children and adolescents and for rural upliftment of the society. Mahatma's vision of education was based on truth and non-violence. Both Gandhi & Tagore emphasized education through "craft" education. According to Tagore was a process through which the mind could grow & reach out of itself. The present paper is an attempt to locate how he tended to blend peace education & education for peace. Gandhiji viewed education as well as society. This education has to be given to the students so that they can learn ethics & values of humanitarian just & peaceful society as "sarvodya samaj".

Keywords: Nai talim, spiritualism, concept of education, integral development.

INTRODUCTION

Mahatma Gandhiji was a great revolutionary and constructive genius by applying eternal values of life at social & national level in the world. He showed a new way to solve the world issue of present time. Gandhiji's education was to be essentially generative which can be passed on form an educated person to the uneducated one a self less spirit. An educated youth could teach his illiterate parents. Likewise community level formal or informal education could also be facilitated in villages through vernacular medium only. It is in this broad context that Gandhiji was opposed to foreign medium education in India. Gandhiji thought that such education did not meet the requirements of the country, there was

no connect between education & home life or village life. Gandhi gave the new concept of education known as basic education or nai talim. Gandhi conceptualized in his revolutionary nai talim or basic education for all in 1937. The story of nai talim that in Gandhi's perception, this curriculum aimed to preparing a good society, not just a literate or educated one. Seen from the context of an education system specially developed for a newly born democratic nation it can be said that nai talim gave freedom, literacy, and superstition. Nai talim was aimed at becoming the spearhead of a silent social revolution. The range of teaching tools that Gandhiji prescribed to actualise nai talim were as revolutionary & unconventional as the concept itself for holistic development of body, mind, and soul he firstly emphasized on useful and purposeful physical labour.

This paper will attempt to do so with Rabindranath Tagore who was a leading spokesman for compassionate humanism and culture in India and the world. Tagore lived in the age of science as we also do. He was proud of age of the of science as we also are Tagore greatly appreciated the benefits of science, and use of science for rural reform which we shall discuss below that brings us to his thought on humanism, education culture nationalism and internationalism and their great relevance today.

Rabindranath Tagore believed that the aim of education is self-realization. He himself was a poet & saint who had through his imagination and insight realized the universal soul in him and in nature. He believed that this realization was the goal of education because the universal soul is the root of our own soul, man's aim in life to reach that universal soul of which all human beings are parts. It is thus evident that Rabindranath educational philosophy is an adjunct of this general philosophy of life. He believed that every human being is one who has potentialities of progressing towards the super human being the universal soul. According to Rabindranath, the aim of education is self-realization. According to him this realization by every on is the goal of education, self-realization of the universal soul in one's self. Man's aim of life is to achieve this status. It is a process which cannot be realized without education.

Objectives of the study:

1. To study the thought on basic education given by Mahatma Gandhi & thought of Rabindranath Tagore on education.
2. To study the thought like truth, non-violence, peace sincerity & sympathy of Mahatma Gandhi.
3. To examine the relevancy of thought and ideas of Mahatma Gandhi & Rabindranath Tagore in present education system.
4. To study the spiritual thought of Rabindranath Tagore & Mahatma Gandhi philosophy.

Mahatma Gandhi's principles on basic education:

Like Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi also prescribed the same ancient spiritual methods of teaching. The following are the basic principles of education.

The following concept of basic education was noted as follows-

1. Free & compulsory education should be provided for seven years on a nationwide scale.
2. Primary education for children under the age group of 6-14 years both boys and girls to develop with faculties conducted by school teachers in co-operation with parents & community.
3. The medium of instruction should be mother tongue.
4. Secondary education should be through vocational education.

Mahatma Gandhi's educational philosophy:

According to Gandhi "truth is god" "truth is end" & non-violence is the means to achieve the goal. The ultimate aim of Gandhian educational philosophy is self-realization.

According to Gandhian education philosophy peace can be established through religion, human interaction, science, nai talim, & non-violence. Gandhian education philosophy in school & colleges could result in all around development of students by bringing the serious gaps. It gives a spiritual signal to all teachers that a student is a unity of physical body intellect & spirit. Gandhian educational philosophy stressed on service to humanity irrespective of caste, colour, religion or nation. It emphasizes the promotion of everlasting world peace. All aspects of life social, political, economic, and spiritual got space in the life of Gandhi because he knew the utility of education.

Character development-

Gandhi's thought that the physical, mental, & conductive capacities of child can be developed by education. The all-around development mental, physical & spiritual development of the child is possible only by education. According to the statement of Gandhi "literacy is neither the end of education nor the beginning of it". It is only a means 'by which a lady or a great can be educated. According to him, the development of all (mind, soul, body, & heart) comes under this action. Therefore he defined "true education is that which may express and encourage the spiritual, mental & physical powers of the children". So Gandhi's concept of education is based on all round development of human personality that includes intellectual development and spiritual development. According to Gandhiji, "By education I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in child & man."

Mahatma Gandhi thought on peace, truth & non-violence:

The Gandhian thought of peace is worldwide acknowledged. The name of Gandhi is synonyms with peace & non-violence. That is why united nation announced world peace day on 2nd October the birth day on Mahatma Gandhi to the humanity is incomparable.

For Gandhi peace can be located in “his revolutionary mode of action which he called Satyagraha & his challenging goal of sarvodaya. Peace to Gandhi is primarily located in his idea of ahimsa or non-violence.

Mahatma Gandhi’s thought with respect to modern education system:

In the Gandhian constructive program, the most important element is “Nai-Talim” or the new education. Gandhi regarded his scheme of education as spearheading the silent social revolution and expected it to provide a healthy relationship between city and village. Basic education or Nai-Talim (new system of education) as Gandhi calls it is revolutionary in its conception. It is based on theory that it is the activity known as “the thinking hand” which more than anything else has guided the revolution of man & society. In this system of whole education man can be imparted through the medium of a basic handicraft. Its goal is to build up a non-violent, non-exploiting social order. Gandhi holds that craft, art, health and education should all be integrated in to one scheme. He mainly suggested that handicrafts are to be taught not merely for productive work but for developing the intellect of the pupils. This helps them to be self-supporting education is popularly and correctly described as education through handicrafts but it is part by true. The root of the new education goes much deep.

Gandhi felt the need to overall education system. He thought of national education and proposed the following methods to be evolved.

1. Education must be imparted through the mother tongue.
2. There must be accord between the education a child receives at the school and the environment of the home.
3. The teachers in primary classes must be competent of good character right from the first class.
4. Education must be free.

Rabindranath Tagore thought on spiritualism:

Rabindranath Tagore gives spiritual approach to education. He considers that the aim of education is self-realization. According to Rabindranath Tagore means the realization of the universal soul in one’s self man. Tagore’s philosophy of education, the aesthetic development of the senses was as important as the intellectual if not more so & music literature art, dance, and drama, were given great prominence in the daily life of the school. So Rabindranath Tagore was a great philosopher and educationist. According to S. G. Sarkar, “he discovered for himself all the theories and principles of education which he later formulated for himself and used in his Shanti Niketan experiment”. Being an idealist, Tagore emphasized that the third aim of education should be to promote moral and spiritual development of the child. In his writings he has thrown on a number of moral and spiritual values which education should strive to inculcate in children.

Integral development: Integral development is the humanistic aim of education in Tagore's philosophy. His approach to ultimate reality as integral .He believes in an inner harmony between man & nature and God. Elaborating the aim of education Rabindranath says "the fundamental purpose of education is not merely to enrich ourselves through the fullness of knowledge but also to establish the bond of love and friendship between man and man. Thus Tagore approach to reality is integral. He believes in inner harmony among man and nature & God. They are in fact three aspect of the same reality. In man again the physical, mental and the spiritual aspects are equally important and internally related.

Rabindranath Tagore thought on education:

Rabindranath Tagore was more than a resourcing leading Indian thinker of India. A prominent figure through his poetic brilliance, Tagore is known to India and the world as the winner of the 1913 Nobel Prize in literature, the first non-westerners. He is one among the others, such as Swami-Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, and Mahatma Gandhi who bitterly criticised the defects of British philosophy of education. They criticised western educational approach in India for its aim.

Aim of education: Tagore's principles of education-

The aim of education as Rabindranath Tagore sees it is to give one a sense of one's identity as a total man and to bring education in harmony with life.

1. **Independence-** Tagore believed in a complete freedom of any kind-intellectual freedom, satisfaction, decision, heart, knowledge, actions and worship. This independence is not to be confused with the absence of control because it is self-control.

2. **Perfection-** Perfection implies that the student mastery to develop every aspect of his personality, all the abilities and powers has been endowed by nature. Therefore academic learning is not merely to pass examinations acquiring degrees or certificates with which he fulfils his livelihood. The sole aim of education is development of the child's personality.

3. **Universality-** Universality implies the importance aspect of an enduring faith in the universal soul, which exists within him. It is thus, evident from the above principles that the aim of Tagore's pattern of education is independence, perfection and universality. The educator creates an environment in which the personality of the student undergoes a free, perfect and unrestricted development. So, the aim of education should be to develop and nourish our beliefs, Emotions and imaginations.

Educational philosophy: Rabindranath had understood that the educational system had enforced on India was meant only to train people as clerk in their offices to inculcate In the educated man a feeling of inferiority of their own cultures & philosophy. So Rabindranath Tagore gave birth to "Santiniketan" an ashram style educational institution in which he provided education based on the principle of freedom, natural trust, co-operation

and joy. In this opinion child's education would be more effective if teachers and pupils live and work for away. He says "this school should be home & a temple in where teaching should be a part of worshipful life.

Integral development& Spiritual thought: Integral development is the humanistic aim of education in Tagore's philosophy. This approach is to ultimate reality as Integral. He believes in an inner harmony between man & nature and god.

Tagore was a spiritualist in education. Generally naturalism discards transcendental experiences. Tagore was a naturalist but his naturalism was not a narrow one. It was a sort of means of spiritualism which he wanted to develop the boys.

So Tagore was a great champion of education for international understanding. He loved his nation and wanted to improve its conditions but in this connection his nationalism was not a narrow one. His patriotism and naturalism leads to internationalism.

Conclusion: In Rabindranath Tagore's philosophy of education man in the centre of all his thinking his philosophy religion, literature, poetry, social activities and educational programmes. He is humanist in the real sense. Tagore as a nationalist, but at the same time he is a true internationalist. His aim is universal regeneration and his educational system is a means to achieve the aim.

Tagore had worked against tremendous odds to build santiniketan as a vision for the world to emulate in the field of education. The importance & dignity of santiniketan is something both the men agreed upon & there was a touching exchange between Gandhi& Tagore. So in effect India could not establish an Indian concept of education, as was the dream of Mahatma Gandhi or Rabindranath Tagore and just let the colonial pattern of education to evolve in post independent India. Rabindranath Tagore vision of education, based on the concept of religion of man is basically not bound to any time frame but Mahatma Gandhi's principle on basic education was conceived to be a gigantic move to be initiated in new independent India. So we lost Mahatma Gandhi's vision on education for ever where as we are yet to try to realize the value of Rabindranath Tagore's vision on education.

In different measures Tagore touched upon Gandhi's three main considerations political & economic freedom, Hindu-Muslim unity and the caste system. They were both committed to the upliftment of Indians & saw themselves as addressing the problems of all of humanity but entirely different enlightenment a brilliant one. Gandhi on the other hand started from other end of stick as it were. Gandhi was privy to an intimate look at poverty and gave the new concept Nai-Talim or concept of education because without education we cannot do the change the society and nation. So Gandhiji thought is very important for our nation.

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