

Teacher Education in Colonial India: An Indian Intellectual Discourse

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Abstract:

Teacher education is an integral component of any educational system. It is intimately connected with society and is conditioned by the ethics, culture, and character of a nation. Teacher education in the modern period was characterized by the British in India. Different committees were instituted to look into the system of teacher education and training. In the present section, an attempt has been made to shed light on eight erudite positions on Teacher & Teacher Training in Colonial Bengal. Basically, the philosophical basis of teacher education has been discussed from Indian perspective. Mainly, an attempt has been made to discuss the opinion of a great person of India regarding teacher education. Few of them later came to be acknowledged afterwards as pioneering educators amongst whom the name of Tagore, Vivekananda, Aurobindo and Nivedita are worth mentioning. Exploration of the documents will be the first phase of the study, which will be followed by the qualitative content analysis, and in the second phase, historical research criticism, both internal and external, will be used. It would describe why and when teacher training had been established as a system of education in India. It would identify and clarify the opinions and thoughts of a great person and their role in that historical context.

Keywords: Development, Teacher education, Teacher training, Bengal, Normal school, Elite Views

Introduction:

In the present section, an attempt has been made to shed light on eight erudite positions on Teacher & Teacher Training in Colonial Bengal. A few of them later came to be acknowledged afterwards as pioneering educators amongst whom the names of Tagore, Vivekananda, Aurobindo, and Nivedita are worth mentioning. Though Nivedita was born in Ireland and brought up mostly in England, she gave away her all for India and whatever educational ideas she had to offer to the world were deeply grounded and got their vigour and vitality from Indian soil. Hence, the present researcher had no hesitation to discuss about her in the present section. Others about whom some discussion has been rendered here are Bhudev Mukhopadhyay, Somnath Mukhopadhyay, Gopal Chunder Bandyopadhyay and Benoy Kumar Sarkar.

Here in this Section the contribution of Mary Carpenter (1807-1877) who visited India in 1866 could have been discussed separately but, since her strong belief that 'Christian and moral teaching had to run in parallel with learning a trade' does not match with the spirit of this section, her pedagogical position has not been dealt with here separately. However, Carpenter had an ambition of hers as regards the spreading of Girls' education in India since

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her meeting with Raja Ram Mohan Roy in 1833. She visited Calcutta, Madras and Bombay, finding that for the most part girls were not educated past the age of twelve years, mainly due to a lack of educated female teachers. During her visit Carpenter met Keshab Chandra Sen, the leader of Brahmo Samaj. Sen asked her to form an organisation in Britain to improve communication between British and Indian reformers, which she did in 1870, establishing the National Indian Association. She visited many schools, hospitals and gaols and encouraged both Indian and British colonial administrators to improve and fund these. She was particularly concerned that the lack of good female education led to a shortage of women teachers, nurses and prison attendants. The Mary Carpenter Hall at the Brahmo Girls school in Calcutta was erected as a memorial to this work.

Again in the present Section the philosophical positions of the prominent Brahmo Leaders have not been dealt in details since most of them were in favour of imitating the pedagogy as well as contents prevalent in the then West only with a little tint of Upanishadic flavour. In this context we may quote from Rammohun Roy:

“We now find that the Government are establishing a Sanskrit school under Hindoo Pundits to impart such knowledge as is already current in India. This Seminary (similar in character to those which existed in Europe before the time of Lord Bacon) can only be expected to load the minds of youth with grammatical niceties and metaphysical distinctions of little or no practicable use to the possessors or to society. The pupils will there acquire what was known two thousand years ago, with the addition of vain and empty subtilties since produced by speculative men, such as is already commonly taught in all parts of India.

The Sanskrit language, so difficult that almost a life time is necessary for its perfect acquisition, is well known to have been for ages a lamentable check on the diffusion of knowledge; and the learning concealed under this almost impervious veil is far from sufficient to reward the labour of acquiring it.

If it had been intended to keep the British nation in ignorance of real knowledge the Baconian philosophy would not have been allowed to displace the system of the schoolmen, which was the best calculated to perpetuate ignorance. In the same manner the Sanskrit system of education would be the best calculated to keep this country in darkness, if such had been the policy of the British Legislature. But as the improvement of the native population is the object of the Government, it will consequently promote a more liberal and enlightened system of instruction, embracing mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry and anatomy, with other useful sciences which may be accomplished with the sum proposed by employing a few gentlemen of talents and learning educated in Europe, and providing a college furnished with the necessary books, instruments and other apparatus” (Bureau of Education, 1920, Pp. 98-101).

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-1891):

Born in a more obscure village in Medinipur District on 26 September 1820, Vidyasagar started his teaching career at the age of 21 in Fort William College, Calcutta, and later joined Sanskrit College as its principal. However, his career was never important to him. His vision was set beyond.

Vidyasagar felt that mass education, irrespective of caste, creed and sex, was the necessity of the day to bring about a real change in the society and to ensure it, spread of education among women was very much essential. Then, the Bengali society was still holding on to medievalism. Besides the commoners, many highly educated men too were averse to any change in women’s status, particularly to their education. Prior to 1850 the government was not too keen on education of Indian women. In his Report on The State of Education in Bengal (1836) William Adam wrote: “A superstitious feeling is alleged to exist in the majority of Hindu families, principally cherished by

the women and not discouraged by the men, that a girl taught to read and write will soon after marriage become a widow.”

Vidyasagar’s well-documented protestations against Education department officials of the day testify to the degree of intensity with which he pursued the course of education reform (Sen, 1962.P-26):

- ❖ He favoured English and Bengali as a medium of learning alongside Sanskrit.
- ❖ He wanted to offer to students a wider range of subjects and thus broaden their horizons in examining European and Indian concepts and practices side by side so they could apply their own judgement in discovering the truth for themselves.
- ❖ He was not afraid of discarding erroneous beliefs of Indian *shastras* and in preferring European science in its place where appropriate.
- ❖ Similarly he did not accept everything that Europe had to offer. His mind was open only to discovering the truth and reality.
- ❖ In these matters his determination was unmistakable and his resolve unshakable.
- ❖ In his famous “Notes on the Sanskrit College” Vidyasagar put forward a comprehensive scheme through which he aimed at creating an elegant Bengali style based on a combination of sound knowledge of both Sanskrit and English languages.
- ❖ He laid equal stress on learning the three branches in English- History, Mathematics and Natural Philosophy.
- ❖ He prevailed upon the government to select as deputy magistrates some of the graduates of this college and established the Normal School for training Bengali teachers at the College thereby broadening the prospect of career opportunities as well as the range of academic interests that could be pursued on its campus. Vidyasagar took several such measures to expand enrolment and strengthen student commitment in Sanskrit College. In this way, he rescued classical education from medieval scholasticism.

Bhudeb Mukhopadhyay (1827-1894):

Bhudeb Mukhopadhyay (1827-1894) who served in the then Bengal Presidency in various capacities including a Teacher, a Headmaster, a District Inspector of Schools, wrote extensively on various modalities of content knowledge as well as pedagogic knowledge including a handy manual for school teachers. The whole manual which was the first book by him, was written in Bengali under the title “*Siksha Bidhayak Prastab*’ (Mukhopadhyay, 1856) and while writing it he was the Headmaster of one School in the Howrah District.

In the Preamble of the said manual, Sri Mukhopadhyay wanted the then school teachers to reflect upon some serious issues as if involving them in pursuing self-introspection in the following manner:

Firstly, the teachers need to ask themselves the basic question so as to why they have chosen the profession of teaching; is it for any financial benefit or is it for intensely loving teaching? If there remains anybody who took it for any monetary benefit he needs to leave this profession immediately because it won’t serve his intended purpose.

Secondly, a prerequisite of teaching is to get joy in helping the tender hearted students in conceptualizing *Vidya* and inoculating in them the basic values of life.

Thirdly, while being engaged in teaching, teachers need to inspire students to make their minds go beyond the four walls of the classroom and beyond only textbooks.

Fourthly, we need to impart such type of socially relevant knowledge that would help students to be self-reliant and self-dependent in all practical senses.

Fifthly, besides philosophy, our students are to be made well adept in Geography, Physics, Economics and History etc. and,

Lastly, just after the completion of their studies our students hanker after getting governmental jobs, but, they need to be enticed towards running independent businesses and the education system needs to be instrumental in this regard.

In the next few chapters of '*Siksha Bidhayak Prastab*', Bhudev Mukhopadhyay dealt with the following important issues:

'Siksha Bidhayak Prastab' at a Glance

2 nd Chapter	Special instructions to the teachers teaching in the <i>Pathshalas</i> .
3 rd Chapter	Developing reading and writing style – Use of wooden plate in this regard.
4 th Chapter	Mathematics Teaching – Abacus – Counting etc.
5 th Chapter	Demonstration lessons – some examples from text books.
6 th Chapter	Teaching physics – Topic: Glass
7 th Chapter	Teaching Bengali grammar – morphology and syntax – citation from text books
8 th Chapter	Perimeter – height and distance – rectangular perimeter and pentagon
9 th Chapter	Oral teaching – oral test related to natural sciences
10 th Chapter	Teaching of Geography and history using maps
11 th Chapter	Necessity of making <i>Dharma</i> (Moral and spiritual education) and physical education mandatory in schools and how to impart it

In the 11th Chapter what Bhudev Mukhopadhyay presented in Bengali can be translated into English in a summary form as follows (English translation is rendered by the present researcher):

“Whatever has been hitherto told is all related only to bringing changes at cognitive domain and chiseling the intellectual faculty of our students, but chiseling the intellectual faculty is not holistic development and hence, is not sufficient. The moral qualities remaining dormant in a student, it is impossible for him to become perfectly happy in life. Such instances are plenty where even a person not as much of being learned but then again endowed with righteousness of high standard is leading a commendable life and an unethical person incurring disrespect and

distrust of everybody in the society. Hence, it is the bounden duty of every teacher to impart value education to every student.

The schools also need to frame some regulations so that students are seriously involved in physical exercises of indigenous nature. Some feel that for this we need to introduce such games and sports which are popular in western countries, but we sincerely feel that even the indigenous sports and games are sufficient to make the physique of our students strong and steady.

But, whatever is done within schools hours, will remain all fruitless unless our children don't get good education from their parents. Everyone knows that a child suffers from malnutrition unless he/she gets mother's milk in his/her childhood; likewise, a person all through the life suffers for his/her ill character if he or she does not get good moral education from his/her mother in the early days. This is a very wrong notion that the learning of child begins at the age of five years. Actual learning of a child starts at the age when he or she is 2/3 months old....."

Thus the above discussed manual is astonishing in the sense that at one hand it gave stress upon 'learner centric pedagogy' as if under the influence of western pedagogic models but on the other it did not deny the importance of pedagogic tradition followed in India during ancient times, moreover, it went on justifying making *Dharma* (Moral and spiritual education) mandatory in schools (Barik, 2016).

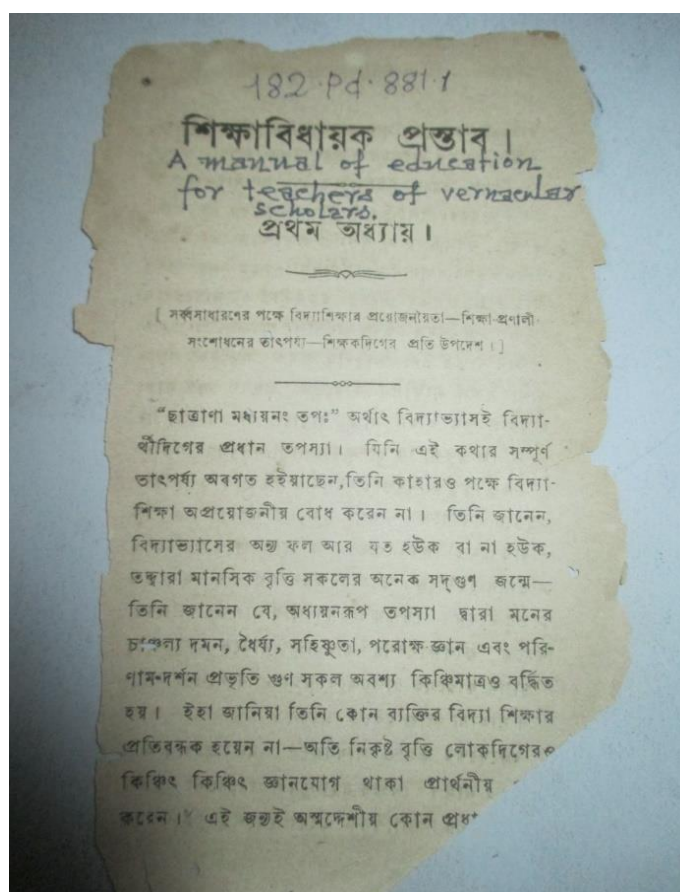


Figure 1. Copy of the First page of 'Siksha Vidhayak Prastab'

As regards preceptor-disciple relationship Mukhopadhyay opined, "The behavior between the Guru and his students should be the same as between fathers and sons. But in this country, there is very little effort to encourage

mutual affection and understanding between fathers and sons” (Sengupta, 2011, p. 81). In our contemporary context the utterances of Bhudev Mukhopadhyay is proven to be a genuine prophecy.

Gopal Chunder Bandyopadhyay:

Gopal Chunder (Spelling unchanged) Bandyopadhyay, Headmaster of renowned Calcutta Normal School and writer of several text books as well as Treatise on Education, can claim the fame of presenting expected teaching ethos in colonial Bengal.

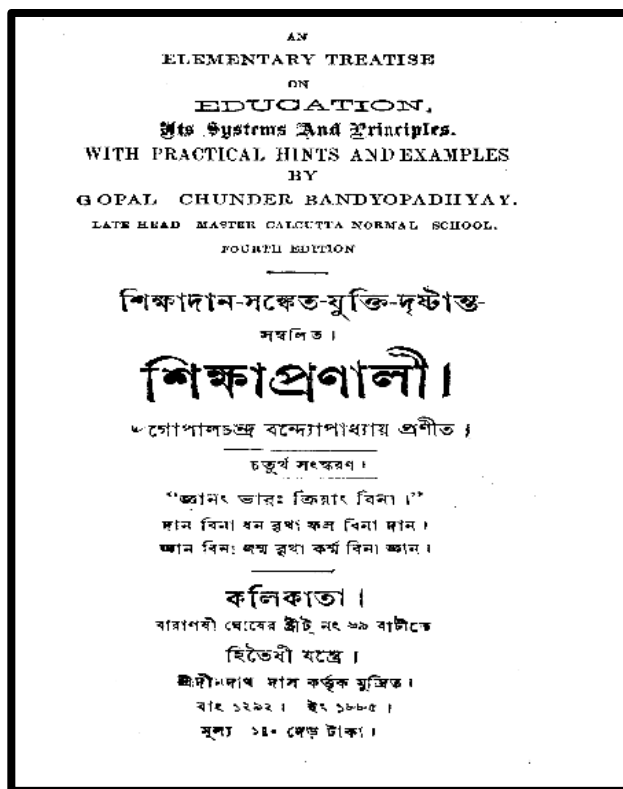


Figure 2. First page of Gopal Chunder Bandyopadhyay's Elementary Treatise on Education

In his treatise on Education Gopal Chandra had firstly acknowledged teaching to be a difficult but glamorous as well as joyful task. According to him in grooming up a child the responsibilities of the parents are in no way less important, rather those parents are the enemies of the children who do not take care to impart good education in their childhood. According to Gopal Chandra Bandyopadhyay a good teacher should have possessed the following qualities:

1. Teachers should have an inclination towards teaching.
2. Teachers should not be engaged in any other professions.
3. Teachers need to be affectionate towards the students like their own parents.
4. Teachers need to be the real well-wisher of the students.
5. Teachers should have the capability to judge the character, personality and skillfulness of the students.
6. Teachers should have real passion for learning.

7. They should have mastery over multidisciplinary subjects.
8. They should have proper communication skills.
9. Teachers themselves should always be morally upright.
10. Besides subjects, they are the disseminators of moral education amongst their students.
11. They need to be initiated in the dictum of plain living and high thinking.

Annexure of the Elementary Treatise include in details the followings:

- a. Modalities of reading, writing and speaking and teachers' role in those activities.
- b. List of words - synonyms, antonyms and homophones.
- c. List of low cost no cost learning-teaching materials.
- d. Pedagogical sequences following minute micro teaching skills.
- e. Demonstration of teaching following question-answer method.
- f. Demonstration of teaching science following demonstration method.
- g. Modalities of imparting value education through reciting relevant poems and rhymes.
- h. Modalities of teaching mathematics through verbal interaction.
- i. Modalities of using the knowledge of geography while teaching history and the vice versa.
- j. Utility of reflective application of mind while memorizing text.
- k. Modalities of using black board/ Maps/ Charts/ Globes.
- l. Utility of reading history – biographical approach.
- m. Significance of composition, translation and grammar in language learning and their appropriate methodology.
- n. Content and modalities of imparting Ethics.

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941):

Most of the technical discussions on the educational philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore endeavor with the proposition that in Tagore's educational philosophy was a culmination of the harmonized synthesis of idealism, naturalism and pragmatism. According to those theorists, he was an idealist as he laid great emphasis on self-realization as the aim of human life and a true seeker after 'Tranquility (*Shantam*), Peace (*Shivam*) and Oneness (*Advaitam*)' only can have the rarest joy and privilege of self-realization; moreover there has always been an unanimity of existence of these *Shantam*, *Shivam* and *Advaitam* in the physical or phenomenal world, in human society and in human consciousness and the realization of this unanimity of existence in both the three planes at a time leads to universal consciousness or *Visva-chetana*. The uniqueness of this universal consciousness is that it enables one to unveil the unity in diversity, and not only that; it clearly shows one's individuality to be a part and

parcel of that universal unity: “*Asim kaler je hillole, joar bhatai bhuvan dole, narite more raktadharai legeche tar tan*”. Educational critics use to call these types of ‘abstract’ ideas as ‘idealism’!

Tagore is a naturalist thinker, according to those theorists, as he laid much emphasis on the harmony of education with the environment. True it is that wanted our children imbibing their national cultural heritage by means of their interaction with the environment: “*Ai akashe amar mukti alloy alloy, amar mukti dhulay dhulay ghase ghase...*”

Explaining the aim of education, Tagore said, “If we believe that the chief aim of education in India is to be initiated into this unique pursuit of India, then we must constantly remember that neither the education of the senses, nor the education of the intellect, but the education of the feeling receive the place of honour in our schools.....Our true education is possible only in the forest, through intimate contact with nature and purifying austere pursuits” (Tagore, 1935/1342, p.145).

Moreover, Tagore was a pragmatist thinker, according to those theorists, as he earnestly admitted bread earning to be a necessary part of any sound goal of education and this admittance stirred him to create *Sri Niketan* even after creating *Shantiniketan*. Therefore, he said, “from the very beginning, such education should be imparted to them, i.e. village folks, that they may know well what mass welfare means and may become practically efficient in all respects for earning their livelihood” (Tagore, 1944, p. 522).

While he is critical of the British system of education which wanted to create clerks out of the Indian educated people, he emphasized that the real aim of education is to develop men and women who may be able to fulfill the needs of the country. In his own words, “one of the main aims of education is to prepare the individual for the service of the country” (Tagore, 1944, p. 517). But the main proposition of this paper is to establish that Tagore was neither influenced by idealism or naturalism nor by pragmatism though his educational thought bear semblances with those western ‘isms’, however, he was well aware of those educational ideas prevalent in the west. Speaking about the genesis of his school at Santiniketan, Tagore stated that it owed its origin not to any ‘new theory of education but to the memory of my school days’. It is well known to all that the experiences that he had in schools – he attended more than one school – was not very pleasant. The main cause of his unhappiness were twofold: One is the relation between the teacher and the taught, which he found degrading and the other was the general atmosphere in school, which gave him the impression of a dull prison house rather than a place of joy (Das, 2004, p.). The game he described in his autobiography in which he played the role of a teacher with a cane in hand with the wish that the wooden bars of the railings in a corner of the Verandah as his pupils is a startling instance of the impact of the contemporary teaching method on the sensitive child: “I had decided which was the good boys and which the bad – nay, further, I could distinguish clearly the quiet from naughty, the clever from the stupid, the bad rail had suffered so much from my constant caning that they must have longed to give up the ghost have they been alive. And the more scared they got with my strokes the worse they angered me, till I knew not how to punish them enough. None remains to bear witness today how tremendously I tyrannized over that poor dumb class of mine” (Tagore, 1959, p.). No doubt, Tagore was unfortunate for not having even an ideal teacher during his childhood life, because, even in the worst time of our cultural history there were teachers who had been perennial sources to their students. However, on the reverse, Tagore was very much fascinated by the glory of the Upanishadic *Taovana* and the green and placid civilization of the forest; his educational ideas were directly related with his poetic vision of that time:

“The life that was yours in the *tapovana*,

The life that was yours in the abodes of kings,

We welcome that life, free and radiant,
Give us that mantra
That overcomes death and conquers fear.”

In China, Tagore told his audience that he ‘tried to found a school where the boys must be free in spite of the school’ (Tagore, 1925, p. 69). He succeeded in ample measures in creating that atmosphere of freedom and joy in his school in Santiniketan. The concept of this freedom and joy didn’t come from the west but he got it in the Upanishads: “(He) knew Bliss as Brahman; for from bliss, indeed, all these beings originate; having been born, they are sustained by Bliss; they move towards and merge in Bliss” (Taittiriya Upanishad, 1998, p.). In his many essays entitled ‘*Dharma*’ and ‘*Shantiniketan*’ Tagore exemplified these ideas of joy and freedom. His priorities of joy and freedom both in education and in work were further manifested in his concerns for rural reconstruction and his endeavor towards the empowerment of the poor and the illiterate villagers around *Surul*. One of his legendary poems in *Naivedya* can be taken as the official manifesto of his educational thought: “Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high,

Where knowledge is free,
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls,
Where words come out from the depth of truth,
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection:
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way
Into the dreary desert sand of dead habits,
Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever widening thought and action
– Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake”
(Tagore, 1994, p. 669).

May be, thus, Tagore’s educational thought was an utopia, but it was and still remains a necessary utopia which have the potential to be instrumental in rejuvenating and reconstructing the Indian nation in an truly Indian way and to Tagore the Upanishads were the rock bed upon which he asserted his ideas of ‘fullest growth and the freedom of soul’.

Tagore felt it difficult to find the sufficient number of ideal type of teachers for his schools (Das Gupta, 2006, p. 138). He was looking for Gurus as an alternative of Schoolmasters. The Sanskrit term *guru* means teacher, yet accentuates spiritual knowledge and practices and is connected to the ancient tradition of *brahmacharya ashrams* and *tapovans*. According to Tagore, *gurus* are “active in the efforts to achieve the fullness of humanity” (Tagore, R, 2001, p. 44) and will give their entire souls to their students instead of merely sharing the material as prescribed in the curriculum. Being a *guru* is a true calling instead of a job to earn money, and the motivation for it consists in love for children and for the subject, not in love for power (Tagore, R, 2001, Pp. 44-50). Good teachers, wrote Tagore, stimulate children’s minds instead of helping them to collect information, and inspire children through their own self-development. They encourage them to work on the teacher’s own original projects and thereby travel together on their journey to more understanding (Tagore, R, 2001, p. 44).

“A teacher can never truly teach unless he is still learning himself. 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 lesson to his students, can only load to their minds. He cannot quicken them. Truth not only must inform, but also must inspire. If the inspiration dies out and the information only accumulates then truth loses its infinity. The greater part of our learning in the school has been a waste because for most of our teachers, their subjects are like dead specimens of once living things, with which they have a learned acquaintance, but no communication of life and love” (Tagore, R, 2002, p. 187).

Tagore argues that teachers would be strengthened through a higher status that, in India, might come through the title "guru." He also says that teacher's education needed to improve, and that it should include a thorough understanding of children's psychology (Tagore, 2006, 507). Their teaching would additionally be of higher value if teachers were given more freedom regarding their teaching methods and, to a certain degree, regarding the content of what they teach.

In general, Tagore is convinced that education "is not a matter of 'teaching', of methodology or of 'educational equipment' (Tagore, Rabindranath, 2001, p. 44) but depend upon the personality of the teacher and the relationship to the student. He said to one of the teachers at his school: *"Do not be preoccupied with method. Leave your instincts to guide you to life. Children differ from one another. One must learn to know them, to navigate among them as one navigates among reefs. To explore the geography of their minds, a mysterious instinct that is sympathetic to life, is the best of all guides"* (Tagore, Rabindranath, 1946, p. 9).

Somnath Mukhopadhyay:

Very little is known about Somnath Mukhopadhyay, the first Headmaster of the Dacca Normal School but his 'Siksha Paddhati'- 1870(Pedagogical science of Teaching) was an astonishing amalgamation of epistemological, ontological and axiological standing of pedagogy particularly in the arena when colonial philosophy was about to eat up the vitality of Indianness in education in all respect (Mukhopadhyay, 1870).

Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902):

“Swami Vivekananda's relevance depends not on the nature of the problems we face but on the spirit with which those problems have to be tackled,” Wrote Swami Lokeshwarananda in “The Message of Swami Vivekananda.” True it is that Swamiji's stress was on man himself, for, given the right kind of man, no problem need be daunting. “Man-making is my mission”- he used to say; there is no denying the fact that any country can produce one or two men of inhuman or superhuman acumen but unless the common masses are ‘empowered’ in the truest sense of the term to play their role in tackling national problems, the fate of that country to be branded as belonging to the ‘Third and Undeveloped World’ could never be overcome and here comes the significance of Swami Vivekananda's deep concern for the warning people of India, who had long been neglected and had had no access to education, should now receive special attention so that they could quickly overcome their initial drawbacks.

A pioneer in education for all time and all places for one and all, Swami Vivekananda's Philosophy of Education and teacher preparation is very significant for excellence and ascent of man. As a firm believer of the self by the self and for the self, he draws our attention to the role of the teacher as a sincere and devoted task master in enabling the learning to justify his/ her perfection already in him/ her as best as possible (Chakrabarti, 2014, p. 103). Vivekananda's explanation is explicit in the following well known utterances:

“A child teaches itself. But you can help it to go forward in its own way. What you can do is not of a positive nature, but of a negative one. You can take away the obstacles, but knowledge comes out of its own nature. Loosen the soil a little, so that it may come out easily. Put a hedge round it; see that it is not killed by anything, and there your work stops. You cannot do anything else. The rest is manifestation from within its own nature.”

“No one can teach anybody. The teacher spoils everything by thinking that he is teaching. Thus, Vedanta says that within man is all knowledge -- even in a boy it is so -- and it requires only an awakening, and that much is the work of a teacher.”

“No one was ever really taught by another; each of us has to teach himself. The external teacher offers only the suggestion which rouses the internal teacher to work to understand things.”

“Negative thoughts weaken men. Do you not find that where parents are constantly taxing their sons to read and write, telling them they will never learn anything, and calling them fools and so forth, the latter do actually turn out to be so in many cases? If you speak kind words to boys and encourage them, they are bound to improve in time.”

“If you can give them positive ideas, people will grow up to be men and learn to stand on their own legs.”

“In language and literature, in poetry and in arts, in everything we must point out not the mistakes that people are making in their thoughts and actions, but the way in which they will gradually be able to do these things better. Pointing out mistakes wounds a man's feelings.”

“(Another) condition necessary in the teacher is that he must be sinless. The question was once asked me in England by a friend, “Why should we look to the personality of a teacher? We have only to judge of what he says, and take that up.” Not so. If a man wants to teach me something of dynamics or chemistry or any other physical science, he may be of any character; he can still teach dynamics or any other science. For the knowledge that the physical sciences require is simply intellectual and depends on intellectual strength; a man can have in such a case a gigantic intellectual power without the least development of his soul. But in the spiritual sciences it is impossible from first to last” (Vivekananda, 1986, p. 43-56).

Sister Nivedita (1867-1911):

Nivedita (previously Miss Margaret Noble) was a Scots-Irish social worker, author, teacher and a disciple of Swami Vivekananda. She spent her childhood and early days of her youth in Ireland. From her father and her college professor, she learned many valuable lessons, like – service to mankind is the true service to God. She worked as school teacher and later also opened a school. She was committed to marry a Welsh youth who died soon after their engagement. She carried on her life.

Sister Nivedita met Swami Vivekananda in 1895 in London and travelled to Calcutta (present-day Kolkata), India in 1898. Swami Vivekananda gave her the name *Nivedita* (meaning “Dedicated to God”) when he initiated her into the vow of *Brahmacharya* on 25 March 1898. In November 1898, she opened a girls' school in Bagbazar area of Calcutta. She wanted to educate those girls who were deprived of even basic education.

Nivedita knew very clearly the kind of education she would like to give to the girls in her school. She had considerable experience in teaching and was familiar with the new ideas of education of the West but she felt the task she faced in Calcutta was different. For she had to succeed in attracting Indian girls to her school and she felt she had to reject the kind of education that was systematized and gave all students a prescribed uniform dose of

instruction. For the girls in her charge she had to provide an education that took into account their existing knowledge.

The girls she would teach would know stories from the two Indian epics: the Mahabharata and Ramayana which were written to teach people ``dharma ``or right conduct and the aims of life. This was deep culture. She felt it was important to make a reverent and patient study of the lives of the girls, what they knew, and the conditions in which they lived before she could proceed to firm up the details of instructions she would provide. Her thoughts on why a ``reverent" study was necessary are explained in the following quote ``Of all the creations of a people, their art, their sciences, their customs, their buildings, and the like, the highest and most spiritual is their language. In it is the left the impress of their love and hope, their

ideas of achievement and their criticism of the world....as language holds the soul of a nation, so in like fashion its literature holds the soul of the language....First there are the philosophical ideas which give its tone to the dream-world of the race. Then there is the great gallery of ideal characters of which every Indian child by his birth is made a freeman, that gallery in which a man may wander all his life without one excursion into formal history: the dramatic background, as it were, of each generation of the national struggle. Then there are the proverbs and fables innumerable, village-legends, quaint stories and metaphors, beggars' songs, ancestral hero-tales, cherished memories of saints and leaders, and all the floating literature that makes so large a part of the spiritual home of man without even incarnating itself in letters:

“Gradually it dawns upon one that behind all this there is some central source of thought and strength, a fountain of authority, a standard of correctness that gives

dignity and assurance. This academic authority lies in Sanskrit..." (Sen, 2018, p. 40).

This deep analysis of the roots of Indian culture and the true nature of education we have quoted shows the way Nivedita approached any task: there had to be well thought out principles in place, there had to time set aside to familiarize oneself to the environment in which the task had to be carried out, and then a well thought out method had to be drawn up which was then to be followed and modified if necessary (Sen, 2018, Pp. 40-50).

Nivedita's entry into political work was helped by the fact that both of the two major political movements of 1905 had an educational dimension. The first was the reaction of educated Indians to the University Commission report which led to the Universities Act of 1904 and the second was the popular agitation against the Bill for the Partition of Bengal in 1905. The Universities Act was strongly criticized because it gave the government full control over all educational institutions and as stressed by Nivedita there was no provision for science education or research. She expressed her strong reservations regarding the Act through letters, articles, and speeches, which established Nivedita as an ardent supporter and a strong voice for the cause of India. She was an important voice supporting the setting up of the National Council of Education and later the Bengal National College (Sen, 2018, p. 50).

The educational vision and the teachers' task as envisaged by Nivedita can be put in her own words as follows,

“Education! Ay, that is the problem of India. How to give true education, national education; how to make you full men, true sons of *Bharatvarsha*, and not poor copies of Europe? Your education should be an education of the heart and the spirit, and of the spirit as much of the brain; it should be a living connection between yourselves and your past as well as the modern world!

“Have the Hindu women of the past been a source of shame to us that we should hasten to discard their old-time grace and sweetness, their gentleness and piety, their tolerance and childlike depth of love and pity, in favour

of the first crude product of Western information and social aggressiveness?... An education of the brain that uprooted humility and took away tenderness, would be no true education at all.

“The question that has to be solved for Indian women, therefore, is a form of education that might attain this end of developing the faculties of soul and mind in harmony with one another.

“And in this particular respect there is perhaps no other country in the world so fortunately placed as India. She is, above all others, the land of great women. Whenever we turn, whether to history or literature, we are met on every hand by those figures whose strength she mothered and recognised, while she their memory eternally held sacred.

“There can never be any sound education of the Indian woman which does not begin and end in exaltation of the national ideals of womanhood, as embodied in her own history and heroic literature”.

Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950):

Sri Aurobindo's thoughts on education have a philosophical basis, which mingles spiritual framework with pragmatic approach. His thoughts reflect upon the learner's world - from within and without. They direct teacher educators to develop a significant viewpoint towards the pupils. This is necessary to promote lifelong learning and bring about transformation in the pupils.

Sri Aurobindo believes in the evolution of human mind which passes through four stages where he discovers himself/ herself as firstly, a rational individual, an individual with a particular national identity, an individual with international citizenship and an individual who is one with infinity respectively. The education which ensures this process of evolution is integral education that is composed of 5 components as follows:

- a. Physical education – Games and sports, Yoga, Athletics, Free hand exercises, Swimming, First aid training.
- b. Mental Education – Language learning, Competency in Mathematics, Getting test in Social Sciences.
- c. Vital Education: Sense Training, Life and Physical Science, Aesthetics.
- d. Spiritual Education – Reading of the lives of the Great people, Singing Bhajans.
- e. Psychic Education – Meditation.

Some of these thoughts on education with reference to teachers and teacher educators as interpreted by Sri Aurobindo are mentioned below:

- i. “The first principle of true teaching is that nothing can be taught. The teacher is not an instructor or task-master. He is a helper and a guide. His business is to suggest and not to impose.
- ii. Sri Aurobindo focuses also upon the education of the heart apart from the education of the mind. He considers the education of the heart as a necessary aspect of life. The education of the heart is beneficial to the teachers as well as to the pupils. This can bring about meaningful transformation amongst the learners (Vaidya, 1955, p. 21).

From the following utterances of Sri Aurobindo we can have his ideas about Teacher and Teacher education:

“The first principle of true teaching is that nothing can be taught. The teacher is not an instructor or taskmaster; he is a helper and guide. His business is to suggest and not to impose. He does not actually train the pupil's mind, he only shows him how to perfect his instruments of knowledge and helps and encourages him in the process. He does not impart knowledge to him; he shows him how to acquire knowledge for himself. He does not call forth the knowledge that is within; he only shows him where it lies and how it can be habituated to rise to the surface. The distinction that reserves this principle for the teaching of adolescent and adult minds and denies its application to the child is a conservative and unintelligent doctrine. Child or man, boy or girl, there is only one sound principle of good teaching. Difference of age only serves to diminish or increase the amount of help and guidance necessary it does not change its nature” (Aurobindo, 1966, p. 20).

“The discovery that education must be a bringing out of the child's own intellectual and moral capacities to their highest possible value and must be based on the psychology of the child-nature was a step forward towards a more healthy because a more subjective system; but it still fell short because it still regarded him as an object to be handled and moulded by the teacher, to be educated” (Aurobindo, 1972, p. 49).

“In order to awaken the child to the understanding of the relation existing between the two worlds which he discovers almost simultaneously- the inner and the outer- he should be told how to observe carefully what happens in himself” (Pavitra, 2002, p. 31).

“The teacher becomes a guide pointing out how to become an animal, how to become a river, a cloud, an electron or a galaxy. We do not have distinguished over selves as animals, but we have to discover in ourselves that we are animals disguised as men, and at the same time men disguised as animals. We do not have to imagine ourselves being an electron, because we are electrons who imagine themselves building cells, who imagine themselves building a human being” (Artaud, 1996, p. 36).

The first result of such a continuous stimulation to identify oneself with a world, in which there is nothing strange, nothing hostile, nothing other or non-self, is that we emerge into a universe where the only possible relations are relation of love. In such a universe even the virus which threatens the life of our physical body, as well as the lions who devour the gazelle, does it out of love. In such a vision there is no place for hatred. The only not – love is indifference, and indifference is the failure to recognise oneself in another (Artaud, 1996, p. 36).

“The first attention of the teacher must be given to the medium and the instruments, and until these are perfected, to multiply subjects of regular instruction is to waste time and energy. When the mental instruments are sufficiently developed to acquire a language easily and swiftly, that is the time to introduce him to many languages, not when he can only partially understand what he is taught and masters it laboriously and imperfectly. Moreover, one who has mastered his own language has one very necessary facility for mastering another. With the linguistic facilities an satisfactory developed in one's own tongue, to master others is impossible to study science with the faculties of observation, judgement, reasoning and comparison only slightly developed is to undertake a useless and thankless labour. So it is with all other subjects” (Aurobindo, 2002, p. 3).

Benoy Kumar Sarkar (1887–1949):

Benoy Kumar Sarkar was a pioneering thinker who was confronting late nineteenth-century modernity and making sense of this complex phenomenon. Sarkar was an speaker who critically engaged theories of modernity presented by those who would later be crowned the founding fathers of Sociology. Sarkar functioned with a cosmopolitan, trans-Asian frame of reference and recognized unifying forces in the space labelled ‘Asia’ despite the diversity and complexity within. He was writing at the turn of the twentieth century, from a non-Western locale,

but deeply and critically engaged with social science concepts, theories, issues and problematic currents in the ‘West.’ He is exposed as an early critic of European theorizing about Asia, in general, and India, in particular, and offers alternate readings of the same.

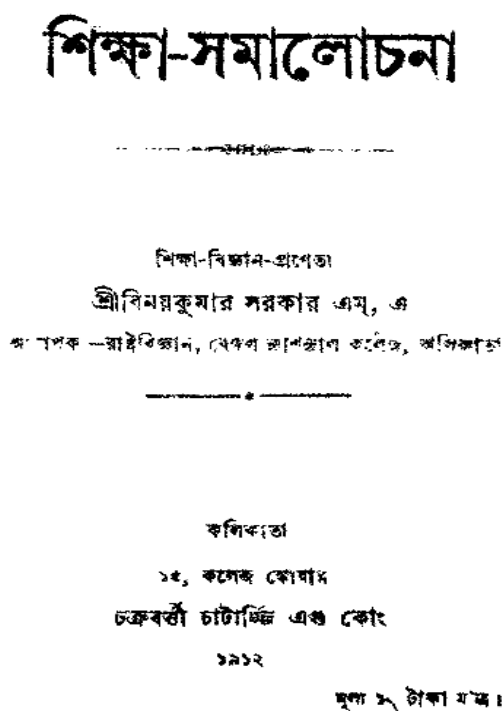


Figure 3. Copy of the First page of ‘Siksha- Somalochana’

In his famous “*Siksha Samalochana*” (A Critique on Education), which was written when he was only 25 years old, Prof. Sarkar presented an expected Indian ideal of teachers and teaching which were utterly relevant during his time. The Critique starts with the following ‘Preamble’ in English:

- I. “General:- Aim and Criterion of Education twofold: the man must be (i) intellectually, a discoverer of truths and a pioneer of learning (ii) morally, an organiser of institutions and a leader of men.
- II. Moral Training to be imparted not through lessons culled from moral and religious text-books, but through arrangements by which the student is actually made to develop habits of self-sacrifice and devotion to the interests of others by undertaking works of philanthropy and social service.
- III. To build up character and determine the aim or mission of life (i) the ‘design,’ plan and personal responsibility of a single guide-philosopher-friend, and (ii) the control of the whole life and career of the student are indispensable. These circumstances provide the pre-condition for true Spiritual Education.

IV. *Educational Institution and Movements must not be made planks in political, industrial, social or religious agitations and propagandas, but controlled and governed by Science of Education based on the rational grounds of Sociology.*

A. *Tutorial-*

I. *Even the most elementary course must have a Multiplicity of subjects with due interrelation and co-ordination. Up to a certain stage the training must be encyclopaedic and as comprehensive as possible.*

II. *The mother-tongue must be the Medium of instruction in all subjects and through all standards. And if in India the provincial languages are really inadequate and poor the educationists must make it a point to develop and enrich them within the shortest possible time by a system of patronage and endowments on the 'protective principle.'*

III. *The sentence, not word, must be the basis of Language-training, whether in Inflexional or Analytical tongues-even in Sanskrit; and the Inductive Method of proceeding from the known to the unknown, concrete to the abstract, facts and phenomena to general principles, is to be the tutorial method in all branches of learning.*

IV. *Two Foreign languages besides English and at least two provincial vernaculars must be made compulsory for all Higher Culture in India.*

C. *Organisational-*

I. *Examinations must be daily. The day's work must be finished and tested during the day. And terms of academic life as well as the system of giving credit should be not by years or months but according to subjects or portions of subjects studied. Steady and constant discipline, both intellectual and moral, are possible only under these conditions.*

II. *The Laboratory and Environment of student-life must be whole world of men and things. The day's routine must therefore provide opportunities for self-sacrifice, devotion, recreations, excursions, etc. as well as pure intellectual work. There should consequently be no long holidays or periodical vacations except when necessitated by pedagogic interests" (Sarkar, 1912).*

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