

Contributions of Indian educational philosophers in early childhood education Mahatma Gandhi, Tagore

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Abstract:

In this study -an attempt will be made to provide a concise outline of the historical advances in education on both the international and the national level. Following that, an examination of Gandhi's philosophical and pedagogical perspectives will be conducted within that framework. The belief that there is a connection between Ahimsa, the central tenet of Gandhi's philosophical system, and one's state of happiness is consistent with Gandhi's perspective on the role of education. Gandhi's educational philosophy was centred on the idea that people may be transformed into responsible members of society who would not only improve their own character but also contribute to the general well-being of the community. The Gandhian approach of social reconstruction emphasises the cultivation of cultural growth while also working to improve the personality and general development of individuals. One might get the conclusion that the Gandhian approach places an emphasis on education as a fundamental right in order to place an emphasis on the full development of the individual. Tagore's educational philosophy is well-known for its emphasis on naturalistic and aesthetic ideals. He was a firm believer in the maxim that "Education is the most direct path leading to the solution of all of our problems." A new way of life may be formed via the power of education. Tagore's educational philosophy places equal importance on a person's mental, physical, social, and economic well-being, in addition to their moral and spiritual development. The creative artist of the contemporary Indian subcontinent, he had a significant impact in bringing the finest of Indian culture to the West and vice versa, and he is usually regarded as having been the most important figure in doing so.

Keywords: education, fundamental, spiritual

INTRODUCTION:

The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme is a reiteration of the promise made by the government. It offers comprehensive services to all children in India between the ages of three and six, with the goal of fostering their complete development. This method sets the way for an all-encompassing strategy that will focus on early childhood education for each and every kid in India, and it does so by making it easier to implement. We are now beginning to understand the significance of early childhood education in a child's life. This type of education lays the groundwork for a child's continued growth and development throughout their entire life, and it is with this concept in mind that we can help children realise their full potential. It is recommended that all children get at least one year of preschool education between the ages of three to six (11th

Plan of India). (The Significance of Early Childhood Education and a Viewpoint from India, 2019) We are all aware that the lifespan of a human being encompasses a variety of stages of growth. After all, a person's early infancy is one of the most significant times in their life since it is when they lay the groundwork for the rest of their life, including the growth and development of their personality. In India, there is a long-standing custom of giving gifts to children when they are still young in their lives. It possesses a diverse cultural history that encourages the growth of young children in many aspects, including the formation of morals and the acquisition of social skills. Cooperative approaches to child rearing and family management were passed down from one generation to the next. The institution of a joint family was the primary setting for the development of practises for early childhood education and care. Yet during the past three decades, there have been significant shifts in the traditional family structure that prevails in India. (The Significance of Early Childhood Education and a Viewpoint from India, 2019)

In today's metropolitan India, the traditional model of the joint family is increasingly uncommon. It is not unusual to come across households in which both of the parents have careers. Parents who choose to raise their children in such nuclear households frequently rely on daycare facilities, preschool programmes, and other community-based early learning settings in order to give their children with an atmosphere that is encouraging and nourishing. Yet, placing your child's early development completely in the hands of these support networks may not be the best course of action. It is important for parents to bear in mind that the majority of a young child's learning and development occurs in the environment that they call home. The care provided by the child's parents is an essential component in the child's formative years. Because we are both parents and independent workers, we are able to empathise with how challenging this duty may be. We acknowledge that it is imperative that parents be educated about the overarching purposes and remit of early childhood education.

Educational Practices

Tagore's theory has been given the names Aims of Education, Ideal Education, and Congruency between Education and Social Life. These names have been branded onto his theory. His educational philosophy was put into action in the form of a school at Santiniketan, which opened its doors to a total of just five pupils when it first opened. The history of the institution as well as its evolution show that the school began as a relatively modest establishment but has since developed into a university known as Visva-Bharati. This university features numerous departments in the areas of the humanities, sciences, arts, music, education, Chinese studies, as well as advanced studies in philosophy and village welfare. In 1922, the Department of Village Welfare at Santiniketan was further enlarged to encompass broader work on rural rebuilding, village education, crafttraining, agricultural research and instruction. This institution, which was later renamed Sriniketan, was established. Tagore's practical approach to education comprises not only a description but also an arrangement of everyday activities, with an emphasis on freedom, games and sports, art, and evening entertainments. The curriculum that Tagore devised was not

limited to the study of textbooks alone; rather, it offered youngsters a variety of opportunities to gain a well-rounded education from a variety of different sources. Tagore gave his interpretation of the curriculum in terms of a number of different things that needed to be done.

Aims of Education

An analysis of Tagore's writings on education reveals that in some places he expressly mentions the goals, while in other places the goals need to be inferred from the circumstances of the passages in question in order to be understood. It is also made very evident that even though he never delivered a lesson on them in a cohesive manner, they are inextricably linked. Tagore had created a perspective on life and the role that education played in it that was fully integrated and holistic. This was not just a collection of appealing and intellectual-sounding perspectives on a variety of life's problems that were unrelated to one another; rather, it was an attempt to see life steadily and see it in its entirety as well as to interpret the relationship between its many fascinating and complicated aspects. The goals of education that he recommended did not originate from a world that was external to him; rather, they originated from his own experience, practise, and experimentation. It has been decided, for the sake of making this topic as clear as possible, that his primary, overarching goal will be presented first, followed by his secondary, more specific goals. According to Tagore, the overarching and all-encompassing goal of education is the development of all of an individual's potential faculties, which ultimately leads to the complete and harmonious development of that individual's personality. This all-encompassing goal was the end result of his approach to life, which centers on the complete and utter acceptance of existence. The explanation he gave for saying that "the finest education is that which creates our life in harmony with all existences" is as follows: His early experiences of school life led him to assume that the educational system of the time was not concerned with the development of children but rather was training them for a society of clerks. This belief was formed while he was in his early infancy. At that time, Tagore was aware of this disparity, and he worked towards the goal of establishing an educational institution in which children would have greater latitude to discover and educate themselves independently in the natural, unstructured setting of the outdoors. In his very first piece of educational writing, titled "Siksha Herpher," he advocated for young children to live a life that was free, joyful, and spontaneous of impulses in the twofold field of nature and imagination. This was done in the hopes that it would serve to make their bodies alert and develop them in all aspects (Tagore, 1351 B.S.). In a different piece of writing titled 'Siksha Saraasya,' he referred to the "laying of the basis of human personality as a whole 'should be the purpose of education'."

So, the purpose of whole personality development receives the most emphasis across all of the other goals that Tagore prescribes in various places. Tagore was not only concerned with the education of the mind, but he was also fully cognizant of the education of the body. He believed that the two should go hand in hand. In point of fact, he attached such a high level of significance to the healthy physical development of children in their

formative years that he ardently advocated for their unrestricted, unplanned movements and play in joyful natural environments, even if it meant neglecting their academic pursuits if that was the only option. "Even if they learned nothing," he says, "they would have had ample time for play, climbing trees, diving into ponds, plucking and tearing flowers, perpetrating thousand and one mischiefs on Mother Nature, they would have obtained the nourishment of the body, happiness of mind, and the satisfaction of the natural impulses of childhood." "Even if they learned nothing," he says, "they would have had ample time for play, climbing trees, diving into ponds, pluck (Tagore, 1351 B.S., pp. 9- 10). Tagore placed a significant emphasis on the role of religion in education; nevertheless, he did not believe that this should include the indoctrination of any particular religious belief. He felt that genuine religiousness was as natural as breathing, and that it was just as much of a necessary component of our existence as breathing. Religious education, in his view, is a spirit and a source of inspiration that permeates every facet of human existence, emphasizing that life's connection to the greatest ideals and providing a sense of kinship with the Real. If education does not foster a higher level of human knowledge and fail to strengthen a feeling of human togetherness, then such education is regarded as shallow and misdirected.

In a same manner, Tagore underlined the significance of discipline in leading a moral life. He said that genuine discipline entails the safeguarding of raw, natural impulses that might lead to unhealthy excitation and growth in bad directions. The moral and spiritual goals of education that Tagore had for his students were rather various. He pushed for the power of self-determination, the ideal of peace and tranquilly, and the freedom of the self from all forms of servitude, and the educational institutions he founded gave opportunities for people to realise these ideals. Tagore was a firm believer in education's capacity to advance social causes. It was believed that a person's level of education should be correlated with their level of social and human values. He was saddened by the fact that people were living in an imaginary world composed of books rather than the genuine world consisting of live men and women. "We have acquired knowledge, but we have lost our humanity in the process." Because the ultimate goal of education is not just to improve one's own life via the acquisition of more information, but also to foster feelings of affection and camaraderie between individuals from different backgrounds and cultures. Tagore's work promoted a message of internationalism through his concept of fellow-feeling, which was not restricted to one's own countrymen. This societal goal is conveyed in Tagore's message for the education of the emotions, which he refers to as "Bodher-Sadhana." Because we may become strong via information, but we can only reach wholeness through sympathy, he was unhappy that teaching of compassion was not only routinely overlooked in schools, but was also harshly repressed, because we can become powerful through knowledge. Education is regarded the most important since it not only teaches us facts but also brings our lives into harmony with everything else in existence.

Aims of education as reflected by Tagore in Santiniketan are:

- **Development of Intellect:**

Tagore placed a strong emphasis on the importance of acquiring more intellectual capacity. This is what Tagore means when he talks about the development of imagination, creative free thinking, constraint curiosity, and alertness of the mind; a child should feel free to study, and this will lead to all-around growth.

Development in Natural Situation:

Tagore had the belief that one might learn the most through being exposed to nature. The natural world gives the learner the required conditions to understand and grow their knowledge. There shouldn't be any kind of pressure put on the pupil to learn anything. A student's mind may be conditioned to have a strong desire to study by exposure to nature, which then allows the student to pursue the type of education he is most interested in. His actions and personality will be influenced by nature. He also emphasized the need of providing students with a free and natural environment that is favourable to learning.

Freedom to child:

Tagore was of the idea that children should be allowed a certain amount of independence. He intended to carry out the very same thing in the sphere of education. It was the only reason he had founded Brahmachari Ashram, Santiniketan, and Sri Niketan in the first place. Students were given the flexibility to choose how they wanted to grow under Tagore's guidance. Education is something that Tagore believed should come second to a person's heart. He articulated freedom in three different ways: freedom of the heart, freedom of the intellect, and freedom of the will. Knowledge that is passed on in an organic manner will eventually result in the accumulation of these three liberties. One can become a oneself by practicing celibacy, or one can pursue a career, get training from an intellect, or receive education in any branch of the humanistic study. Both of these paths lead to the same destination.

Philosophy of Early Childhood Education in India:

Some of the most important and prominent philosophers in contemporary India, including Rabindranath Tagore, Gandhi, and Vivekananda, as well as Aurbindo, Gijubhai Badheka, and Tarbai Modak, were among the first to recognise the need of providing care and education to young children. They contributed to the conceptualization of a child-focused approach to the development of children. They held the belief that one might obtain the greatest amount of benefit from education if it started as early as possible.

Conceptual contribution Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi:

Rabindranath Tagore is widely regarded as one of India's greatest poets. He also had a strong interest in ensuring that children received a quality education. He is both a philosopher and an excellent educator. Tagore placed a strong emphasis on the development of all of a person's inherent talents since all of these facets of a child's personality contribute to the development of those capacities. He is against schooling that is focused on tests and places an emphasis on imparting education in natural settings. He

also believes that children should be allowed to have a certain amount of independence. Because of this, he decided to create his 'Shanti Niketan' in a natural and barren place that was located close to a large open forest. It was established in 1901 with the intention of introducing an innovative approach to educational thought. He stresses that education has to be relevant to the realities of life, and the name Shanti Ketan literally translates to "home of peace." He was of the opinion that any form of education that did not take into account actual life was pointless. As a result, an educational programme that is in harmony with itself should take into account both human nature and requirements. Tagore also held the belief that a kid should be exposed to the surrounding natural environment and should be familiarised with appropriate social conduct.

Principles of Education according to Tagore:

The principles of Tagorian Education are as under-

- Instruction is provided in settings inspired by nature, with the goal of fostering students' comprehension of the natural world and how it relates to the particulars of human existence.
- It is important that children be allowed entire freedom, as this allows them to express themselves, which in turn helps them overcome their emotional outbursts, moods, emotions, and manners.
- The capacity for empathetic understanding and contentment that results from a profound connection between man and nature.

Children at Santiniketan should have the opportunity to develop all of their skills as part of the education programme there by participating in activities like as sketching, painting, music, dance, and leatherwork.

- A shared feeling of community is fostered via children's participation in educational activities. Tagore placed a strong emphasis on education as a means of fostering spiritual unity throughout the nation.
- Tagore underlined that Western and Indian cultures need to be combined and taught to students through the medium of education. It is important for students to simultaneously study science and culture.
- Education need to emphasise real-world application. Kids need to learn by reflecting on and building upon their own experiences.

The acquisition of information should not be required of children via the use of books, but rather through the use of genuine and natural sources.

- The use of one's own language as the medium of instruction
- Education does not prepare children to become skilled farmers, clerks, or craftsmen; rather, it aims to create them fully formed humans.
- Indian philosophy and social ideology should be incorporated in the curriculum.
- Education does not teach students to become skillful artisans.
- Self-determination is considered to be one of Tagore's guiding ideals. The kid is able to differentiate between what is appropriate and inappropriate, what is natural and what is

superficial, what is permanent and what is transient, what is universal and what is particular and self-directed.

- Must have a flawless educational record. The formation of the child's character should be seen as the primary purpose of the educational process. It is imperative that each and every facet of it be stressed, and not a single detail should be overlooked.
- The significant and everlasting component of faith in the omnipresent universal spirit, which is inherent to globalisation, is reflected in it..

Because of this, it is essential to identify your soul with the soul of the universe. Its all-encompassing spirit may be discovered not just within one's own body, but also in every component of one's surroundings and the natural world. This finding is the result of knowledge, adoration, and the doing of good deeds. If one has come to terms with this overarching sensation, it is much simpler to progress farther.

Contribution of Tagore's Educational Philosophy in Childhood education:

- Tagore placed a strong emphasis on the child's overall development, including its physical, moral, spiritual, social, and intellectual growth. Physical development
- A sound physical condition is the foundation for a sound mental state.
- As a result, he recommended that youngsters eat a diet that is well-balanced.
- Moves to various sections of the body in addition to training of the senses through unrestricted mobility and the pursuit of pleasure. When it comes to physical activities, activities such as swimming, diving in ponds, climbing trees, harvesting fruits and vegetables, and playing a range of sports and games at natural events are beneficial.

Intellectual development

- Giving the youngster more freedom and encouraging independent thought. The youngster is required to know the facts, comprehend them, put them to use, analyse, synthesise, and evaluate them.
- He criticised schooling that was too focused on books and advocated for more outdoor activities and experiences in natural settings, arguing that nature has more to teach than any book ever could.

Mahatma Gandhi and Childhood Education:

One of the greatest thinkers of all time was Gandhi, who is also known as the father of the nation. He was the one who initiated the plan for elementary schooling. He did this by teaching people how to educate the small children independently, which is known as basic education. This allowed him to build a person's individuality (knowledge, body, and spirit). The purpose of the basic education that Gandhi offered was not to impart information but rather to cultivate the student's knowledge as well as their body and spirit. A fundamental component of basic education is the acquisition of occupational skills. It entails acquiring

comprehensive knowledge of any given occupation. The fundamental education is referred to as "Craft Center Education." It is beneficial to a person's life since it offers adequate instruction in any skill they want to pursue.

Pre-basic education:

"Education of children under seven years of age for the development is through the teachers in the schools and the cooperation of the parents and the community in the homes" is the full meaning of the term "pre-primary education." Pre-primary education fulfils this definition in its entirety. The following, in Gandhi's view, should be included in every child's pre-basic and elementary education.

The home serves as the primary and most important learning and development centre for children.

- And teachers and parents should support the education of young children.
- Preschool education is not necessary so that it reaches the majority of the child population.
- A child will have to be dynamic, creative and vibrant and learn things through play.
- Self-efficacy should be looked for in children.(Aggarwal, 2017) The first experiment in pre-basic education was started in 1945 at Sevagram village in Wardha, Maharashtra, which was based on Gandhiji's above views on preschool education. The pre-primary school education program is tailored to the needs of the following four groups

Throughout the first two phases of schooling, the mother and the child are both involved. There are a variety of educational options available to mothers, including ones that focus on the upbringing of children, health and cleanliness, modern techniques and fashions in mothercrafts, and more. The children are provided with attention as well as medical support. (Aggarwal, 2017) Children between the ages of 2.5 and 4 years old are encouraged to participate in various team sports and other group activities. Children require total independence in all aspects of their behaviour, including decision-making and activity selection. Teachers are in charge of supervising and directing the children in their classes. (Aggarwal, 2017) By the age of four, children are able to take part in activities with a purpose, such as cleaning the classroom, watering the plants, washing the dishes, measuring and weighing tonnes, fetching water, drawing and painting, and other similar activities. The instructor must be aware of the child's preferences in both academic and extracurricular activities.

Gandhiji's views on other aspects of early childhood education

A good education, in Gandhiji's view, is one that develops the children's potential in all three realms of their being: spiritually, intellectually, and physically. The curriculum is structured around several skill areas and exercises. In the preschool level, an emphasis will be placed on activities involving construction. According to him, children gain an

understanding of the tangible realities of life via the practise of craft. This ability should be taught to youngsters not only so that they can perform useful jobs, but also so that their intellectual capabilities can grow.

Contribution of Gandhi's Educational Philosophy in Childhood education

Education, in Gandhi's view, is the key to ensuring that children and young people have the healthiest bodies, minds, and souls possible. Gandhi is quoted as saying that there is no such thing as an interview or research. The only way for him to cohabitate with a lady or women is through this method. Although her children are still quite young, proper education must take into account factors such as frequency, length of time, and season. He maintained that a kid's personality should be developed via education in such a manner that it is whole and in harmony, so that the child might one day discover the purpose of life, which is either reality or God.

Self-supporting education:

Education should enable a person to live his life independently and enable him to stand on his own two legs. Education supports his future life.

- Cultural development: Culture is a fundamental and fundamental aspect. He advocated vocational education as well as cultural development. He recommended the Gita and Ramayana to introduce the rich cultural and spiritual heritage to the students.
- Character building: Character building should be the end product of all knowledge. It is more important than literacy education.
- All round development: development: Gandhi emphasized three H (head, heart and hands) instead of R's. The perfect harmony of body, mind and soul creates the complete personality.
- Purpose of liberation: It means liberation from all forms of slavery in the present life. To practice is to free the soul from worldly slaves.

Cultivation of higher values of life:

Gandhi placed a strong emphasis on education as a means of inculcating virtuous, spiritual, social, and aesthetic qualities in individuals. Gandhi believed that the ultimate purpose of education was to achieve union with God and with oneself. This one, overarching objective takes precedence above all other goals. The kindness of God should be seen in each and every kid so that they might grow up to become divine people. "The end goal of a genuine education should not be material strength, but rather spiritual might. The trust of man in God must be bolstered rather than reawakened by it.

CONCLUSION

Tagore and Gandhi shared the belief that children had an innate propensity to learn and that parents should let their children learn from their natural environments on their own. Both men also felt that children should be given the opportunity to learn from their environments. Tagore was of the opinion that children should be encouraged to pursue their interests in music, painting, and poetry from a young age since these activities are vital to the general development of children and should be taught to children from an early age. Gandhi came up with the idea of "Nai Talim," which was a significant step towards the education of young children in India at the time. He was opposed to what he called "textbook culture" and a "test-based" method of instructing students. On the other hand, receiving an appropriate education helps a child's personality grow in its whole while also enhancing the individual's innate capabilities. It is of the utmost importance to provide the child with the optimal environment from an early age in order to promote healthy growth and development.

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