

# For the Urge of a Better Future: A Study on the Great Educators

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**Abstract-** We are all aware of the fact that the term '*Education*' is a comprehensive one. The term is also dynamic in nature and is used in both narrow and broader sense. The narrow sense defines education as a part of an individual's schooling system, while the broader one depicts the growth of human consciousness and emphasizes on the greater cause of human beings. Education is a lifelong process and is all pervasive. The great educators of the world have defined '*Education*' in a different way. For some education is a way of life, for others it is defining our consciousness and making the world a better place. This paper will give an insight to how education is defined differently by different educators of the East and West, and at the same time how their perspective is contributing to a social cause.

**Keywords:** Educators, Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore, A.P.J Abdul Kalam, Mary Wollstonecraft, Maria Montessori, Nel Noddings

## EDUCATORS OF THE EAST

The Bengal Renaissance was a period of cultural and educational upheaval, marked by the development of jubilant culture, socio-religious and educational transitions (Roy et al. 2023). The early history of education in Bengal will be incomplete unless the pioneers of education are discussed. The society at the time had become engulfed in cultural rigidity, which could only be overcome through the spread of education. It is worth reflecting on how these reformers, such as Raja Rammohan Roy and Vidyasagar, wisely combined traditional studies with western education (Adhikari & Saha, 2021a). This was also a time when imparting education and moral values through mythology (Adhikari & Saha, 2021c) became quite natural, be it through art (Adhikari & Saha, 2021h), literature (Adhikari & Saha, 2022c) or theatre (Adhikari & Saha, 2021b), society began emerging itself into various modes of education both in the east and west (Adhikari & Saha, 2021j). According to Swami Vivekananda, true education is that which helps prepare the individual for the struggle for survival. The main aim of education is to equip an individual with a strong character and enable him to perform social service. Swami has emphasised that all knowledge, whether secular or spiritual, is ingrained in the human mind. It was hidden behind a veil of darkness and cluelessness (Roy & Saha, 2021). Swami distinguishes two different processes- Teaching and learning. While the teacher is responsible for only advising, guiding and suggesting, true education depends on one's own self to acquire self-knowledge and learning. He was opposed to bookish learning and rote memory education. He strongly opposed theoretical and academic education and advocated for practical and experimental education (Agarwall & Gupta, 2006).

Gandhiji stated that an education that does not distinguish between good and bad. He promoted education as a means of equality. He was of the view that education should be revolutionized so that it can reach the poorest of the poor (Hassan, 2021). Basic education according to him is something which connected children, from villages to the urbanise cities. Literacy is not an education in and of itself. Literacy for him can be taken neither as the end nor as the beginning of education. Education in true sense should have the ability to draw out the best in an individual. True education always contributes to a healthy society and environment (Kalita, 2017).

Tagore was a great champion of education for understanding and acceptance. He thought education should assist an individual in attaining complete manhood, allowing all of his powers to be fully developed for his own individual excellence as well as the precision of the human society into which he was born (Mondal & Gayen, 2021). He did believe that education was concerned with the entire physical and social cultural context, in which his life was lived, rather than just the individual's growth and fullness. Tagore emphasised the importance of nature in human development (Saha & Maji, 2012). He wished for the boys and girls to be fearless, free and open-minded, self-reliant, full of the spirit of inquiry and self-criticism, with their roots firmly planted in Indian soil but reaching out to the rest of the world in understanding, neighbourliness, cooperation, and material and spiritual progress. Tagore's ideal education concept included the description of an ideal atmosphere, institution, teacher, and method (Rayees & Dar, 2021). Jiddu Krishnamurthy was a philosopher and educator from India. He believed that the primary goal of education should be the spiritual development of humans. Spirituality does not imply becoming a slave to any religion, but rather learning about reality through self-realization and self-analysis (Singh, 2020). According to Kalam, education is about developing good human beings with skill and expertise. It is necessary to raise enlightened citizens and to install creativity in children. He also emphasised the importance of students developing self-confidence and moral leadership in various fields (Gayen et al, 2021; Pandit et al. 2016). India has had a long history of women educators, who were seen as sacrificing and devoted, but also rebellious and dangerous.

Educators and social reformers such as Pandita Brahmacharini Chandbai, Durgabai Deshmukh, Pandita Ramabai, Savitribai Phule, Anutai Wagh, and Tarabai Modak spoke of equality and attempted to educate women (Adhikari & Saha, 2021d).

### EDUCATORS OF THE WEST

Every country is currently concerned about education. Education is the only social agent which calls for a greater positive outcome. According to Rousseau, a proper education excludes constructs created by people with the goal of controlling other humans. A proper education allows Nature to teach humans in accordance with their nature (Shahsavari, 2012). Milton's goal was traditional: to shape boys into enlightened cultivated, good citizens and leaders (Maji & Saha, 2012). According to Matthew Arnold, education is the acquisition of culture, while culture is the study and pursuit of perfection (Adhikari & Saha, 2021i). Paulo Freire believed that education is a liberation practise because it frees the educator from the shackles of silence. The following are the components of Froebel's educational philosophy: (a) Independent self-expression; (b) Creativity; (c) Social participation; and (d) Motor expression. Froebel believed that encouraging voluntary self-activity in young children was the most important form of pre-school education (Kibor, 2004).

While we talk about education and educators of the west, women have contributed significantly to the improvement of education in different ages. Mary Wollstonecraft, Maria Montessori, and Nel Noddings have brought to light important issues concerning women and children's education through their rapid work in education (Adhikari & Saha, 2023). Despite being born in different eras and regions of the world, these three female educators were united by their interest in education. Research works have been taken up to bring out the educational ideas of these women educators from various eras. Wollstonecraft has been a champion of women rights (Adhikari & Saha, 2022d, 2022e) and has made education an important agenda (Adhikari & Saha, 2022a). Wollstonecraft has been advocating massively for a greater cause of human lives. She had been a live witness to the French Revolution and thus knew very well the need and urgency of liberty, equality and fraternity (Adhikari & Saha, 2022b). Maria Montessori was one of those educators who have advocated for child education not only in the west, but also during her brief stay in India (Adhikari & Saha, 2021f). Montessori education recognises that children learn in a variety of ways and caters to all learning styles. Students are also free to progress through the curriculum at their own pace, guided by the teacher and an individualised learning plan (Adhikari & Saha, 2021g). Education, according to Nel Noddings, is critical to the development of caring in society. She defines education as a series of planned and unplanned encounters that promote growth through the acquisition of knowledge, skills, understanding, and appreciation (Adhikari & Saha, 2021e).

### CONCLUSION

Educational philosophy has been a constant notion which is derived from both traditional and modern sources. These combined have been working in tandem to bring out the supreme nature of education as a necessity of humanity. Thus, the purpose of this paper was to interpret the approaches and values in two massive educational philosophies, namely the education systems of the West and the East. The culture and tradition of the society itself had influence on the growth of both philosophies, revealing how dissimilar these disciplines are. While the east's educational philosophies were enriched and backed by spiritual agreeableness, the west fought for women's and children's rights, and took a deeper interest in practical approaches to teaching and learning.

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