



## Identifying Philosophical Themes to Develop a Holistic Model for Education in the Twenty First Century

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### Abstract

Twenty first century is posing unprecedented challenges for the human existence and development. This era has witnessed awesome economic & technological growth, increased connectedness but great poverty, malnutrition, anxiety, mental stress and environmental degradation. Thus, this time depicts great contradiction, uncertainty, and risk. Accordingly, in this era a holistic education system has to deal with the challenges such as population growth, terrorism, environmental degradation, hegemony of machines, mental stress, cultivating creativity, bridging the skill and wisdom gap, and expanding human potential etc.

To find a sustainable solution to such challenges, we need to develop a holistic education system which acknowledges various dimension of human being. For this task, this paper will try to highlight some philosophical themes which are commonly suggested by various prominent thinkers such as M.K. Gandhi, R.N. Tagore, J. Krishnamurti, S. Radhakrishnan etc. in India, and J. Dewey, I. Illich, and B. Russell etc. in the west. They have put forward their philosophy to discuss the aims of education which are relevant to this century. In this paper, we will analyze their views from the perspective of the challenges that the twenty-first century world is going to face. Our investigation will analyze agreements and disagreements among the approaches taken by these educators. However, the focus will be on the commonalities, so that we can identify some philosophical themes which can work as the solid foundation for holistic model of education.

**Key words: Holistic education, Twenty-first century challenges, Self-knowledge, UNESCO, Creativity and learning.**

### Introduction

Twenty first century clearly represents the “*acceleration in the velocity of our history and the uncertainty of its trajectory*” (Brzezinski: 1993, ix).<sup>1</sup> This era is marked by hope and expectations, as well as deepening contradictions, uncertainty, and risk. Globalization has resulted in the elimination of many physical and psychological barriers, increased connectedness, but also caused alienation of many people and the concentration of wealth in a few hands. Besides, in most of the economically developed countries and in most schools, people complain about high levels of stress. It leads to hyperactive lifestyles that can become unhealthy and compulsive. As a result, Mindfulness has been gaining ground in schools.

Furthermore, economic growth and technological advancement have resulted in an increase in global wealth that has resulted in serious degradation of the planet's natural resources. Earth's biocapacity



is being depleted at an exponential rate. Our current behaviors will quickly exhaust the resources of our planet if we do not stop soon (Rockström: 2009)<sup>2</sup>. While the machines and the algorithms built by humans now operate them and challenging the uniqueness of human intelligence. Many people, including young people, seem increasingly dependent on their devices. How does this affect education?

## **Challenges in the Twenty-First Century**

As the first decade of the 21st Century has progressed, some have argued that truth means different things that we are entering a post-truth era where communications strategies trump the truth of what is being said. This attitude has many negative effects on democratic values and cooperation among citizens. In addition to the challenges above, Poverty, Population Growth, Terrorism, Cultivating Creativity, Bridging the Skill and Wisdom Gap, and Expanding Human Potential are some of the challenges that education system has to deal with. Many thinkers believe that we need to rethink what we teach in schools as a result of new technologies and how knowledge is distributed in the 21st Century School entirely and perhaps teach less content, opening more time and opportunities for skills development (Martin: 2007, 20)<sup>3</sup>.

Regardless of how we respond to global challenges, the question of a person's character is at the core. This is what determines their response to any given situation in terms of style and scope. Increasingly, the world is unpredictable and fast-changing and therefore requires a high degree of resolve and sturdiness. To tackle these challenges, we need to redefine and relook for the existing treasure of knowledge and make the appropriate changes to our understanding about education.

Many thinkers, such as M.K. Gandhi, R.N. Tagore, J. Krishnamurti, S. Radhakrishnan etc. in India, and J. Dewey, I. Illich, and B. Russell etc. in the west, have put forward their philosophy of education and discussed aims of education in detail. In this paper, I will analyze their views from the perspective of the challenges that the twenty-first century world is going to face. In their works, they have highlighted the crisis within the education system which ultimately led to problems all around the world. To overcome these problems, they have suggested alternatives to the prevalent education system of their time. Each philosopher mentioned above has his own assumptions and priorities and consequently developed a unique model of education. In this paper, our aim is to identify common themes within the educational views of these thinkers so as to develop a holistic educational model that meets the needs of the twenty-first century. Our investigation will reveal agreements and disagreements among the approaches taken by these educators. However, we will focus on the basic commonalities, so that we can conclusively determine the important themes of education advocated by all of the prominent thinkers. In other words, this is where a solid foundation for education can be found.

## **Self-knowledge, Uniqueness and Morality**

Self-knowledge or self-realization is the first foundational point of education that is a common theme among the Indian philosophers. It is endorsed by Gandhi, Radhakrishnan, Krishnamurti, and Aurobindo. As far as the goal of education is concerned, these thinkers agree that the goal is self-realization. However, they do not disregard technical and other knowledge in education, but that knowledge should not come at the expense of self-knowledge. It is the self-knowledge through which humans are able to utilize their



other knowledge in the right way. The study of these thinkers has led us to infer that the most important aspect of an integrated education system is self-realization.

In order to attain the goal of self-realization, these thinkers advocate a student-oriented education system. It is important to remember that each student is unique in his/her nature as we create an educational model. One size fits all systems should be avoided because when we do so, we start comparing one child with another. Children are, however, all unique. As a result of this, we force one child to mimic another child who is good at a specific skill. A student becomes mediocre through this process as it kills their natural tendencies (Krishnamurti: 1953)<sup>4</sup>. Though, all educationists are against this tendency of our present education system but Krishnamurti specifically points this out repeatedly. In an educational system, he emphasized the necessity of accepting every student's uniqueness.

On the significance of self-knowledge, Aurobindo believes humans are expressions of divine souls, so the study of human beings is fundamental to developing the right education. A system of education that is only concerned with academics, without considering the mind of the pupil, is doomed to fail. The main objective of education, according to Aurobindo, is to bring out a child's hidden potentiality (Pandya: 2016)<sup>5</sup>. In order to achieve that, he favored synthesis of the ancient Indian thought with the western techniques of education. He took the best out of both for making the integrated education system which can satisfy not only the spiritual needs of humans but also the mental, physical and economic needs. Aurobindo first outlined his idea of 'integrated education' in his work Essays on the Gita, he stated:

*The child's education ought to be an upbringing of all that is best, most powerful, most intimate and living in his nature; the mold into which the man's action and development ought to run is that of his innate quality and power. He must acquire new things, but he will acquire them best, most vitally on the basis of his own developed type and inborn force (Aurobindo : 2000, 517)<sup>6</sup>.*

Integrated education means inclusion of five principal aspects related to five important activities of human beings; physical, vital, mental, psychic and spiritual. In addition to this, he declared that education must have three aspects; the man, the nation or people and universal humanity. Consequently, education is not only about individual growth, but also about national and universal humanity. . He sees these three aspects as interconnected and cannot be separated. On the types of education, Aurobindo suggests sense education, body and mind education, moral education and religious education. At the early age, sense education is important for a child as s/he gathers so much information through senses and makes a sense out of this world. Sense education means training the senses for their fullest utilization. In order to achieve that, there is a need to remove any obstruction of senses which can be done by 'Nadi Shuddhi' (Sharma: 2000, 62)<sup>7</sup>. On the mind education, he argues that to study a particular kind of subject one needs to develop a specific kind of mind. For example, to learn science, one needs to engage in inquiry, analysis, and investigation. For learning Philosophy, one should have a sense of curiosity, while learning arts would appeal to the students' imitation and imagination.

On this point, Radhakrishnan advocated "integral insight" in order to understand the truth which is spiritual in nature. Sense perception and mental exercises are not enough to reach that stage. In this regard, education plays an important role, according to him, as it triggers the intuitive notion that



ultimately leads to self-realization. Radhakrishnan asserts that education should aim at the pursuit of the “Integral insight” that can satisfy the infinite soul (Radhakrishnan: 1979, 33)<sup>8</sup>. Education, he believed, would automatically solve ethical and moral problems if we educate people with this approach.

While Gandhi aimed to build the character of students; for him character is more important than literacy. He gives immense importance to abstinence; for him abstinence means consistent efforts to find God in least possible time. His views on education include austerity and simple living. He gave tremendous emphasis to honor others; and emphasized values like tolerance, sympathy and benevolent thoughts and deeds. Gandhi proposes an ideal character and values that one should follow. On the contrary, Krishnamurti’s approach on character is different from his. Krishnamurti does not recommend following ideals, rather, he inspires one to find one’s own ways to live. For that he relies on understanding one’s desires and mind rather than following some ideal characters.

Gandhi emphasized on the moral and spiritual role of education. Moral role of education comes in the form of character building; for him it is the end goal of education. The character and life of a teacher is the main source of building good character according to him. Ancient education system of ‘Gurukul’ was greatly admired by Gandhi (1997, 75-78)<sup>9</sup>. He established Gujarati Vidyapeeth on the basis of the ancient education system. Like (unlike Krishnamurti) most of the educationists, the realization of God is the end of education for Gandhi. For him, God’s realization leads to self-realization and both are interrelated. On the other hand, Krishnamurti talks about self realization but he does not relate it with the realization of God. In fact, he was quite critical of such notions like God, authority and traditions.

Radhakrishnan, unlike Krishnamurti, also supported and encouraged religious instruction in schools (1926). However, these instructions were not based on a single religion but rather on the common themes found in all religions. As opposed to J Krishnamurti, who criticized any popular figure's ideation and emulation, Radhakrishnan opined that thoughts and life of great religious figures such as Buddha, Mahavir, Jesus, Kabir and Nanak etc. should be included in the syllabus. In this sense, Krishnamurti's educational philosophy departs from tradition more radically. Radhakrishnan finds spiritual education a fundamental to any education system. In his words, "Sensitive and informed minds believe that the fundamental needs of the world, far deeper than any social, political or economic re-adjustment, is a spiritual re-awakening, a recovery of faith." (Radhakrishnan: 1955, 119)<sup>10</sup>

On the basis of the above discussion, it is evidently clear that Gandhi and Radhakrishnan along with Krishnamurti were concerned for the person who is learning rather than going into the techniques etc. They both are fascinated by the impact of education on that person. But there is a difference of approach between both the thinkers. Gandhi is promoting idealism to solve the problem of degradation of human values and character. On the other hand, Krishnamurti criticized the approach of creating ideals and making students follow them.

## **Individual Learning, Freedom and Creativity**

Second point that is brought up by all the thinkers, especially Ivan, Tagore and Krishnamurti, is the importance of individual learning instead of being governed by an institution. Ivan criticized institutions for harming individuality and creating a mechanized environment of learning. On the other hand,



Krishnamurti criticized institutions like religion, society and state etc. for promoting a pattern driven learning which is based on conditioning of students. Ivan also criticized these institutions for providing packaged knowledge which does not promote individual efforts for innovation. Thinkers like Tagore and Gandhi were also against the rotten learning and promoted education which is a product of individual experience and observation. Based on this discussion, we can conclude that the more education is free from authority the more it promotes innovation and creative thinking.

In education freedom, joy and creativity were advocated by Tagore; without these, education becomes just boredom and energy less dead activity. He advocated play way in early education as it develops free and spontaneous expression of creativity. Learning by activity in a natural way makes the children sensitive. If a child is not sensible then education just becomes a mechanical process to train the mind without leaving any space for creativity.

Dewey, like Krishnamurti, also suggested that the aim of education should not be decided by an educator. It is the student who chooses his aim of education. Remembering his school days, Dewey said that schools in his time were full of an artificial atmosphere dominated by books & exams and tense students (Dewey: 1899, 25)<sup>11</sup>. He encouraged students' natural urge for questioning and discovering the truth. He says, "*A thought is not a thought, unless it is one's own.*" (Dewey: 1899, 50) Though, he did not support that students' interest should be followed freely without any direction. He advocated that these interests should be utilized in a controlled and fostered manner for specific purposes and long term goals. Besides that Dewey, like Krishnamurti, was against rote learning and too many facts in the schools rather he supported inquisitive nature and learning with experiences.

Like Gandhi, Ivan Illich criticized modern industrial society and age which is quite relevant for the developing countries as well. The basis of his criticism is that the institutions and intended technology has harmed individual autonomy to the worst. As per him, these institutions and professionals promote dehumanization in the society. He explained that modern society believes too much in creating institutions for everything and that eventually makes an individual's life more and more mechanized. In the long run, this process underestimates the capabilities of humans and reduces confidence. The result comes in the form of reducing problem solving capacity in humans and killing of human relationships.

He criticized too much professionalism and expert advice in our daily life. In his book 'Disabling Professions' he expressed that established medical hospitals are actually a threat to human health. Experts and expert advice on every matter hinders the spread of knowledge as they have said on that matter and decides what legitimate knowledge is. The result of this expertise and specializations comes in the form of commoditization of education. The process makes learning a 'thing' in place of an 'activity'. Like other commodities, education is also being sold and becoming scarce. This way, knowledge is converted into a profession which is a means of exploitation. He said: "*In school we learn to consume packaged learning in the form of curriculum. Like other modern consumer products*" (Illich: 1997, 12)<sup>12</sup>.

## **Education as First Hand Observation**

Krishnamurti does not accept any end to the education, it is a living process. According to him, the essence of education is in the non-verbal rather than the verbal form of communication. Education helps one to



uncover deep relations with the trees, birds and humans. In order to make this relationship intense, he advocates going beyond the thoughts. Thoughts distort any relationship by jumping to already established facts and conclusions about someone or something. The perfect looking, listening, and learning can only occur when the mind is clear of preoccupied notions. As soon as the relationship ends, attention vanishes. Things can only be seen by attentive minds, which require great alertness and interest in the world around them. By contrast, the ordinary mind tries to build an opinion or conclusion based on previous information, which halts learning. Krishnamurti's philosophy of education is an extraordinary effort that focuses on learning and not just knowledge full of facts and opinions presented by others (Rajagopal: 2001, 100-102)<sup>13</sup>.

Education, for Krishnamurti, is something which aspire a learner to investigate. The purpose of his education is not changing humans intellectually but touching the deeper levels of his/her being. He insisted on 'understanding', which is not the result of thoughts, knowledge or scientific brain rather, it comes immediately with the observation of vast sky, ocean or a snow capped beauty of the mountain. The essence of his education and life is to experience the whole world beyond fragmentation and pettiness. This education opens the door to the new dimension of life which is based on insight. Insight is not a calculated or remembered activity rather it is without memory and time; it is an action without decision. The word insight indicates inward perception. According to Prof. David Bohm who is a theoretical physicist, insight is looking into the essence of the contend, it is to be understood but at the same time looking at the mind which is involved in the understanding of that contend. Krishnamurti calls it '*choiceless awareness*' sometimes. This point links to the self-awareness in the thoughts of Krishnamurti. It also covers learning to do and learning to be both the aspects (Shringy: 1977, 270)<sup>14</sup>.

While Tagore felt that through education human beings can attain true knowledge and become mature. He was a naturalist and wished that education would return to nature. So, he emphasized on the education which is direct or first hand. This is where one can compare Tagore with Krishnamurti as he also points out the importance of firsthand knowledge (Chakrabarti: 1988, 35)<sup>15</sup>. In this regard, Tagore was influenced by Rousseau and Wordsworth while for Krishnamurti first hand information is important because it helps a person to live with the present. Here it is important to understand that Tagore was a naturalist in terms of not only theory but he also applied it in real life conditions. Bringing young children closer to nature is very important in the twenty-first century, as human interaction with nature is becoming less and less because of technological advancements. Though, to live in a sustainable manner human-nature has to be deeper and dynamic instead of exploitative.

On the first hand knowledge, Aurobindo emphasized concentration in the education of mind. A student should know the subject through all his senses. He/she should observe, analyze, concise and systemize it; this process must go on until he understands it as a whole. Aurobindo's notion of concentration is comparable to Krishnamurti's notion of observation (Aurobindo: 1921, 20)<sup>16</sup>. According to Krishnamurti, we should look at an object as it is without prejudice or past knowledge. Although there are differences between the two, Krishnamurti suggests looking at an object without comparing it with other objects, while Aurobindo advocates comparison and contrast in order to understand it.



## Mother Tongue as a Medium

Gandhi and Tagore were great supporters of mother tongue as a medium of education while Krishnamurti specifically did not say anything on this matter. Gandhi refuted English as a medium of education and was inspired by the countries which were able to make great scientific developments without using English as a medium of education. He criticized English as a medium of education because it makes students more prone to unnecessary stress, cramming and imitation. Students are unable to produce anything new and innovative because of this. Furthermore, students educated in a foreign language unintentionally isolate themselves from the rest of their society.

Gandhi states in his words:

*The foreign medium has caused brain-fag, put an undue strain upon the nerves of our children, made them crammers and imitators, unfitted them for original work and thought, and disabled them for filtrating their learning to the family or masses. The foreign medium has made our children practically foreigners in their own land. (Bose: 1948, 346)<sup>17</sup>*

Tagore gave importance to the connectivity between life and education; and for that he advocated mother tongue as means for education. As he finds native tongue effective, fastest and best in order to impart education (Chakrabarti: 1988). Though, he was not against learning English. As far as curriculum is concerned, he was in favor of a curriculum which fulfills students' aesthetical, spiritual and vocational needs. The curriculum should have both physical and mental activities in the real life situation. So, a child can develop his/her potential. On the question of the medium of language in education; Radhakrishnan, like Tagore and Gandhi, was in favor of regional languages for education. However, Krishnamurti never explicitly focused on this issue.

## Making a Bridge between Inner and Outer Needs

To educate a child, it is essential to understand his psychological and social needs, or else the whole purpose of education will be missed. In this regard, S. Radhakrishnan stressed upon the importance of respecting the child's individuality and self-consciousness. Similar to Krishnamurti, he believed in awakening children's internal intelligence. He says:

*In this country different races and religions, creeds and clans contributed to the making of the pattern of our culture. Children must be taught history of different nations where they will perceive their uniqueness. They must be taught, even, they are very young, the elements of science and technology. They must be given glimpses into world literature, so that their own minds are sharpened and feelings refined. It is my earnest desire that our children are treated as human beings and not as automata. (Radhakrishnan: 1956, 342)<sup>18</sup>*

Being aware of modern needs, he took science and technology education very seriously. He repeatedly emphasized that we should be searching for facts and realities that will improve the lives of human beings in the world. Science, according to him, is the most important means to attain it. Besides giving so much importance to science and livelihood, he believed, like Gandhi, that education without spiritual and moral values is no education. He finds spiritual education fundamental to any education system. In his words,



"Sensitive and informed minds believe that the fundamental needs of the world, far deeper than any social, political or economic re-adjustment, is a spiritual reawakening, a recovery of faith." (Radhakrishnan: 1955, 119)<sup>19</sup>

Education thus is a means of pushing humans toward their ultimate goal. Further, He suggests that the "Attainment of this is possible only when man attains his deepest self by losing his selfish ego" (Radhakrishnan: 1956, 30)<sup>20</sup>. This attainment is not possible only at the level of logic or mind but intuition and self-experience is much needed for it. Thus, Radhakrishnan balanced science and spirituality without contradiction and gave equal weight to both. Like Krishnamurti, he believes that inward quality should not be sacrificed in order to achieve outward efficiency. This is why, for him, an education which does not contain spirituality is not education at all. The assumption is that if someone does not have a spiritual perspective, he would not be able to utilize his/her full potential on a physical and mental level.

### **Significance of Life-Long Learning**

All these prominent educationists agree that education is a lifelong process, not restricted to schools or colleges or to a particular age group. When making a picture of holistic education, one should keep this in mind and create an environment conducive to this kind of education. Additionally, education is a dynamic process that must evolve to meet the changes in society. Therefore, we should not stick to one pattern of education for too long as it becomes a tradition. The content and methodology for education needs to be upgraded as per the demands of social needs. Dewey was against assigning the fixed final goal to education as life is changing every day. So the aims of education must be changing according to the present requirements. Dewey says, "The process of education is a continuous process of adjustment, having as its aim at every stage and added capacity to growth" (Dewey: 1916, 61)<sup>21</sup>.

Education, for Gandhi, is a natural and continuous developing process. Humans are educating themselves from the very beginning of their existence. Whatever he has learned is called education. It is not like a seed which can be given to anyone rather it is a continuous ever evolving phenomenon. Here Gandhi's views are like Krishnamurti who also finds education as a continuous life process that is why his letters to the schools are published in a book called 'The Whole Movement of Life is Learning'.

Similarly, Dewey does not accept the idea that education begins when a child starts going to school rather education is a process that goes throughout the life. According to him, the inner and outer perspective of an individual keeps changing with the time span. Humans face new challenges in life and readjust themselves according to the changing environment. This change of experience and perspective is education for Dewey. Education is life in itself rather than preparation for life.

### **Society, Nature and Learning by Activity**

Second, all these thinkers agree that education should be closely tied to life. It should not be separated from the demands of time and people, as it becomes the cause of boredom and makes people less energetic. In doing so, Gandhi distinguishes between learning and knowledge of letters. In his experiments, Dewey found that, if education is disconnected from society, it isn't education at all. Similarly, Tagore and





Krishnamurti point out the importance of nature in a student's learning. Such efforts are designed to make education as close to our lives as possible.

This point is linked to the previous one, since both of them emphasize the importance of changing the educational model from time to time. It is for this reason that Tagore and Gandhi put so much emphasis on learning by doing. Through this type of learning, young students become more engaged and prevent learning from becoming monotonous and disconnected from life. Recent studies suggest that young people learn best when they are engaged in an activity. Education becomes playful and lasting when this occurs.

Similarly, Tagore suggested that learning through discussion question and answer sessions make the students' knowledge lively, active and less bookish. Besides that discussion develops the ability of students to think logically. While activity based learning is the best way to learn anything as it activates every part of body and mind. This is the very reason which encouraged him to make handicraft a compulsory subject in his school and university.

Gandhi doesn't equate education with bookish knowledge alone. Rather asserts that if education is only about knowledge of letters, then it is an instrument to be used or abused (1997, 82)<sup>22</sup>. As a tool, it can be used for the betterment of humankind, or to destroy it. According to Gandhi, knowledge of letters is like a weapon and we have seen the ill use of it in the past in this period of miscommunication and ill-effects of science & technology, we can clearly see the significance of Gandhi's skepticism about knowledge of words. Similar issues are raised by Herbert Marcuse in his book *One Dimensional man*. Gandhi says, "*We daily observe that many men abuse it (education) and very few make good use of it; if this is a correct statement, we have proved that more harm has been done by it than good.*" (*ibid*, 82) Generally, education just means knowledge of letters; Gandhi cites an example of a farmer who does not know how to write his name but he knows about the world, family and rules of morality. In this case, if we urge him to get educated (which is knowledge of letters) what happiness does it add to his life? Gandhi suggests here we should not follow the path just because of floods of western ideas; rather we should weigh pros and cons of this education.

Considering the poor society of that time, he created a plan for basic education which is not a burden on the parents of a student. As this education is based on, 'learning through activity' as well as giving dignity to manual work and skills. Gandhi based his social philosophy of 'Sarvodaya' on the foundation of educational philosophy that he proposed. Making one independent and being able to earn his/her livelihood was the main aim of education for Gandhi. Due to prevailing poverty in India at that time, he felt that education should ensure basic earning first.

Dewey, like Krishnamurti, criticized the aloofness of education from the life and separation between school and home. Though, their approach towards society may be different but they both think that the change in individuals will eventually change society. During his experiments on education, he found four main problems that require attention and he listed them in his book 'The School and Society'. These are: a] school, home and society should come closer to one another. b] There is a need to create a subject matter which is directly related to the life of a student in a positive way. He wanted to find a way in which the symbols of reading, writing and mathematics can be linked to the everyday experiences of



life. So a student feels better connection with them. C] To evolve a teaching method that gives utmost importance to the students (Dewey: 1899)<sup>23</sup>.

Dewey was of the view that there is a strong connection between democratic society and democratic methods of education in schools. In his book ‘School and society’ he wrote, “*Democracy has to be born anew every generation, and education is its midwife.*” (ibid 27) He emphasized on a strong bond between learner’s life and schools; for him schools are not places where the lessons are broadcasted which may or may not be useful in the learner's life. So schools should provide that foundation which can make them an important contributor to society. With these skills, they can use their mind for the improvement of themselves and the society. He defined education by this social interaction he says:

*Society exists through a process of transmission quite as much as biological life. The transmission occurs by means of ideals, hopes, expectations, standards, and opinions from those members of society who are passing out of the group to those who are coming into it. Without this, social life could not survive.* (Dewey: 1916, 3)<sup>24</sup>

It is found by Illich that modern schools are incapable of producing skilled people, even after so many claims. J. Krishnamurti also feels in the same way that schools are hindering in finding the right vocation to a person. This is why; Ivan favored partial Deschooled society and suggested much of the learning should take place at home and society as knowledge is not packed rather related to real life. On this point, we can find similarities between Gandhi and Ivan when it comes to preferring practical knowledge over words of letters; both are on the same page but their approach to the alternative is different.

## **Education and Discipline**

Next significant thematic point is related to the views of these educators on discipline. Krishnamurti and other philosophers oppose imposing discipline on students by authority. In this regard, Tagore and Krishnamurti are very close to each other. Krishnamurti supports ‘order’ in place of discipline, as order is governed by self-awareness and sensitivity within oneself instead of forced outer discipline. While Tagore advocates that students should maintain their affairs by themselves; he allows maximum freedom to students as it opens the door for creativity.

On the point of ‘order’ Krishnamurti is criticized for giving so much importance to sensitivity which promotes a kind of abstractness and raises some questions. Is it possible that every child comes to that level of sensitivity to manage his or her acts? Here one can find that the idea of Aurobindo on discipline looks much more practical as it balances between freedom of students and managing the orderliness. Aurobindo suggests that the imposed discipline cannot make students moral; rather a student should himself/herself understand the importance of discipline. If students understand the value of it, then only they can shape themselves as better individuals. Instead of imposing discipline on students, he favors guided instruction to make this possible (Krishnamurti: 2008, 21)<sup>25</sup>.

## **On The Role of Teachers**

As far as teachers are concerned, he took the ancient Indian view, like Aurobindo, that teachers should be ideals for the students by their conduct. The teachers have a great role in shaping the heart and mind of their pupils and eventually the society. This is why the Radhakrishnan Commission recommended a higher



salary for teachers so that they would be more motivated to work hard. To ensure that teachers are aware of the latest and upgraded methods and techniques to educate students, the commission recommended that teachers' training.

If we compare Tagore and Krishnamurti with the western educational thinkers regarding the teacher-student relation, they both seem to suggest the same thing. Unlike western thinkers who give more importance to methods and technique, these thinkers focus on the relationships between teachers and students. The more teachers are full of love, patience and joy the learning would be more effective. They both give great emphasis on the attitude of the teacher that they should have towards students. A teacher should believe that her student is full of love and innocence. Tagore shares his own experience in this regard:

*Of the teachers, I remember only one, whose language was so foul that, out of sheer contempt for him, I steadily refused to answer any one of his questions. I learnt about all the injustice, impatience, anger and partiality underlying the process of instruction, more easily than my lessons. (Tagore: 1931, 69)<sup>26</sup>*

Tagore like Krishnamurti criticized the bookish and exam oriented educational system as it is evidently against the nature of a young child. He was in favor of daily practice of students to see what they are learning instead of exams. In place of books Tagore was in favor of 'constructive engagement' of students by teachers. Like Krishnamurti, he also thinks that a person cannot teach anyone if he or she is not learning at the same time. In order to explain this in his words, he writes:

*A lamp can never light another lamp unless it continues to burn its own flame. The teacher who has come to the end of his subject, who has no living traffic with his knowledge, but merely repeats his lessons to his students, can only load their minds; he cannot quicken them.*

Aurobindo suggests that a child should develop and evolve oneself; teachers are just the guiding force here. These thoughts of Aurobindo are like Krishnamurti who proposes no imitations of teachers by students. Secondly, according to Aurobindo, education should match the qualities, abilities, and ideas of the students. Every individual and community should have an education system which suits its nature. The fundamental idea behind this is to follow one's 'Svadharmā' in order to achieve the goals faster and smoothly.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the above analysis, we can conclude that holistic education should first balance between the outer and inner needs of modern human beings. In order to achieve this it should be revised from time to time and the training of the teachers should be done accordingly. Second, it should be very much linked to the lives instead of based on abstract ideas. For that only bookish knowledge is not necessary, rather learning by activity, observation and experience should be given an important role in education. Here, so much emphasis on institutions and specialized knowledge should be redrawn towards individual creative thinking. Innovative thinking can be promoted in many ways such as open environment, freedom to students and creating the atmosphere for debate and discussion instead of dissemination of knowledge by



teachers. Holistic education must accept the uniqueness of every student and develop ways to promote their possibilities through education rather than comparing them with one another.

If we look at UNESCO's goals that it has defined for education in various reports over the last 50 years. We can refer to a report "Learning: The Treasure Within" published by UNESCO under the chairmanship of Jacques Delors. It mentions four pillars of education for holistic development - Learning to know, learning to Do, Learning to be and Learning to Live Together. Learning to know implies being able to direct and be responsible for one's own learning, for staying informed, for knowing where to find information. Learning to do implies putting what one has learned into practice. It is closely related to vocational-technical education and work skills training. Learning to be entails discovering and interacting with one's true nature, this is beyond thoughts and emotions. This requires learning to live responsibly, to respect and cooperate with other people and, in general, with all living organisms (Dash: 2015, 21-25)<sup>27</sup>.

While situating the discussed themes in this paper with the framework of four goals prescribed by UNESCO, we find some common points between both. The understanding prescribed by these thinkers of Self-knowledge is very similar to the aim of learning to be prescribed by UNESCO. The point of Individual learning, freedom and creativity discussed above is quite close to UNESCO's first aim of learning to know. In the four goals emphasized by UNESCO the significance of mother tongue as medium of education is not emphasized, however all thinkers except Krishnamurti were great supporters of it. Significance of life-long learning connects to two of the aim of UNESCO i.e. learning to know and learning to do. The point of Society, nature and learning by activity elaborates and uncovers various dimensions of UNESCO's fourth goal - learning to live together. Thus, these philosophical themes should be focused with their development according to the precise needs of this century.

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