ABSTRACT

Development and educational opportunities play a vital role in each aspect for the overall progress of a community. A society’s mindset is more sophisticated and educated when its educational institutions more in number. The think tanks and leaders of a society mold each theoretical aspects of it whereas the ruling entities remain responsible for the implementation of these theories to materialize in reality. Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi are two prominent personalities who happened to design the country while Jiddu Krishnamurthy contributed a lot for keeping its million’s well-being intact through his novel education policies. The educational theories and concepts of this particular duo are the core crux or draft of the policies for education implemented today. Through this paper an attempt is made to analyze the various theories of education by Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi, and compare them with methods and features along with comparing multiple differences and similarities with Jiddu Krishnamurthy’s education policies.

Keywords: Educational theories, Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Shanti Niketan, intellectual development, colonial education

INTRODUCTION

Education has a solution for each problem that we may face in any phase of life. Most often we see people without any job around us which is a direct result of insufficient education or lack of it. Thus, education plays a prominent role in a person’s life. Many policies are active to deal with education in order to bestowed it to everyone in need [1]. In this paper, the discussion shall happen on the various policies that Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore came up with. The educational philosophy of Gandhi is comprehensive since he looked upon education as the true instrument for material advancement, socio-economic progress, moral development and Political evolution for individuals and the society as whole. The education system propagated by Rabindranath Tagore put emphasize upon the intellectual, social, physical spiritual, economic and moral aspects of the life of each human, by which anyone may develop a personality that is towering in stature.

Few policies that Tagore propagated are same as that Gandhi suggested. Here the discussion may go deep in the differences and similarities between Tagore and Gandhi’s policies. The present era has the educational teaching methods and theories of these two brilliant personalities, which is still relevant in today’s educational context. These policies are wise to be applied on our education system, where it will prove to be a solid milestone for a fabulous turning point that can’t be denied. As per a student of moral studies, the theories of Rabindranath Tagore are the most applicable in today’s world. It emphasizes on the ease of keeping a student’s mind free while the study is going on. This aids in a
student to concentrate on one subject at a time. Comprehension and studying the lessons along with the theories are mostly easy and humble as Tagore suggests [2].

Gandhi is one of the most prominent figures among the many personalities who earned independence for the country of India and contributed a good lot for the well-being of many who live in this great nation [3]. Thus the educational theory of Gandhi is fundamentally based on the teachings of spiritual development, political evolution, economic progress and social awareness and understanding.

EDUCATIONAL POLICIES OF MAHATMA GANDHI AND RABINDRA NATH TAGORE

Many have acknowledged that Gandhi happened to be a man of great genius who had an outreach to every household on Indian soil. His leadership aroused the spirit of India. Each movement that Gandhi carried out had a deep kind of social connotation that inspired many [4]. The philosophy that Gandhi propagated for basic education is extremely comprehensive since he saw education as an apt instrument that would uplift each individual in the society, receiving it at moral, political, economic and social levels while material advancement would complement them to a large extent. Gandhi’s view on basic education is largely influenced by the philosophy of nonviolence and truth whereas his firm belief in dignity of labour and god strengthened it further. His emphasize on the vital point that education should be imparted in a friendly and sympathetic manner with deep emotions and love to the recipients.

When we further get into the various theories of Gandhi related to education and more, it seems that there was an orthodox mentality in his approach where he was extremely averse to the idea of modern technology’s application in various things. Surprisingly, his thoughts on such subjects are nothing but display of ancient mindset [5]. The opposition to modern machines was his main outcry because he deemed them an unnecessary evil with accurate weaving of yarn to produce excellent clothes that would ruin the market for hand-woven fabric by local producers.

As he said, “in case the craze for machinery grows in the nation, the possibility of us having an unhappy land will be more” but in present day scenario his concept on the arena of education is just impossible since people cannot live without the use of modern machinery, while the entire nation of India further adapts western culture with each passing day. Thus, the concept of Gandhi completely deferred in accepting any kind of modern machinery in the field of education [6]. He further declared, “True liberty shall come when we would free ourselves completely of the various denominations of western ways of living, western culture and western education that has ingrained completely in us and emancipation from such a culture would then mean true liberty for all of us.” Thus further shows that Gandhi not only disallowed the colonial education but he did put forward an extreme option.

Furthermore, I do want to refute the attitude of Gandhi in industrialization and involvement of western technology in anything Indian.

Rabindranath Tagore, the recipient of Nobel Prize for Literature in the year 1913, is known internationally as a much vivid and lively poet who created many literature marvels. On May 1, 1861, he was born in Calcutta, Bengal, at such a time when the very first non-critical admiration for Western countries had worn off and there was better balanced appraisal towards the same. Thus simultaneously, there was an apt increase in knowledge of and respect for the eastern values. The grandfather of Rabindranath Tagore, Prince Dwarkanath Tagore, happened to be a friend of a famous Indian religious reformer by the name Raja Ram Mohan Roy, while the former was among the first few Indians to travel across European countries [7].

Gandhi was absolutely infuriated on the knowledge that he was required to speak about home-role or liberty where all documents of official nature were only in English while best newspapers as well as education was available only in English and that too for a few fortunate people. Gandhi was an advocate by profession; he could never speak in his own tongue in the court. It was his thought that when an individual speaks a language such as English, the idea of western culture gets into the mind of...
native countrymen and just like their rulers, the natives would adopt the values and deportments of the ruling country. Thus, India would lack further educated individuals [8].

However, this very concept seems to be impossible right now since English as a language has become an important language for communication. It is taught in majority of schools and most of the schools have it in their syllabus now. Hence, if these books are prohibited, the children would remain uneducated and won’t be able to compete with others who receive the same education in English. At last, this education theory of Gandhi doesn’t hold ground in the present era because when he had such a view and similar ideas on the same, it was mostly politically motivated [9]. He only wished to express that one should be proud enough of his/her mother tongue than picking up stinking western languages and cultures.

The knowledge concerning the various production processes challenges in crafts like weaving, spiraling, basket making, book-binding and metal work was a sole trade of specific group of castes in the traditional pyramid of society at its lowest echelon. Gandhi’s concept was that in the production processes, the manual works must never be viewed as substandard to any kind of mental work that educated people tend to do.

Gandhi wanted the schools to become efficient in self-financing their expenditures. He gave two reasons for the same. First, any poor society like India will never have money, enough to render education to each child unless schools themselves do not garner resources from their own side. Second, more economic-efficient school will become the further independence they would gain in political thought process [10]. Thus Gandhi emphasized the requirement for child education through the means of manual work and never as a neglected side activity; but it was supposed to be the primary means in imparting intellectual training to the child. “Here the possible error in the fundamental scheme was that of 26 buildings that had the entire curriculum made around one craft, which was mostly weaving and spinning in deference to the ideas of Gandhi.

Rendering importance to the manual work, Gandhi further added, “The useful manual labour that is performed with dignity renders means to excel in developing one’s intellect, while a balanced intellectual individual would harness harmonious condition within the society as a whole and develop both him/her and the society at large.” Gandhi was indeed a big proponent of knowledge about handcraft because he wanted it to be included in school syllabus [2]. Such an idea may seem pretty practical as the manual work can steer a student with their completely loaded tempo to various shimming pastures of vivid imaginations with the same, while it will certainly boost a student’s confidence towards hard work and thus encourage him/her to search for the result with the same.

Getting education for securing specific information or just for getting it through the process of developing the society was, as Gandhi believed; was a clear conflict in terms of various ideologies that he had. The fundamental education pattern of Gandhi sought to have the education universalized by having the schools flatter to home along with participation value coordinated with vocalization, and warranting the school’s economic self-sufficiency. It is indeed a great philosophy that Gandhi has delivered about education according to me [5]. The education that we have is meant only for our native countrymen. It could spread all across the globe through good media for creating a favorable political atmosphere. If we are well educated, we may do it and we will have to manage doing something for society and individuals. Thus, then knowledge would become practical. Gandhi did practice the idea before preaching or suggesting it to anyone else [8].

The year 1933 saw he states that he has developed a form of “Scientific Satyagraha” through “Scientific research”, where he applied all necessary skills of a scientist would usually. Gandhi’s methodology to various social evils, including customary and religious issues, was always doubtful while he promoted every idea he had, through the “test of reason” to prove a convention or doctrine’s dependability. He did it all with his life, while anyone can render advice but Gandhi practiced it in his daily life before preaching the same. It is indeed the truth which is real while no one can change it ever.
Intellectual development is necessary and one of the most eminent personalities to stress upon this was Rabindranath Tagore. He talked about it specifically with regard to students. Intellectual development includes both imagination and progress of the intellectual mind. In order to gain new knowledge, every child has to learn things on their own. Moreover, writers and artists all over the world gained recognition because of their imagination and creative prowess [10]. Self-realization is also called self-actualization and it helps a student or a person to recognize their strengths and weaknesses. However, more often people only focus on their weakness and this tends to take a toll on their satisfaction level which can be quite depressing for the person. In order to get a good personality, a person focuses on self-realization. It has helped students in expanding their horizons both in terms of thinking personality and internal sources. Self-realization helps a person in brightening and focusing on their entire self.

Everyone born on this planet is equal and this is what Rabindranath Tagore wanted to emphasize on. The brotherhood that needs to be developed in order for everyone to work together and live in harmony is necessary in today’s war torn world. Tagore talked about educational philosophy which not only talked about universal brotherhood but it also talked about physical development. A sound and healthy physique is very much required for physical development and in this regard, he talked about sports, yoga, meditation and other such different exercises. All this should be an integral part of the education system. But, indulging too much in sports activities and taking care of the physical development of a person might deviate them from their goal in life [7].

Education makes a man but freedom is necessary for getting the right education. Tagore argued that the right way to impart education to students is by giving them the freedom to learn what they want. However, in today’s world education through freedom can get complicated. And this is why students need not be given all the freedom in their respective courses or else they will only focus on sports all the time. Mother tongue is more important than any other language for medium of instruction [2]. This is why Rabindranath Tagore emphasized on it. When it comes to language, native language or a person’s mother tongue cannot be replaced by any other language. He believed in education through one’s mother tongue. Language binds people and every language has a certain group of people. However, in today’s world of internet and online chatting, mother tongue is not the right way to put anything in perspective as a common language is needed to bind everyone together.

In Tagore’s educational philosophy, another thing which was reflected is spiritualism. He says that a person receives maturity according to their spiritual development. However, this is not true in today’s world because people are gaining maturity through the things they are learning from their books and not just from their age or spiritualism. A person gains maturity when they see more of the world rather than sitting in one place and praying [4].

Establishing the much-needed perspective on the relation between man and god is also important and Tagore did this. We all know that the potential talent and way of life of God is much different than humans. Tagore believes in studying through praying. He also establishes the fact that every atheist person is foolish because when you include god in your thoughts, you excel in studies and life.

This philosophy is not present in the minds of the entire world and this is why some people follow their own philosophy. However, God has importance and people should believe in him [2]. Not only the development of the intellectual self but also the social self-matters according to Tagore’s philosophy of education! This can be seen in today’s world where highly education people are working for big companies and often forget to care for the people who are less fortunate than them. Social development matters because a person will learn to be human and look after fellow humans as well. Tagore wanted that everyone in the world should learn about cooperation with fellow human beings or else they would be in a problematic situation. After gaining education, a person should not abandon their family and take care of them [6].
JIDDU KRISHNAMURTHY’S APPROACH TO EDUCATION

When we talk about Krishnamurthy’s point of view, we realize that his journey or theory does not take a person very far from oneself. When it comes to education, everything happens within one’s boundaries and education then becomes merely the process of self-education and nothing else. There is no definite point where a person knows oneself completely. Rather, they learn about themselves in this journey of self-realization every day [3].

Right Education

Krishnamurthy’s world revolved around education so much that he did not only talked about education for self-realization and learning but also as a tool for social change. Thus, it can be said that education will be foundation of a good society. Moreover, he believed and knew that each person has a responsibility towards the society and this can be seen in these lines said by him: ‘You are the world’. One individual’s action therefore affects another, since ‘to be is to be related’ [5]. Thus, it can be also said that there is nothing as individual consciousness but rather something of the order of collective human consciousness which will help a person assert them in the right order. He also stressed on the relation of the inner and outer world saying that what a person feels internally will definitely show up when he/she is talking about the notion of collective consciousness. The internal self of a person might deteriorate the world or help in making it a better place. The harmony will not manifest itself on its own. Rather, a collective effort has to be made for a person to understand what has happened in relation to the outer world. The outer world and the inner self go hand in hand and this can be seen with the basic principle people follow everywhere [8].

In order to bring about harmony, the focus should be on the inner self as well because that is the source of discord so many times [4]. He also said that societies are after all created by humans and not some other world creature or God.

Krishnamurti established the Krishnamurti Foundation India (KFI) and there were many schools functioning under this. Some were established in his lifetime while others are still being developed. He said of these institutions that they were not meant to indoctrinate a student rather it was meant as a place for flowering of the students in its purest sense. The students could learn about the world and get real education rather than musing on the philosophical aspect that their teachers were talking about in the ancient times. The schools are supposed to prepare students for future generation and KFI does that. Students are prepared for the world to come and they do should learn everything in relation to each other and not the other way around. Acquiring psychological knowledge is as important as learning the skills and other trades of life. Thus, KFI’s main goals ‘are not only to be excellent academically but are to be concerned with the cultivation of the total human being’ [7]. These schools help both the students and the teachers develop to their full potential. They not only focus on the mere subjects and learning them by memory but they also focus on bringing about the good in each person which meant that they have to learn to be a good human as well. A right education system does not churn out mere careerists but something more than that which includes students with the right heart and will to do greater good [3].

Krishnamurti made annual visits to two schools of the KFI - Rishi Valley School in Andhra Pradesh and Raj ghat Education Centre at Varanasi. Here he gave talks to both students and teachers and asked them various questions which dealt with the topics of what the students have learnt from the meaning of education, the quality of education and what were the roles of teachers and students in imparting them that education. He also asked the students to learn the value of education which was not only to memorize facts and pass exams but to learn about the world order and what it has to do with everything. He also urged them to prepare themselves for the new world without fear or any sort of contradiction in their heart. He knew that this was only possible in an atmosphere where there was no fear and only the will to educate one was above everything. The right education thus also becomes the atmosphere or place where education is nurtured properly devoid of any fear from the people or any other authoritative figure.
When he talked to students, he told them that usually education prepares students for a specified frame that the society has made for them. This however, according to Krishnamurthi, does not serve the real purpose of education which is to prepare the students for the tough world outside. There are going to be both psychological and physical problems which a student will have to face later in life and this is one of the things for which the education system currently doesn’t prepare those [8].

Thus, the purpose of education is to not produce trained monkeys who know what to say and work on programs but intellectual people who know the world as a whole and are ready to face the complex challenges that life will throw at them. The simple answers of Krishnamurthi are however unrealistic at times because when a student asked him what should we do to happily live in a competitive world, he replied that we should all stop being so competitive which is as unrealistic as an answer can get [10].

A person who is not competitive won’t be able to survive in this world and that is what makes his reply a bit unnerving. However, Krishnamurthi says this because he knows that a world without competition will be much better because the essence of all our problems stems from competition as people are becoming more violent in this competitive world.

He offers a better alternative to this and that is self-confidence which stems from the ability to realize the true essence of a person’s life without any self-importance. When a student is confident about themselves they will be able to perform better and teachers at KFI do not compare or judge students. At his talks and in his life in general as well, Krishnamurthi believed that there is more to life than just becoming money-minting machines. The essence of life lies in realizing the importance of everything around us and working consciously to achieve it in a holistic manner and not just for material gain.

The KFI Schools

The links of origin of KFI schools lie in Krishnamurti’s involvement in the theosophical society. He believed in the education system of India and wanted a better way in which people could approach the entire world of education. Thus, KFI was set which focused on imparting the right education to students. The first one was the Rishi Valley Education Centre in Andhra Pradesh. One of the founders of the KFI was Dr. Annie Besant (President of the Theosophical Society at the time) [6].

KFI developed through the years to become what it is today. The schools under KFI not only educated its students but also focus on every type of research which could lead to betterment of the society. Another important pursuit of the institution is to preserve, acquire and publish Krishnamurthi’s work that has been collected from all over the world through the years.

A journal is also produced in the schools since 1997 which is called the Journal of the Krishnamurti schools. Apart from this, the students are sent on retreats and other important seminars to help the students learn about everything that is happening around them [7]. They are kept in close contact to nature so that they can develop their senses and also learn about the important of nature in one’s life.

In order to develop a creative and inquisitive mind, Krishnamurthi focused on establishing these schools of learning in places that were in the midst of great splendor of nature. In order to produce harmony in the physical space and the natural surrounding this was important. Moreover, when the education is right and the student is being prepared for the outer world and not just their grading marks then it becomes inevitable to focus on the nature and the environment in which they will be studying. Everything is important when it comes to imparting right education and KFI takes care of that when they are teaching their students [6].

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The key difference both their philosophies and theories comes in the word of spiritualism. Spiritualism for Tagore is very important as he wants to use it for both moral development and the life after death. However, for Gandhi, it only plays an important role in moral development. Tagore is an idealist who not only wants the world to understand brotherhood but also the love for God. This can be noted from
his deep-rooted belief in spiritualism. Tagore’s Ashram even had a place for praying and time for it. The students were encouraged to spend time with God in case they felt doubt in their life or wanted to take a major decision. It was thought that by confiding in God, all their problems would be solved. Tagore’s theory becomes acceptable and important because in this one knowledge stems from knowing the lord.

Physical development was another important theme on which both the theorist digressed. For Mahatma Gandhi, physical development also meant using the physical structures of the world for self-realization and using it to gain further knowledge of the world. Moreover, he wanted his students to rely on their own resources and only approach the world when they needed moral education.

Gandhi and Tagore used to look at education and define it in terms of post-colonialism as that became an important factor during their lives. Both took great references and learning from the two important books of India’s heritage – Vedas and Upanishads. When it comes to tagore’s theory, we can see that he wanted to include the old ways of Ashram in the contemporary education system. The one thing he wanted to inculcate in his students was the familial bonds among the students and teachers as was the tradition of the ancient times where students lived with their teachers over the entire course of their education. In this regard, the learning was carried out not only with bondage among the students but also with the nature around them. Even Mahatma Gandhi used the ancient practices in his teachings and wanted his students to learn from the old Vedas and customs of our country. In ancient times, education meant learning what the parents taught their children which mostly included the family craft. However, in the contemporary times, Gandhi also wanted the students to learn about various topics which include art and literature as well.

In almost every field education is an important subject. Every human place far more value on education than anyone else. Simon Peres, president of Israel and his words have stuck with me. He said, “Agriculture is more revolutionary than industry. In twenty five years Israel increased its agriculture yields seventeen times. This is amazing. People don’t realize this. Agriculture is ninety percent science five per cent work”. The theories presented in this chapter are a small contribution from my part and I hope the world will learn from this and develop much better theories in the coming days. A break from this tradition of attaching oneself came with Krishnamurthy. He was a stout philosopher who did not believe in developing spiritual, emotional, psychological or intellectual ideas to impart education. His students did not have to preach him or worship him as a sender of God to achieve education.

This was a detachment from the theories which were followed by other leaders but came as a breath of fresh air for students who wanted to study without getting attached to their teacher or working towards their acceptance. Krishnamurthy thus stressed on the importance of self-education by paying more attention to oneself rather than the crutches of the society which could hamper people’s belief in them. He broke free from the Theosophical society and their ways and this led to better understanding by the people of the real reasons to start learning the ways of the world. His remaining life was spent in this quest so that he could give better education and reform the cultural and old ways of teaching for his students. Krishnamurthy was different from others because he did not show himself as a teacher of Nirvana or self-truth in order for a person to understand what was happening. In order to attain final truth, a person has to leave behind any notion of authority as has been said in this line: “to be a light to ourselves we must be free of all tradition, all authority, including that of the speaker, so that our own minds can look and observe and teach.

He did not believe in education to be a mode of learning first and then translating what was learnt in action. Rather, he believed that everything in education is a shared effort. People have to partake in the sharing process rather than the give and take rule which was established by the earlier philosophers and theorists. He also emphasized on the nature of transformation which is not just attaining some ideal through gradually learning something. Rather, it is more about timelessness. Krishnamurthy
believed that when it came to education, there is no ideal that has to be achieved or followed. Rather, it comes down to the attainment of knowledge by slowly unfolding the different truths one can find.

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