

# The Comparative Analysis over Women Education via Tagore and Gandhi

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## ABSTRACT

The concept of education in Indian context is always considered as the source of enlightenment and authority which changes and enables our country for advanced and collaborative development of our physical, mental, and intellectual faculties. Equality for women is a central social requirement. Women play an important part in the growth and evolvement of family. Women education is now regarded as the backbone of India's social and national development. In this paper I am going to discuss the multiple visions of Tagore and Gandhi towards women education. Tagore was one of the greatest followers of women education. And Gandhi was also the supporter of women education. The present paper discusses the importance of women education in India. The vision of Tagore and Gandhi towards women education has been restrained the contribution of both philosophers regarding women education a comparative study. In today's context their observations on women education are of utmost importance.

**Keywords:** Education, Tagore, Gandhi, women education, equality

The concept of education in Indian context is always considered as the source of enlightenment and authority which changes and enables our country for advanced and collaborative development in realms of physical, mental, and intellectual faculties. Education is the sole base of improvement and the responsibility of a well organized and built society as well as democracy. The relevance of this need is always indispensable. It is one of the most effective tools to meet the challenges faced by a nation and society. Only education can emancipate the people with knowledge and the confidence essential for building a dynamic, cohesive nation, capable of providing its people a purposeful life. We find a keen and vital interest among the people in India and abroad that there is something unique about Indian women as they are seen to be taking part at the utmost level of headship and assessment making with self-assurance. In current period of time, a woman in both India and abroad has to discover themselves and push their case for a more balanced and essential place in hierarchal male-dominated

society. It is challenges and creates jeopardy situation for both men and women to evaluate them again. The women's emancipation movement has extended the area of such narrow minded belief.

The present current of thoughts has widened an interest among all kind of people over the world to know more about the rules being played by the altruistic people. In yore, during Vedic and Buddhism period, the condition of women was all right, because they (women) could get the same right of education along with men. But, by the time Muslim period started, the condition of women education worsened. And this very legacy of improvement continued during British government when some pieces of work directed to promote women education. In the contemporary time of Indian independence there was mass illiteracy, so the Indian government had to undertake measures to abolish illiteracy. Even though the provisions provide by the Indian constitution and a number of intellectual legislations removed so many obstacles against women in Indian society but there are

many problems existing at the present time. The continuing problems of dowry system, *Pardha* system, house oriented inclination etc. prove the lower status of women chiefly in the traditional Indian society. So, woman education is must-need for the growth of nation as a housewife and as an educated mother; a women can considerably help in lessening the incidence of illiteracy, poverty, unawareness and ill health of our adolescents. But this role transcends the frontier of her abrupt ambiance. For the first time, the concept of women education was introduced by Raja Ram Mohan Rai duly supported by many Indian philosophers from time to time. The same thought was popularized by Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi because they were concerned about the fading condition of women in India. And they imagined women education as the only remedial actions to develop women's status in society.

### Justification of the Problem

The idea of equal opportunity among men and women along with emancipation from traditional oppression has been the corner stone of Indian policy since independence. The National Education System seems to have played a constructive role in women education. The education of women is very crucial for happy and healthy homes, enhancement of society, economic richness and national harmony. Educating a girl is the cheapest and the most reliable instrument for the solidification of a nation as a whole.

Education for a girl is the key tool to provide novel opportunities for the advancement of society, where the spirits and provisions become an important social requirement. Women have to perform a significant role in the development and progress of family in dual manner. A country's magnitude is mainly attributed by the mode in which it shows reverence towards its women society. The good condition provides a strong and innovative base for the due welfare of the country. Education of women is an important part of didactic reconstruction in India. Both Tagore and Gandhi felt strangely for the emancipation of women through education. Both succored women education in their own methodology which proved to be a pivotal platform for the up-coming time. Here, the sole objective of this paper is how the two great Indian

educational philosophers understand their views and perspectives towards women education.

Women education is now thought to be a sine-qua-non of India's social and national improvement, which seems to be possible only through education of women. Because, it makes happier family life, better hygienic condition, and greater reduction in fertility rate, increased production and economic prosperity. Apart from this, the further reason for undertaking the study is that earlier researchers did not find to have drawn comparison between these two educational philosophers with special reference to their concept of women education. Thus, investigator was inspired to study Tagore and Gandhi's views regarding women education. That is why; he was motivated to take it up as a topic of research.

### Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the importance of women education in Indian context in as a historiography model;
2. To study the contribution of Rabindranath Tagore towards women education through his theoretical and empirical modalities;
3. To study the pragmatic and normative aspects of Mahatma Gandhi towards women education from multiple point of views;
4. To scrutinize the critical and philosophical views of Tagore and Gandhi with reference to women education as the tool of emancipation;

### Procedure

In this context of the paper, my research tries to find a possible solution of multiple problems related to women education. It attempts to answer a question or to determine the relation between two or more variables. There are numerous problems in the field of education all over the world. A scientific and successful solution of these problems is not an easy task to be performed. We need a proper and contextual research for solving these problems. So, it is both a systematic and empirical attempt to find out an answer about phenomenon or event through application of scientific procedure. It is an objective, impartial and logical analysis and recording of collected observations that may lead to the development of generalizations and principles.

Further, it may result to some extent in production and control of events that may be consequences of specific phenomena. My research involves gathering new data and putting them in a systematic way.

After the problem has been ducted, the next task is to define and delimit it. A researcher must be certain that he knows exactly what his problem is before he begins working on it. Research means a serious effort to put collected data into a systematic way. It is not a speedy task; but requires one to proceed in a definite direction along with well defined lines. Mere a collection of bits of information is not research in both technical and theoretical mode. Planning and due procedure for the study are essential tools to save it from here and there. It goes without saying that the ultimate success of the research project greatly depends upon the method employed therein.

Every investigator's task is to gather the best needed information from the most suitable and reliable sources. S/he must employ the most available refined techniques for this purpose. But it will not be out of place to state that neither the technique nor the source can be thoroughly perfect. There are various methods with their help a researcher can precede in getting multiple sorts of results and observations. In this respect, my thorough research analysis is philosophical and historical in nature. So, the researcher has adopted historical method. The methodology followed in the study, is more or less descriptive. It is a philosophical study where the analytical approach has been followed. Following the pattern of historical method of research, the investigator has collected the data and analyzed the data collected and then presented the facts. While collecting data, the investigator consulted the two types of sources- Primary and Secondary sources.

In primary sources, the investigator will take the help from the writings of Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi, archives, memories, biographies, diaries, personal letters and books on the philosophy of both the scholars. Investigator in his study has gone through and taken help from secondary sources also. In secondary sources, he would consult many books of different writers and authors, different journals, magazines, articles, research abstracts and pamphlets published by different universities from time to time.

The investigator tried to present the fact accurately and objectively in this paper. The researcher has also tried honestly to compare the educational ideas of Tagore and Gandhi towards women. It is library work confined to the works of Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi. Library work, through time consuming, is a fruitful phase of a research programme. The analytical approach has been appropriately followed in the research project. The investigator endeavored to analyze and interpret Tagore and Gandhi's views regarding women education.

### **Delimitations**

The present paper is a broad and comprehensive study in itself. Hence, it will be confined to the evolution of the Tagore and Gandhi's contribution towards the women education. Tagore and Gandhi's educational philosophy is the outcome of his general philosophy on the following aspects of education:

1. Aims of Education;
2. Curriculum;
3. Methods of teaching;
4. Role of teacher;

The researcher has to confine its study pertaining to the women education aspect, which served as the backbone for the development of human personality. Although the study seems to be limited, yet its ramification touched every important aspect of women education as visualized by Tagore and Gandhi. The vision of Tagore and Gandhi towards women education has been confined contribution of both philosophers regarding women education a comparative study.

### **Tagore's Views towards Women Education**

Tagore was one of the greatest supporters of women education. He viewed that man and women were complimentary to each other leading to the concept of mutual respect and need. He was one of the strongest champions of the cause of women. Therefore, he gave his views regarding different aspects to woman education. Through education, he wanted to bring harmony between man and nature and man and God. He recommended harmonious development of women's personality. That means, there should be physical, mental, moral and spiritual developments of girls through

education. Similarly, he wanted that girls should be economically independent. He also wanted to attain the freedom of mind and give importance to individual and social development of girls. As an internationalist, Tagore was in favour of developing international understanding and world citizenship among boys and girls. Apart from this, he also suggested that education could also bring about cultural and character development of girls.

Tagore's ideas reveal that women should be equal partner of men in all fields, neither subordinate nor superior. He expressed definite opinion towards women education. Unlike Rousseau, he was not against education of women. He wanted women of the country to come forward and lead in promoting women education. He wanted women to be true to their nature, real companions of men, standing by their side in movements of crises, sharing their anxiety and lending company in their grief. Such were his views on women's education. There was perhaps no stronger champion of the cause of women like him. He strongly advocated education for girls and equal status with them. But at the same, he held that women had their own sphere and their deeds were complementary to men as their competitor.

Tagore recommended same curriculum for girls and boys. He thought that girls should be taught different sciences like natural science, social sciences and especially domestic science must be compulsory for girls. To widen mental horizon of pupils, he wanted to include mathematics in curriculum. Tagore wanted to develop aesthetic sense among girls; therefore, he also introduced music, painting, dance and craft in curriculum. To make girls financially independent, Tagore also recommended agriculture and technical education for girls. Regarding medium of instruction he wanted that mother tongue should be adopted but he also did not deny the importance of foreign language. He also favored that religious education should be given to girls for their spiritual development.

In order to meet the aims of education for girls, Tagore had given different methods of teaching. He adopted realistic approach, activity principle and teaching while walking. He also suggested some teaching methods to teach girls, for example, he laid stress on discussion and questioning methods. Therefore, his methods of teaching were activity

centered. In spite of all these aspects, Tagore also wanted that girls should be aware of their rights. He wanted to educate girls so that they could get knowledge about their rights which are equal to men.

### **Gandhi's Views towards Women Education**

Gandhi was also a great emancipator of women education. He wished to improve the status of women in the country. He was of the view that needs and aptitude of women should be basis of their education. Like Tagore, he also had brought into light the different aspects of women education. He said that harmonious development of women's personality is possible only through education, hence, he emphasized on physical, mental, moral and spiritual development of women. Education should develop self-supporting capabilities in women. He wanted to provide that kind of education to the girls which leads to salvation i.e. freedom of mind. He was also conscious of both the individual and social development of girl pupils. Gandhi laid stress upon character building and he was of the opinion that character is the expression of the whole personality. He gives equal importance to cultural development of girls to the fullest of their growth in multiple realms.

Regarding curriculum, Gandhi suggested same curriculum for boys and girls up to fifth class. There should be natural sciences, social sciences and Mathematics in curriculum. After fifth class, domestic science should be introduced in schools especially for girls to teach them how to handle domestic problems. Gandhi also gives importance to music and drawing. He wanted to provide education through crafts to make girls economically independent. Gandhi was great advocate of native language and he also wanted to include religious education for girls in curriculum.

Gandhi has been of the view that women have to perform their separate responsibilities which are as important as that of men. In fact, both women and men are complimentary to each other none is superior to any other. So, women also should be given education according to their particular roles in life. They have not to compete with men, but there should be no bar for them to any avenue which is generally considered as more suitable for men. The Wardha Scheme has been so planned as

to be consistent with Gandhi's basic ideas regarding women education. Gandhi was very much worried about the deplorable condition of women in the country. He wanted to raise their social status. He desired that women should be given education according to their needs and aptitudes. He was of the view that as far as possible women teachers should be appointed for girls. He thought that married women should be appointed for girls. He thought that married women would be better teacher than unmarried ones, since they have a vast ocean of knowledge which could be beneficial for the girl students.

To make teaching effective, Gandhi suggested different principles for women education. He wanted to correlate all subjects with craft. He also believed in learning by doing and learning on the basis of self-experience. He suggested craft as a medium of imparting education for both girls and boys. He also advocated lecturing, questioning and project methods to teach boys and girls. Gandhi wanted that girls should realize their rights who are as capable as men. He wanted to provide the sort of education which was helpful for them.

### Main Findings of the Study

In the investigator judgment the following have been the principle findings of this work:

#### The Similarities

1. Tagore and Gandhi both advocate for harmonious development of women's personality through education.
2. Both stressed upon self-sufficiency among women which could be achieved through education.
3. Both recommend individual and social progress of girls through education.
4. Tagore and Gandhi agreed that domestic sciences should be included in the curriculum of girls' education.
5. Both Tagore and Gandhi are in favored of activity method for imparting instructions in educational institutions.
6. Tagore and Gandhi assign an important place to hand work or craft in the scheme of women education.

7. Both stresses that mother tongue should be the medium of instruction in schools.
8. Both are conscious about deplorable condition of women in country therefore, they were conscious about benefits of educating the women.

#### The Dissimilarities

1. Tagore and Gandhi recommend education of national culture to women but its scope differs. Gandhi devises the scheme of education strictly for Indian children but Tagore wants to bring about a harmony between the east and the west.
2. Tagore recommends similar education to boys and girls but Gandhi laid stress that on that women should be given education according to her needs.
3. Gandhi gives more importance to character and cultural development of girls as compared to Tagore
4. Gandhi and Tagore stress upon self-sufficiency among women. Gandhi advocates for earning while learning but Tagore does not agree with it.
5. Tagore gives stress upon education to a woman who leads to world citizenship but Gandhi importance to women education for national citizenship.
6. Tagore laid stress upon imparting technical education to women whereas Gandhi favoured mainly craft-based education.

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