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REVIEW ARTICLE

THE NATIONAL RENAISSANCE AND ITS IMPACT ON THE FRAME AND FEATURES OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN INDIA

The National Renaissance and Its Impact on the Frame and Features of the Educational System in India

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The educational system of a country will normally be a product of a variety of factors that characterize the life of the people of that country. Different countries have different patterns of education, depending on the social, religious, linguistic, cultural, political and economic factors. India is no exception as almost all these factors have had helped the shaping of the educational system in the subcontinent. This chapter attempts to analyse the predominant factors and the remarkable events that prompted the growth of India's national renaissance and their direct and indirect impact on India's field of education and how far they affected the soul and content of educational pattern in Kerala. Any study on Indian education will be incomplete unless it is accompanied by an attempt to examine and evaluate the educational ideas propounded by renowned reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, Annie Besant, Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo Ghosh and Mahatma Gandhi. They all, in their own way, contributed in rousing the national consciousness in the minds of the Indians in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries.

The need for a system of national education began to be felt in India due to many factors. The inspiring role played by great men and women of the Indian national Renaissance can never be minimized. The contributions of Sri Aurobindo, Tagore and Gandhi deserve special mention as their views on education had a profound impact during the days of India's national insurgency.

This can be fully understood only in the perspective of economic, political, social and cultural life of the Indian people, particularly during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when the British were rather riding safe in the Indian political arena. By establishing their rule in India the British also tried to impose their educational system and cultural ideas on the Indian people. This new western culture and education gave birth to a new awakening in India. The most distinctive achievement of the British educationists was the creation of a new system of education the main objective of which was to spread western literature and

science. This new knowledge exposed the weakness of the Indian society. It was this educational system that made itself mainly responsible for the modern renaissance in the Indian life and society. Thoughtful Indians began to realize the defects of their society and looked for possible remedial measures. In social and religious spheres the new education was causing positive and valuable changes. The influence of the new education was noticeable in Hindu society because it was the Hindu society that needed much reform. Many social evils such as the caste system, untouchability, sati, etc. could be eradicated only with the help of this new type of education. At the same time there arose a strong feeling for religious reform. The main torch-bearer among them was Rajaram Mohan Roy, the founder of Brahmo Samaj. Other social and religious reformers included Swami Dayanad Saraswathi who founded the Arya Samaj, the Ramakrishna Mission started under the leadership of Swami Vivekananda and the Theosophical Society of Annie Besant. These movements, while trying to reform religion and society, were fully aware of the importance of education as a tool in arousing the national consciousness and national regeneration. Their leadership and legacies substantially helped in evolving a national system of education in India.

The culmination of the above forces gave rise to a new type of national consciousness -- i.e., nationalism. Nationalism was a revolutionary force not only in the field of politics but it exercised a powerful influence in the field of education also. Nationalism is a complex term involving a number of factors — past, present and future -- which lend solidarity to a group of people living on a compact territory. Hans Kohn in his book 'The Idea of Nationalism' observes:

Nationalism is a state of mind permeating the large majority of a people and claiming to permeate all its members; it recognizes the nation state as the ideal form of political organization and the nationality as the source of all creative cultural energy and economic well-being. The supreme loyalty of man is

therefore to his own nationality as his own life is supposedly rooted in and made possible by its welfare. In other words, the concept of nationalism is indicative of a psychological feeling which stresses the loyalty of the individual to the nation state. Therefore nationalism is basically a feeling or sentiment of belonging to and the loyalty for a politically independent group, living in a common territory.

The concept of 'National Education' is a product of Nationalism. The rise of Nationalism had its effects in the field of education too. Even greater was the effect of the new education in the political life of the country. As the momentum of the national struggle increased, people began to be more conscious of the defects and weakness of the educational system sponsored and controlled by the foreign rulers.[^] It was generally felt that, the prevalent system of education would help the British to establish and preserve their rule and that it must be replaced by a national system of education which would be more suited to the interests of the Indian people.

During the first seven decades of the nineteenth century the attention of the educated Indians was drawn mainly towards the social and religious reforms. Majority of the educated Indians took to social and religious programmes, because it was more convenient to have reform movements rather than organizing political agitation.

But soon the educated young felt that mere social and religious work alone would not solve the problems before the country and that the best possible and the most effective way to bring about a regeneration of India was through a political control of the government. There was no doubt that national consciousness was fostered by the British system of education. The movement arose primarily from the condition created by the British rule and its exploitation in the economic, social, political and educational fields. It was, in fact, the result of the intrinsic nature of imperialism and also of its harmful impact on the lives of the people that a powerful anti-imperialist movement gradually arose and developed in India. It united the people from different classes and sections of the society who shed their differences to unite against the common political enemy. It was in these circumstances that a political agitation slowly grew up and led to the establishment of the Indian National Congress in 1885. Although the chief aim of the congress was to achieve political independence for the country, it became, especially in the twentieth century, a great force in the realm of education. People like Gokhale, Tagore, Aurobindo and Gandhi took keen interest in the educational needs and problems of the country and sought to convert the then existing system of Indian education into a national mould. So the Indian Nationalism, viewed from the broader perspective, passed through two distinctive stages, i.e., the 'religious cum cultural stage' and the 'political stage'. These two stages contributed much to Indian education and sought to

evolve a national system of education for India in the long run.

Religious Cum Cultural Stage Many Indians realized that social and religious reformation was an essential condition for the all round development of the country on modern lines and for the growth of national unity and solidarity. So there appeared a number of reformer saints, scholars and educators who tried to purify some of the social customs and traditions by condemning the evils existing in the society as such. While trying to reform religion and society they focused the attention of the people on the essentials and told them to ignore the non-essentials to suit the real needs of the Indian society.

The central figure in this new awakening was Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who is rightly regarded as one of the great leaders of modern India. He worked hard all his life for the development of social, religious, intellectual and political regeneration of the people of India. The Indian renaissance of the nineteenth century was an outcome of this general awakening and a number of indigenous movements emerged, which ultimately transformed the entire social and religious life in India. Of all these movements, the Brahma Samaj was the pioneer movement and the credit goes to Raja Ram Mohan Roy for founding this pioneer national movement of India. The nature of Brahma Samaj was essentially non-sectarian. It was wedded to the basic principles of Universalism which contributed the guiding ideal of its founder. Under the influence of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Brahma Samaj touched several aspects of Indian life namely, law, matrimony, social customs, religion and education.

The work of Ram Mohan Roy as an educationalist did a signal service to the social and national fabric of India. He was one of the earliest Indians to realize that India's greatest need was a synthesis of eastern and western cultures. This great vision made Raja Ram Mohan Roy's prophet of modern India. The greatest contribution of Raja Ram to the modern system of education was the introduction of western education, the study of English language and western sciences, in the country. He felt that the spread of English education must inevitably result in the raising of moral, social and political life of his backward and degenerate countrymen. In other words, he did so because he earnestly desired to bring India into the full current of modern thought and civilization. Furthermore, he identified himself with almost every scheme that was set on foot for the promotion of education of a modern and practical type. The first English school founded on the initiative of Raja Ram Mohan Roy was the Hindu College which was later transformed into the Presidency College. He played a leading role in putting the idea into a concrete form and gave most enthusiastic assistance to Hare and Duff in their educational projects.

Another great contribution of Raja Ram Mohan to modern education was his emphasis on the study of modern Indian languages. He himself gave the lead in this direction by writing books in Bengali on Grammar, Geography, Astronomy and Geometry. Equally was the Raja's advocacy of the education of women. His Brahmo Samaj did a great service in removing the prejudices against the education of women that were prevalent in the then Hindu society.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy may rightly be called the precursor of the modern system of education in India. His moral earnestness and untiring energy, his boldness of imagination and firm grasp of first principles mark out Raja Ram Mohan Roy not merely as a great educational

The next important national movement, which emerged in the country was the Arya Samaj Movement founded by Swami Dayanand Saraswati. Like Brahmo Samaj, it was also primarily a socio-religious movement working within the frame work of Hinduism. The aim of the Arya Samaj was twofold: to protect Hinduism from the attacks of Islam and Christianity, and, to reform the perverted Hinduism to that of the puranic age by reviving the original force of Hinduism as profounded in the Vedas. For achieving the ideas of Arva Samaj, Swami Dayanand and his followers found that it was necessary to start a new system of education. For this they themselves took to the task of founding schools and colleges in which the youth of the country would be trained in the vedic atmosphere. They fought against untouchability and the regidities of the hereditary caste system. All persons were to enjoy equal social and religious privileges. So the Arya Samajists were vigorous advocates of social reform and worked actively to improve the condition of women and to spread education among them. This was a movement which aimed at welding the whole of the Hindu society into a powerful and homogeneous mass.[^]

The Ramakrishna Mission, started in Bengal in 1897 under the leadership of Swami Vivekananda, was another reformist movement of great importance. The patriotic vision of Swami Vivekananda helped him to understand almost all the major problems of Indian society. It was his firm belief that the root cause of the backwardness of the Indian masses was their ignorance. He considered education the only remedy for improving the condition of the people. By education he wanted to regain the lost individuality and identity of the people and to regenerate the country. So he wanted to reorganize education on a national basis. In his own words, "we must have the whole education of our country, spiritual and secular, in our own hands, and it must be on national lines, through national methods as far as practicable". With such an education, Swami Vivekananda wanted to train the people of India into the various aspects of Indian customs and manners, culture and philosophy and

then acquire the knowledge of various civilizations of the world. This clearly indicates the nationalistic ideology of Swami Vivekananda in the field of education.

Despite his great admiration for the ancient culture of the country, Swami Vivekananda was not adverse to the good points of western culture and learning.[^] In fact, he put his weight behind the happy blending of western sciences and the Indian spiritual philosophy. So he accepted the idea of incorporating the teaching of western sciences and technology in the educational system of the country as an essential prerequisite of her all round progress.

Another important aspect in the educational plan of Swami Vivekananda was his vigorous advocacy for the upliftment of the masses and particularly the women. So he recommended that daughters should be brought up and educated just as sons. According to him, any sound scheme of national education for India could ill-afford to ignore the masses and women of India. He remarks:

Ignorance is the mother of all the evils and all the misery we see. Let men and women have light, let them be pure and spiritually strong and educated, then alone will misery cease in the world, not before.

Swami Vivekananda believed that knowledge resided within the individual himself and everyone is entitled to perfection and education was a means towards this end. So he considered education as a very important means to regenerate the country. To sum up, the Ramakrishna Mission brought about a spiritual renaissance in the realm of Hindu religion and philosophy which resulted in a widespread national awakening, manifesting itself in a patriotic feeling of pride in the great spiritual traditions of the country.

In the history of Modern India, the name of Annie Besant stands out as one of the great personalities, whose efforts have gone a long way in shaping the destiny of this country in modern times. Though English by birth, she regarded India as her own motherland and the people of India her own. During her lifetime she had been a great dynamic force behind the Theosophical Movement. She became the President of the Theosophical Sociey in 1907, after the death of the founder President Col. Olcott, and rendered her services to the society in the sphere of religious and social reform till her death in 1936. Mrs. Annie Besant is rated as one of the outstanding figures in the history of the Hindu Renaissance of the nineteenth century. All through her life she tried to Make Indians feel the greatness of their religious and cultural heritage.

Annie Besant was an all-rounder and showed her tremendous energy and driving force in many fields.

She began her career with religion but in later years she changed her attention to politics, education, journalism and social reforms. But the greatest service rendered by her to India was in the field of education. She had tremendous faith in education as an effective tool to bring about the desired regeneration of India.

Annie Besant was convinced that the system of education prevalent in India during her time was neither enough nor satisfactory. She said: Modern education in India has practically confined itself to the training of the mental and intellectual nature, and has ignored the unfolding of the spiritual nature, the evolving and training of the emotional nature, and until lately, the development and training of the physical body to a high state of efficiency. Therefore she felt that the system of education was not a balanced one at all. She wanted to make the youth of the country conscious of the great Indian heritage and wanted to conduct the education in such a way as to enable everyone to stand on his own in every situation in life.

With these aims in view, she laid down certain ideals and principles of education together with a national scheme of education for India.

The ideals and principles of education and a national scheme of education for India indicate that she was quite alive to the fundamental principles of education. For instance she was impressed and influenced by ancient ashrams and the Gurukulas of India. Mrs. Besant based her principles of education on her own conception of "Natural Law of Education". According to her the early evolution of the individual falls into three natural periods of seven years each, ending at the ages of seven, fourteen and twenty one. Besides the above principles, Annie Besant had also outlined a scheme of education which consisted of three stages, namely, the Primary Stage, the Secondary Stage and the High School Stage giving it a national character. By founding the Hindu College at Banaras in 1898 and by nourishing it with utmost sincerity for nearly two decades, she tried to put her ideals into practice. The great Theosophical institution at Adyar, Madras, had also been very much influenced by her noble ideals.

Even though she admired and loved the ancient Indian culture, she was not so strict on this line. Annie Besant emphatically declared: Indian custom and sentiment must regulate the balancing of the two civilisations, the dominating customs must be Indian, the foundation must be Indian; in no other way can all that is best in the West be made acceptable to the East.

This was why her conception of national education was not hostile to the study of western sciences and literature.

Overwhelmed by her services to the cause of Indian nationalism and her courage and devotion in

advocating Home Rule Movement, the Indian National Congress honored her by electing President. In fact, Annie Besant and the Theosophical society were the foretellers of a new movement in the field of education, sought to promote a national system of education in the country.

Though different from other communities in India in respect of religion, language and customs, the Muslims, who constitute the major minority in the country also played a significant role in the socio-religious reawakening of the country. Like the Hindus, amongst the Muslims too there arose some socio-religious movements as a result of the spread of modern education and the rise of a new consciousness among them. The most important reformer among the Muslims was Sayid Ahmad Khan. He was tremendously impressed by modern scientific thought and worked all his life to reconcile it with Islam. He had a firm belief that the religious and social life of the Muslims could be improved only by imbibing modern western scientific knowledge and culture. He felt that the only way in this direction was the promotion of modern education and he founded many schools and translated many western books into Urdu. In 1875 he founded at Aligarh the Muhammedan Anglo-Oriental College as a centre for spreading western sciences and culture, and later it got developed into the Aligarh Muslim University. The contributions which these movements made were significant not only for the Muslim community but for the country as a whole.

The socio-religious movements of the nineteenth century fostered among Indians a great self-respect, self-confidence and a sense of national pride. By interpreting their religious past in modern national terms, the reformers enabled their followers to meet the official taunt that their religions and society were decadent and inferior. These movements also, to some extent, ended the Indian cultural and intellectual isolation from the rest of the world.

POLITICAL STAGE

The impact of British domination and western civilization began to be clearly realized in India by the beginning of the present century. The Indians, brought up under the discipline of British education in India and abroad, felt an urge for political freedom and economic emancipation. It was this new system of education that gave educated Indians an insight into western political life, created or strengthened their love of liberty and guided them to organise a fight against their alien rulers. The establishment of the Indian National Congress towards the close of the nineteenth century gave an added impetus to the political agitation against the British administration. The spirit of Nationalism was slowly growing in the period between 1885 and 1902 and was about to burst into a storm at the close of the nineteenth century. The vice-royalty of Lord Curzon and his

political policies put fuel to fire and provided the immediate cause for this political outburst in India.

In the first decades of the twentieth century, educational reforms became part and parcel of the independence movement. Meanwhile, the Indian Universities Commission of 1902 was appointed by the Government of India and consequently the 'Indian Universities Act' was also passed in 1904, more popularly known as the Curzonian history of Higher education in India for it widened the scope and functions of the universities in the country.

Even though it produced certain good results, no piece of legislation evoked such a storm of criticism and protest, and the Indian nationalists opposed the recommendations.

Because the Act gave power to government to control the university matters and to make university virtually a department of the state. The British system of education was founded for political rather than educational purpose. That system of education had been so corrupt and ruinous that its continuance was taken as a serious menace to the future prospects of the nation. So the national leaders preferred to boycott such a system of education than accept it silently and submissively.

Meanwhile, tremendous changes were taking place in India. It was Lord Curzon's administration and his policies gave rise not only to a new militant nationalism, but to national education as well. The partition of Bengal, indeed, enraged the Indian people as it hurt their feelings. The Swadeshi Movement was born immediately after the partition of Bengal and it was this movement that gave rise to an organised voice of the nation against the political suppression and economic exploitation of the alien rule. The Swadeshi Movement which affected every walk of life may be regarded as generally responsible for creating a love for everything Indian, may it be culture, educational system philosophy, arts or crafts.

When the Swadeshi Movement emerged in 1905 as the first expression of militant nationalism, the concept of national education also had undergone a change. The Indian National Congress in its Calcutta session in 1906 passed a resolution on national education. It appealed to the people all over the country to earnestly take up the question of national education for both boys and girls and organise a system of education, literary, scientific and technical, suited to the requirements of the country, on national lines and under national control and directed towards the realisation of the National destiny. It was emphasised that the educational system must be under the Indian control to regenerate love for the motherland, to have a national content to fulfill the real needs of the people and to have a technical, scientific basis to modernise the Indian Society. According to Annie Besant;

National education must be controlled by Indians. It must hold up Indian ideals of devotion, wisdom and morality, and must be permeated by the Indian religious spirit ... National education must live in an atmosphere of proud and glorious patriotism ... (It) must meet the national temperament at every point and develop the national character.

What was more interesting about the national education scheme was that it emphasised education must be provided to the masses.

Lord Curzon promoted the expansion of primary education and allotted large funds for it, but the situation of mass education remained highly unsatisfactory. Curzon's main intention to raise the quality of education, even at the expense of rapid expansion was also seen as a threat to the reformers' hopes in bringing education to the masses within a short time."^ This development was not liked by Indian nationalist opinion which began to press Government for the introduction of compulsory education. In short, British government did not really care about the mass education.

The Swadeshi Movement and the resultant political awakening drew the attention of the country to an important issue, i.e., the education of the masses. This demand was further strengthened after the encouraging Baroda experiment. Veteran nationalist leader Shri Gopala Krishna Gokhale invited the attention of the government and the public towards this vital issue and put forth the demand of free and compulsory primary education before the government. On 19th March 1910 Gokhale moved the following resolution in the Imperial Legislative Council.

Despite the sincere attempts by Gokhale, the bill was rejected on the plea that the country was not prepared for free education and this would entail large financial expenditure on the part of the government. Although Government had turned down Gokhale's Bill, it could not entirely ignore the growing popular demand for the spread of mass education. The government of India itself had reconsidered its policy on education and a new educational policy was launched in 1916.

It is to be mentioned at this point that when Gokhale's Bill for compulsory primary education was rejected by the government of India, the same proposal was accepted by the government of Travancore as early as in 1904 and later by the Cochin rulers. In 1904, the Travancore government took up the responsibility of imparting free primary education to all children in the state, and as a first step, fees were abolished in all schools for the backward classes and salary grants were made to all private schools maintained for them. In 1904-1905 fees in class I in all government schools, were abolished and fees in Class II and III

reduced to two and three chakrams respectively. An Education Code was introduced in 1908-10 and restrictions on the admission of Pulaya boys and girls in government schools were removed in 1911-12. At that time, the princely states, which were administered by progressive Indian rulers, had almost 60 per cent of school age children in primary schools.

The work of Gokhale was taken up at provincial level by Shri Vallabhabhai Patel, another great leader of the Indian Nationalist Movement. His bill for the compulsory education in municipal areas was accepted by the Bombay Legislative Council and became the Bombay Primary Education (District municipalities) Act of 1918. This lead was followed by several other provinces and the question of mass education was now firmly on the educational agenda.

In pursuance of mass education and the resolution of Calcutta Congress in 1906 for the promotion of National Education, a number of patriotic Indians started schools and colleges under private management. In spite of sustained efforts, a large number of them could not survive for long. By 1920 many of these educational institutions closed down due to the lack of financial support and pupils, and some put their lot behind the official system. Lala Lajpat Rai was bewailing the disappearance of the National High Schools which were so popular once. He wrote:

The few scholars who, with characteristic self-sacrifice, gave up careers to give instruction to the students of the National College are all dispersed. They are seeking appointments in Government aided institutions. The Nationalist schools started by the Council, have, most of them, been disintegrated by the force of circumstances and at the present moment the movement is nothing but a dilapidated and discarded landmark in the educational progress of the country.

The repressive policy adopted by the government after the First World War — the economic distress and country wide epidemics -- with the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy as its highest water mark, the Indian National Congress launched a mass movement of non-cooperation against the government and for the adoption of measures for the expansion and improvement of education. The resolution stated that the Congress would adopt the policy of "progressive nonviolent non-cooperation inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi until Swaraj is established". It was with this proclamation of Nagpur Congress in 1920, a second upheaval started under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. The Non-cooperation Resolution passed by the Congress in 1920 earnestly advised the students to boycott the schools and colleges. The idea behind this protest was not to protest only against the denationalising character of education under the British rule but to urge the students to participate in the constructive programmes proposed by the Indian National Congress. This movement gave a fillip to the idea of national education and to establish institutions

which bears the characteristics of national education. With this a number of such institutions came into existence, namely, Bihar Vidyapith, The National Muslim University of Aligarh, the Gujarat Vidyapith, the Kashi Vidyapith, the Bengal National University, the Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapith and a large number of National schools of all grades that played their role in disseminating nationalist ideas.

It was almost at this time that the reforms outlined in the Government of India Act of 1919 came into force in 1920-21 and diarchy was introduced. With this the department of education was transferred to the control of Indian ministers with certain reservations. The ministers who were in charge of education were not in a position to bring about farreaching changes because they lacked the necessary funds, political strength and initiative. This situation was altered only by the Government of India Act 1935, which came into force in 1937, put an end to the inherently defective diarchical system of administration. The new system, known as provincial autonomy, placed the whole field of provincial administration under a ministry responsible to a legislature which had an overwhelming majority of elected members, in eleven provinces of British India.

The end of post-war financial stringency, the beginning of economic recovery and withdrawal of the non-cooperation movement etc. caused a rapid expansion of education in the mid-twenties. But it could not be continued for long due to certain reasons. Formal education expanded somewhat more rapidly than before but the increase was proportionately much more in secondary and higher education than in primary education — where the tempo of expansion greatly slowed down after 1932. The blackening was mainly due to the effects of the Hartog Committee (1929) and the financial constraints caused by the system of dyarchy and the world economic repression. In 1929, as auxiliary to the Indian statutory commission, a committee was appointed known as Hartog Committee to review the position of education in the country. Collecting together all the negative features of the educational situation in India, the report severely criticised the rapid expansion of education. This committee held that the sudden rise in quantity had led to a great dilution of quality and that the education alsystem of India was largely ineffective and wasteful. A new period began in 1937 by the introduction of provincial autonomy and the matters pertaining to education were with the provinces, which ultimately managed by the Indian ministers. This gave a hope that the education would get a much better deal than before. But the situation changed rapidly due to national and international developments. In the last decade before the independence, the problems occasioned by the Second World War and the transfer of power as well as the absence of Congress ministries between 1939 and 1946 caused a set back to the growth of education in the country.

The enthusiasm generated by nationalist movement gave rise to a mass literacy campaign and attempts were made to start national schools. In brief, the idea of National Education had been expanded, and in 1921, a large number of Vidyapithas and National Institutions were established. But their existence was not very stable as it should have been. In spite of this situation, they became active centres for bringing up a veritable phalanx of freedom fighters in the thirties and early forties. During this phase Rabindranath Tagore, the renowned poet of India, started institutions like Visvabharati and Shantiniketan at Bolpur with an aim of running institutions on Indian lines. This was also the period of the initial germination of Gandhi's ideas of basic education. Gandhi felt that "the mode of education is radically wrong from bottom to top". This prompted him to start "basic education to combine theoretical and practical training and to spread popular education in an inexpensive manner. In 1937, the first conference on National Education and the Zakir Hussain Report fully endorsed this concept and elaborated the Wardha scheme on Basic Education and the congress ministries began to implement it. In 1944, the Central Advisory Board of Education which is an all India advisory body set up by the Government of India, submitted a comprehensive report on post-war educational development containing certain important recommendations. The report, more popularly known as the Sargent Report (1944) after Sir John Sargent who was Educational Advisor to the Government of India, was mainly influenced by the educational ideas put forward from the time of Gokhale to Gandhi. In the first official attempt to plan a national system of education, the report visualised a system of universal, compulsory and free education for all boys and girls between the age of 6 and 14, the senior basic or the middle school being the final stage in the school career of majority of the future citizens and also advocated the development of adult education. This showed that Sargent Report basically adopted the Wardha scheme. So tremendous changes took place in the educational scenario from 1939 leading to the attainment of independence after the partition of the country in August 1947.

The system of modern education pursued by the British contributed much to the growth of scientific study. This led a critical attitude towards traditional cultures and laid the foundation of an Indian Renaissance and National Education. This modern education contributed much to the growth of Indian Nationalism, as already noted earlier. The quotations of Dutt and Desai probably express the truth:

New Theories Initiated by Gandhi, Tagore, Aurobindo
It is said that the world often neglects or uses ill of its great men and prophets and allows them to pass unhonoured and sometimes even misunderstood.

"Appreciation comes after deaths, when the extreme violence of opinions subsides, hostile theories correct

one another and the scattered elements of truth cease to Contend and begin to coalesce". This is not entirely true of Gandhi, Tagore and Aurobindo, to whom universal recognition and appreciation came while they were very much alive. They dared to speak on almost all aspects of life. The modern trend in education all over the world is to relate education to the needs of life. The needs of life may be fourfold: social, political, economic and moral. From another standpoint the bare necessities of life consist of food, cloth, shelter and amusements. They pertinently remarked that education cut off from life's essential needs was quite meaningless. Rousseau, credited by some as the father of Modern Education, held a very robust view that education should be 'according to nature'. Tagore, Gandhi and Sri Aurobindo were almost unanimous on this point. They, of course, added many more things according to the needs of the time and circumstances.

Gandhi's Views on Education
Primarily a politician, statesman and social reformer, Mahatma Gandhi made a substantial and solid contribution to the educational thought and practices in India. Mahatma Gandhi, the great thinker, philosopher and reformer, experimented on everything around and formulated his own views and ideals about most of the things in the world. He expressed his ideas on matters from God to birth control. For our purpose his belief in God, Truth, Ahimsa and dignity of labour are important. He had a profound faith in one God and emphasised the importance of man's unity. He said:

Before dealing with the educational philosophy of Gandhi, it will be pertinent to know the background of his philosophy on education. There were several factors that inspired his educational philosophy. With the introduction of the English system of education, the system of ancient Indian education practically disappeared, though it was not completely wiped out. It was at this juncture that Gandhi appeared on the scene.

Gandhi found that the system of education introduced by the English in India was not at all suited to the Indian situation. In his view the major handicap was English medium for all the branches of higher learning. This had created a permanent bar between the highly educated few and the uneducated many. He said: Such education was neither, "responsive to the realistic elements of the present situation nor inspired by any life-giving and creative ideal". Gandhi also pointed out that the western civilisation on which the British Indian system of education had been built was entirely different from the civilisation of India. According to him "civilisation is that mode of conduct which points out to man the path of duty. Performance of duty and observance of morality are convertible terms".

Another factor that determined his educational philosophy was his conviction that social, moral, political and economic regeneration of India depended on education.⁵¹ It was in this context that he gave to the people his message of truth and non-violence, which would erase every type of exploitation in the economic, social, political or even religious fields. Moreover his educational experiments at Tolstoy Farm, Sabarmati and Sevagram Ashrams and his philosophy of life determined his philosophy of education.

Thus, in Gandhi's opinion, the system of education in India which prevailed in his time was not at all satisfactory. Hence it became necessary for him to formulate a new system of education. This education had certain definite aims: it had a philosophy of its own and it was, in his view, an education most suited to the culture and civilization of India.

GANDHI'S AIM OF EDUCATION

In his attempt to formulate a new system of education Gandhi has kept in view certain aims and objectives. Being an idealist and a realist, Gandhi kept the ultimate and immediate aims of education before him. "His ultimate and by far the most important aim of education is the knowledge of God leading to self realisation, the merger of the finite being into the Infinite". With the pursuit of truth through non-violence, love and service as the cornerstone of Gandhiji's philosophy of life, the aim of education according to Gandhi was realisation of God or Truth or even self-realisation. Gandhi tried to achieve this objective by the development of moral and spiritual character. "For Gandhi, God is the ultimate reality behind the universe which is always in a state of flux". So Gandhi held that to be God-fearing and to be religious is the real sign of education. He considered God to be the ultimate Reality and equated God to Absolute Truth.

Gandhi considered that the aim of life and education was to enable every man to achieve realisation of God by adhering to Truth. Infact, Gandhi wanted that education should help one to become self-supporting in later life. He desired that each boy and girl should be "self-supporting by finding an occupation after receiving the formal education". He said that education must enable one to stand on his own legs. In Gandhi's opinion:

The idea that education should be centered round a basic craft was intended for a better type of total education. He did not want to teach handicraft as only one of the subjects of instruction. Gandhi wanted that the "handicraft should not be taught mechanically but scientifically, i.e., the child should know the way and wherefore of every process". In other words, the handicraft was not to be the necessary concomitant of the existing method of imparting education, but it was to be the centre of the method. All training would be principally through the medium of and in correlation with a productive industry. The school was not to be

just a place where a vocation was added to the existing plethora of subjects; but all subjects were to be taught through vocation. This means that the craft should not be taught, merely for production work but for developing the intellect of the pupils. So he wanted that the craft should be learnt systematically and scientifically to serve as a means for intellectual work and economic self-sufficiency. He, therefore, suggested that education should be self-supporting and it was his belief that handicraft, besides developing the personality of the child, would make education self-supporting. "It helps", says J.B. Kripalani, "to combine intellectual, artistic, scientific and physical development of the pupil". Thus Gandhi discovered a new method of education suitable enough to satisfy one of the most important of all aims in education, i.e., the training of self-supporting citizens. At the same time that education gives them literary and intellectual training and makes them intelligent and informed citizens as well.

Another aspect which Gandhi valued most was the cultural aim. He attached greater importance to the cultural aspect of education than to the literary. He said:

Thus according to Gandhi, culture was not a product of intellectual work. It should be the quality of one's soul, pervading all aspects of human behaviour.

By education Gandhi meant "an all round drawing out of the best in the child and man -- body, mind and spirit". The chief goal of Gandhian education was the harmonious development of all the abilities both innate and acquired. Again, he said that "True education must stimulate the spiritual and physical faculties of the children". Thus Gandhi laid greater emphasis on the education of the three H's (Hand, Head and Heart) than that of three R's (Reading, Writing and Arithmetic). In order to draw the best out of the child and to create real interest in him, physical drill, handicrafts, drawing and music should go side by side. In the education of hand, heart and head he foresees the all-round development of the child.

Gandhi laid so much emphasis on character and made it the central purpose of education. However he did not rule out the literary aspect. He regarded character as the expression of personality including its ethical and spiritual aspect. Gandhi was prepared to accept the value of knowledge and of scholarship if they helped in building good character. He observed, "The end of all knowledge must be the building up of character".

Gandhi did not merely put forward these aims but showed how they could be achieved in practice. In short, Gandhi placed before us a constructive scheme for a new educational system suited to our culture. It remedied many defects of the British Indian system of education and functioned as a useful instrument for the development of Indians as

Indians. He pointed out that this educational system was at the same time old and new: old because Gandhi was indebted to the ancient Indian educational philosophy and practice; new because he made some changes in them so as to conform to the latest in educational philosophy. In other words, Gandhi rejuvenated the ancient system of Indian education and made it suitable to the modern generation of Indians.

After decades of trials and experiments Gandhi finalised a scheme of education in 1937, on the basis of his educational philosophy, for its application throughout the country. At the All India National Educational Conference held at Wardha on the 22nd and 23rd October 1937, he placed forth the salient features of his scheme. The conference appointed a committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Zakir Hussain for preparing a detailed syllabus on the lines mainly indicated by Gandhi. On the basis of the Report, the committee adopted a new scheme of education known as Wardha Scheme or Basic National Education. The Indian National Congress at its Haripura Session in 1938 accepted the principles of Basic National Education and authorised the formation of an All India Board to work out a practical programme. Accordingly, the Board under the name Hindustani Talimi Sangh was formed, under the guidance and advice of Mahatma Gandhi himself Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941)

India is singularly fortunate that two of her greatest sons in contemporary times Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi have been true educationists of the first order. Their status as eminent educators was not enough known to the world as they were primarily reputed as poet and politician respectively. It is true that Gandhi distinguished himself in the field of politics and Tagore in the field of literature. By dint of their extensive experiments in education in the latter half of their life, they made themselves eminent educators. Like most of the western educators they were not theorists but practitioners. It was true that both Gandhi and Tagore experimented their ideas, the former with the Wardha Scheme of Education and the latter with the Shantiniketan.

They preached to their people their concept of man-making or inculcating character and strength in the coming generation so that they became competent to move with the progressive trends of the times, with their moorings in the best of India's tradition. It is in this context that Rabindranath Tagore's contribution to Indian education is to be evaluated.

Rabindranath Tagore was born on 6th May 1861 in the city of Calcutta in Bengal. He began composing verses when he was only eight years old. He had his education mostly at home, either under tutors or by private readings. His literary career was crowned with

the award of Nobel Prize in 1913 for his 'Gitanjali'. On his death in 1941, the Syndicate of the University of Calcutta thus placed on records his services to India as quoted by S.P. Chaube.

Tagore's philosophy of life and philosophy of education are interrelated and inseparable. He approached education as he approached life as a poet, with a totality of vision. He was fully aware of education's innumerable implications and firmly believed that education is a permanent part of the adventure of life. To him the object of education was freedom of mind through the path of freedom though it had its risk and responsibility.

He firmly believed that only through the medium of love and action the perfect knowledge could be obtained and manifested.

In considering the educational aims of Tagore it should be remembered that he was not an educationist in the strictly academic sense. Even though his educational writings run to many volumes, he did not write any single work systematically developing any particular thesis on education in the nature of Rousseau's *Emile* or Spencer's 'Education'.⁶⁵ All through his writings some direct and definite statements had been made both on education as well as on other subjects.

Before going into details of Tagore's educational philosophy, it is necessary to know what prompted him to evolve an idea of his own. The system of education that was prevalent at the time of Tagore — specially in the last phase of nineteenth century and in the first phase of the twentieth century — was purely anglicised and mercenary and had no connection with the tradition and culture of the country. Due to the repeated invasions and crude attacks of the foreigners many centres of culture in India were ruined. As a result, the high ideals of western education that elevated the mind and soul to achieve liberation from ignorance and narrowness were replaced by materialistic and mercenary ideals.

The second defect which Tagore pointed out was that the contents or subject for education and the medium had been changed thoroughly by the Britishers. Such an education, according to Tagore, would make the Indians lose sight of their tradition and culture. He was against the artificial imitation of the western education and culture, which aimed at making clerks to run the British administration in India with a low administrative cost. To overcome these defects, Tagore waged a ceaseless battle to uphold the highest educational ideals before the country and conducted educational experiments at his own institutions, thereby he showed the world living symbols of ideal and full education.

Tagore¹'s philosophy of life was intimately related to his philosophy of education and was inseparable from it.

Harmony with all things was the basic principle of his philosophy. According to him, education makes one's life in harmony with all existence. During his childhood he rebelled against the prevailing system of education because of its disharmony with nature. His educational philosophy was based on naturalism, humanism, internationalism and idealism.

Nature occupied a very important place in Tagore's philosophy of education as it did in his philosophy of life. Tagore viewed nature as a precious source of profound joy and delight and was convinced of it from his own experiences he gained in his early childhood. He firmly believed that children should be surrounded with things of nature which have their own educational value.

Tagore carried the principle of natural life in education and gave his first impression of his school: All of a sudden I found my world vanishing from around me, giving place to wooden benches and straight walls staring at me with the blank stare at the blind". This reveals Tagore's protest against artificial arrangement of life and education. He firmly believed that children should be kept away from the sophistications of modern civilisation.

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