

PHILOSOPHIES OF PEACE: VIVEKANANDA, TAGORE, AUROBINDO AND MAHATMA GANDHI

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Abstract

Philosophy of education takes its shape through integration as well as synthesis of cultural inputs. National philosophers of Indian education, for example, are – Swami Vivekananda, Rabindra Nath Tagore, Shri Aurobindo, and Mahatma Gandhi – who have offered their best in building Indian philosophy of education. These four Indian educators have been discussed about Education briefly. Sri Aurobindo who envisages integrating our body, mind and spirit for the upgrading of self. Education is the way to realize the self and the world. Swami Vivekananda emphasizes on mass education. He believed in the potentiality of human being and the education is the means of extracting and developing those potentialities. Tagore applied his creative self-expression on education. Gandhi on the foundation of truth and nonviolence very much significant in today's perspective. These four systems of education are very reflective and ultimately able to evaluate our present day's peace education very critically.



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Introduction

Peace education is the process of acquiring the values, the knowledge and developing the attitudes, skills, and behaviours to live in harmony with oneself, with others, and with the natural environment. The International Day of Peace 2013 to peace education in an effort to refocus minds and financing on the pre-eminence of peace education as the means to bring about a culture of peace. A philosophy of peace education is thus more than a personal statement of the importance of peace education, as valuable as this might be. There must be some argumentation of the importance of peace education through either established philosophers and/or established schools of philosophical debate. Developing a philosophy of peace education are, at one level, similar to the reasons for developing a philosophy for any educational activity.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA (1863 – 1902)

Swami Vivekananda is known to the world as the patriot-saint of India, as the symbol of vigor, as a social reformer, as a religious leader, as a philosopher and so on. But he was an educationist who propounded original ideas on education, for ensuring an educational renovation from the height of his unquestioned love for country and humanity. He developed his ideas on education after Vedantic philosophical stances and ardently visualized the full manifestation of perfection endowed in man. According to Vedanta, man's real nature is pure consciousness, known as the Atman, which is beyond body and mind. In brief his philosophical ideas may be summarized as the educational philosophy of Swami Vivekananda. First he is concentrate on the life philosophy of Swami Vivekananda. In this way he is summarized form greatly influenced by the classical Indian philosophy being a student of philosophy as a subject and tried to apply those concepts for the good of the common people.

Educational Philosophy of Vivekananda

From Swami Vivekananda writings, speeches and practices of his own life the following ideas on education.

- 1) Education is based on development of inner potentiality.
- 2) Education is man making.
- 3) Education is “by which character is formed mind of strength is increased and by which one can stand one's leg”.
- 4) Education is a tool for social development.
- 5) Upliftment of masses is also an emergent dimension of education.
- 6) Education is the training of the intellect and spiritual training for the learners.
- 7) Democracy is the best form of Government implying freedom which is inseparable from responsibility, the sources of which are morality, philosophy, law and other social factors.
- 8) The social progress is possible through mass education and woman's education.
- 9) He believes in the Universal brotherhood of man, and upliftment of mankind.

Meaning of Education

Education according to Swami Vivekananda is self-realization which takes place from within. It brings perfection through the manifestation of one's potentialities. In his inimitable words – ‘Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man’. He states it more clearly –

‘knowledge is inherent in man, no knowledge comes from outside; it is all inside’, what is learning? Vivekananda answers – “what a man ‘learns’ is really what he ‘discovers’ by taking the cover off his own soul, which is a mine of infinite knowledge.

Freedom in Education

Swami Vivekananda was a staunch supporter of freedom in education because he believed it the first requisite of development. Education must be based on the needs of the child. The task of education is to nurse the process with every care and assistance, but never through any force, artificial manipulation and interference. Education should provide the child ample scope for his free growth according to his nature. When freedom in education is given to a child, it is sure to say that the child will develop positive ideas, deep self-confidence and the spirit of independence. Self-activity is the pre-condition to realise one’s freedom, i.e. self-discovery.

Teachers’ Responsibility

Teacher plays an important role in the task of educating the child. Teacher is one who can come down, immediately; to the level of the student and can “transfer his soul to the student’s soul”, and see through the student’s eyes, hear through his ears, and understand through his understanding. A teacher, in its truest senses is a friend, philosopher and guide capable of providing proper direction and guidance to his pupils. He has to understand the needs of the pupil and to guide his learning and activities accordingly. The teacher should be a “role model” to his pupil. Guru Grahayasa is recommended by Swami Vivekananda, and is one of the best ways a teacher can help the pupil. So we can say that teacher’s responsibility is to show the pupil light in order to lead a brighter future.

Aims of Education

Swami Vivekananda says – “The end of all education, all training, should be man making. The end and aim of all training is to make the man grow”. Education he maintains should help people to build up self-confidence and self-reliance, based on balanced human relationships. The ultimate goal of all educational effort is to strive towards character development characterized by the development of will-power, leading to courage, stamina and fearlessness. Through education the individual should develop adaptability and be able to meet the challenge of a changing society, and this can be able through education and training that he or she receives from his parents and teachers.

Curriculum

Swami Vivekananda did not prescribe any specific curriculum, but some general instructions were given by him on the type of the subjects which the students would learn. Children should include cultural heritage in terms of history, geography, poetry, grammar and language. He also prescribed for every pupil to study various branches of modern science and equally gave importance in Western technology and engineering and said that it should be included in the curricula of schools and colleges, it would aim at the economic development of the country. Education must be life-skills building process. He laid special emphasis on physical education in the sense that a good physique beholds good mind. He not only asserted for Brahmacharya but also prescribed practice of yoga for the students. Moral and religious education was other dimensions of curriculum. However, he advised that this part of curriculum should be free from any particular dogma or secretarial philosophy or theology.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE (1861–1941)

Rabindranath Tagore's manifold reflective as well as creative expressions are embodied in his life-long literary works he composed, experiments in both Shanti Niketan (abode of peace) and Shri Niketan (abode of beauty and aesthetics) he did, addresses he delivered in home and abroad, his art works he did, the letters he composed etc. If all these are critically analyzed, we become charmed to discover his inner voice and the very realization – a continuous endeavour in searching for a concept of a Universal Man who is endowed with potential – ability re-construct one world permeated through a sense of fraternity; and a divine power for reducing human sufferings and acquiring spirit of joy, love and enjoyment in life.

Educational Philosophy

Now we are going to discuss educational philosophy of Tagore:

- Tagore's idea about education is to cultivate human being through 'Communication with nature mingled with freedom and Joy and Cultural Collaboration with other people'.
- Creative self-expression is one of the prominent educational philosophies of Tagore. He considered cultural practices as part and parcel of Curricula. To him dance, drama, recitation, singing and other performing arts are integral part of the education system.
- Tagore's concept of national integration, international understanding leading to globalised world has been used in education as a tool for developing oneself.

- Tagore's emphasis on the development of socialization, social awareness, skilfulness, productive ability and social usefulness through education is relevant in present day's context.
- The basic principles of Tagore's educational philosophy are freedom and harmony with natural and human sunng.
- The objective of education according to Tagore is to the all-round development of learners reflected through his words –
- "The ideal education must combine in himself the gifts of a philosopher, a poet, a mystic, a social reformer, a scientist and a veritable man action, because he has to take into account all types of men and their aspiration, all facts of human personality, all levels of man's experience, all fields of endeavour and achievement".

Aims of Education

Aims of education, according to Tagore, can be deduced from his philosophical standing and thought on education. He has presented aims of education in multitude dimensions, all embracing life which vibrates with the hymn of Satyam, Sivam and Sundaram. The supreme aim of education is harmony of all existence. Education objects to offer man the unity of truth. Education aims at developing full man. Education is living, not alien from realities and cultural contexts". "True education consists in knowing the use of any useful materials that has been collected, to know its real nature and build along with life a real shelter for life". Education must appreciate both the liberal and utilitarian aspects of human life. Education must aim at developing men and women who may be able to fulfil the needs of the country. Education aims at fostering physical, intellectual and emotional development of the child. Education aims at developing the spirit of nationalism as well internationalism education.

Curriculum

The Santiniketan and Visvabharati introduced music, art, craft, dance, drama and mainly aesthetic approach in the mist of nature. He emphasized the vocational education also. At Sreeniketon he established the Vocational unit on the basis of work oriented education system. Other than Vocational and creative subjects, academic subjects are also given importance for imparting education. Tagore wished to equip his strength with the help of curricular and co-curricular activities for ensuring balanced education of the child. Tagore felt the need for introduction of modern sciences and technologies in curriculum of the

students though he emphasized on the cultivation of the past treasure of India in child. In this way, he was an Indian Pragmatist.

Role of the Teacher

A teacher cannot teach well unless he himself continues to learn just as “a lamp can never light another lamp unless it continues burn its own flame”. A teacher does not merely inform but inspire his pupils. A real teacher is benevolent mentor-co-learner, co discoverer as well as task master. He envisioned a true constructivist teacher devoted to Flowering of the plant in pupil.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF SRI AUROBINDO (1872 – 1950)

According to Sri Aurobindo, “The world knows three kinds of revolution. The material has strong results, the moral and intellectual are infinitely larger in their scope and richer in their fruits, but the spiritual are the great sowings”. It is therefore the spiritual force through which universe can be explained. Knowledge according to Aurobindo is nothing but to develop spiritual consciousness. Knowledge here communicates significantly between material world and spiritual consciousness. He further added : “It is the whole consciousness, mental, vital, physical also, that has to rise and join the higher consciousness and, once the joining is made, the higher has to descend into them. The psychic is behind all that and supports it”.

The Training of the Senses

Sensations are an excellent instrument for attaining knowledge by seeing, observing and hearing. ‘Studies develop our sensation; the mind receives things through sensation’. By the education of the sense organs one’s education and knowledge may be enhanced. If any person can distinguish different odours, yes! It’s a means of education is possible. Actually without sensation nothing is possible to perceive through which knowledge is possible. Information does nothing. So education should be developed on the basis of training of senses.

Development of Faculties

He has felt urgency of general education to add and function of some cultural and aesthetic education, to add artistic taste and refinement to power and precision that is the aesthetic culture which will protect learners from degrading influences. In our society performing art and education is not highly related. We somewhat neglecting performing and creating art in our education system, so according to Aurobindo, “This supreme intellectual value of Art has never been sufficiently recognized.

Enlightenment of the Inner Movements

We have to enlighten ourselves through education, The Mother said: “The perfect oneself, one must first become conscious of oneself”. Therefore, by education, Sri Aurobindo upholds to improve the inner potentiality of human being through the right operation of the educational system.

Aims of Education

The aim of education according to Sri Aurobindo is the integral development of learners. Education to be fulfilled if it embraces five principal activities of the human being –

- The physical,
- The vital,
- The mental,
- The psychic and
- The spiritual.

The physical: Development of physical culture is another aim of education according to him. Besides cognitive and mental development, physical development is also well placed in his education system. “If our seeking is for a total perfection of the being, the physical part of it cannot be left aside, for the body is the material basis, the body is the instrument which we have to use”.

The Vital: Sri Aurobindo used to offer vital education for the learners at Pondicherry. He maintains in the vital education – “The vital is the life-nature made up of desires, sensations, feelings, passions, energies of action, will of desire, reactions of the desire. Soul in man and of all that play of possessive and other related instincts, anger, fear, greed, lust, etc. that belong to this field of nature”. But the basic target of vital education in his views, is to organize and training “of this complex of forces, is of the utmost importance for the building up of character”.

The Mental: He criticizes the present quantitative aspect of our educational system and thinks that the improvement of the quality of oneself should be the ultimate target of our education system. About the present situation he rightly points out – “The greatest mistake is to make an accumulation of factual knowledge, i.e., erudition, the crowning end of the education. Instead of learning how to acquire knowledge, the student is asked to store in his memory the knowledge gained by others, so as to keep it ready at hand – at last for the time

of the examination”. In this way, he rationalizes the essentiality of the mental education for the child.

The Psychic: “Psychic” means “belonging to the soul or psychic. The psychic being is a conscious form of the divine growing in the evolution”. Mother adds: With psychic education we come to problem of the true motive of life, the reason of our existence upon earth, the discovery to which life must lead and the result of that discovery.

The Spiritual: Spiritual aim of education is mixed up with the psychic education and both are given the generic name “yogic discipline” although each has different goal to attain. Simply, psychic education implies a higher realization upon earth, while the spiritual education implies an escape from all earthy manifestation, even far away from the whole universe, a return to unmanifest. Psychic life is the life immortal, ever progressive change; on the other hand, spiritual consciousness means to live the infinite and eternal to throw oneself outside the creation, beyond time and space.

Teaching and Learning

Sri Aurobindo in his A Preface on National Education (1920–21) prescribed three principles of teaching and learning as pointed out below: The first principle of true teaching is that nothing can be taught. The teacher is not an instructor or task master; he is a helper and a guide. His business is to suggest and not to impose. He does not actually train the pupil’s mind, he only shows him how to perfect his instruments of knowledge and helps and encourages him in the process. He does not impart knowledge to him, he shows him to acquire knowledge for himself”.

The second principle is that the mind has to be consulted in its own growth. The idea of hammering the child into the shape desired by the parent or teacher is a barbarous and ignorant superstition”. A child must be induced to expand according to his own natural dharma. The teacher’s task is to find child’s dharma, develop it and use it, “to help growing soul to draw out in itself” to make it perfect.

The third principle of education is to work from the near to the far, from that which is to that which shall be”. That is, the teacher and his teaching must foster a free and natural growth for facilitating the child to have the condition of genuine development. Learning is, then, growing, discovery of self.

The Teacher

The first duty of the teacher is to help the student to know himself and to discover what he is capable of doing. According to Aurobindo the relation between teacher and student should be a relation of soul to soul. The teacher should be punctual, calm, methodical, orderly, sympathetic, and courteous and will have a good personality. Nothing should be imposed from outside but suggestions will come from the inner part. The attitude of the teacher must be one of a constant will to progress, not only in order to know always better what he wants to teach the students but above all in order to be a living example to show them what they can. Thus, a successful teacher is expected to have:

Complete self-control not only to the extent of not showing any anger but remaining absolutely quiet & undisturbed under all circumstances (Mother). Must know that all are equal spiritually and instead of mere tolerance must have a global comprehension or understanding (Mother). The business of both parent and teacher is to enable and to help the child to educate himself, to develop his own intellectual, moral, aesthetic, and practical capacities.

Physical and Moral Education

Physical education is the base of the total curriculum, means not only the proper functioning of the various organs of the body but also the development of strength, balance and a sense of beauty, something akin to conceptualization of Plato. "If our seeking is for a total perfection of the being", says Aurobindo, "the physical part of it cannot be left aside, for the body is the material basis, the body is the instrument which we have to use". Therefore, a development of the physical consciousness must always be considerable part of the complete aim of education.

Integral Education

The system of Integral Education as being experimented at the Ashram accepts the truth and values underlying all the systems of education, but it is identical with none of them. It does stress harmonious development of the physical, the vital and the mental, but the harmony is sought to be achieved not by any mental or moral or religious ideas or system, but by an uncompromising stress on an inner seeking and discovery of the psychic and spiritual principles in the personality" "An Integral education which could with some variations, be adapted to all nations of the World must bring back the legitimate authority of the spirit over a matter fully developed and utilized", Mother maintains, "To pursue an integral education

that leads to supramental realization a fourfold austerity is necessary and also a fourfold liberation”, and their practice will constitute the fourfold discipline or Tapasya which can be defined as Tapasya of Love, Tapasya of Knowledge, Tapasya of Power and Tapasya of Beauty.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF M. K. GANDHI (1869 – 1948)

Mohondas Karamchand Gandhiji’s philosophical standing was a product of Indian culture and his experiments with truth what he derived at home and abroad. His philosophical ideas and thoughts were underpinned by the various kinds of school of philosophy or ‘isms’ – ancient Indian thoughts and religions, Swami Vivekananda, some Western social reformers like Tolstoy, Ruskin, Thoreau and his experiences with life both in South Africa and India. However, he is best called the father of ‘Gandhism’ a hybrid philosophy which proclaims. Some of his philosophical ideas may be summarized as Gandhiji believed in democracy and socialism for developing and organizing a country guided by the moral and social values.

Educational Philosophy

Gandhiji believed that handcraft would make education more realistic, productive and self-supporting. Free and compulsory education should be provided between the age group 7 and 14 which was supported by the First Conference of National Education at Wardha in 1937. Gandhiji believed that the highest development of mind and body is possible only through handicraft. Self-supporting and productive based education system is possible by craft centred education for improving quality of life of the masses. Gandhiji’s basic educational philosophy is to apply the concept of non-violence in the teaching and learning to develop basic human qualities and also to promote democratic citizenship among learners. Gandhiji believed that education should be work oriented which can enable learner to appreciate the dignity of labour. Thus, education will be productive and it will help the society and nation to go ahead.

Aims of Education

Aims of Education according to Gandhi may be stated as:

- 1) To develop self-realization, self-confidence, morality and oneness with God is the ultimate aim of education.
- 2) According to Gandhiji, “True education should result not in the material power but in spiritual force”. Therefore, according to Gandhiji education should be based on spirituality which is the ultimate aim of his concept.

- 3) Gandhiji advocated the self-supporting education as its utilitarian aim as it can remove unemployment and it is need-based too.
- 4) By education Gandhiji meant all round development of mind, body and spirit. It is possible through a productive craft. It involves all round progress by hand, heart and heat.
- 5) The end of all education according to Gandhiji 'should be the building up of character'. Moral development is held as the highest priority by Mahatma Gandhi.

Ideas on Basic Education

Gandhiji is more famous for his educational innovation, popularly called 'Basic Education'. It is held as a means as well as a culture for causing social revolution through his cult of 'Sarvodaya – leading to all round development of all without any trace of the governing principles of exclusiveness. Basic education was held by him as the education for all for building bases of life. Its philosophy and practices have socio-cultural, economic, pragmatic, etc. perspectives.

Curriculum

Gandhiji introduced activity-based curriculum to extract all round development among learners by learning through doing. His curriculum includes : Basic craft (agriculture, spinning, weaving, cardboard, wood and metal work). Mother tongue. Mathematics (to develop computational ability arising out of craft work). Social studies (Cultural contribution of the country). General Science (Nature study, Zoology, Physiology, Hygiene, Physical Culture, Chemistry and Physics). Moral studies.

The Teacher

Gandhiji visualized that

- The teacher is to be more active.
- He must be a good planner, doer and thinker.
- He will be able to correlate various subjects with craft.
- The teacher should be conscious about the all round development of the learners.
- He should have a flexible personality.
- He should have mastery over craft and co -relational principles of instruction.
- He is the instructor and also a guide.

Conclusion

Sri Aurobindo visualized the true National System of Education and formulated in its model that appeared in the Karma Yogin for the first time long before the proposition of basic education given by Gandhiji himself. His formulation of national education perfectly reflects his deep sense of patriotism and burning passion for education of the India children and youths. Vivekananda advocated for a positive system of education in which he synthesized spiritual and material values. According to Tagore, education was not only imparting information but to develop himself by improving the personality and through formation of character. The ideas of Tapovan or the Gurukul system that he advocates is the natural reaction against the mechanical system of education. The concept of Gandhiji's philosophy of education is unique, balanced and unquestionable. But its implementation is rather weak. Therefore, Education Commission (1964–66) has rightly pointed out : “What is now needed is a reorientation of the basic education programme to the needs of a society that has to be transformed with the help of science and technology”.

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