



## EDUCATIONAL THOUGHTS OF WESTERN THINKERS FROM PHILOSOPHICAL VIEWPOINT

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### ABSTRACT

In order to create the ultimate culture of education for humanity, the idea and notion of education philosophy were developed from both ancient and modern sources, merged, and worked on simultaneously. When comparing these aspects within the understanding of education itself, through the countries apart from this global nation, there are many aspects of this discipline that are not parallel with one another. The present study focuses mainly on Western thoughts on education. Different Western educationists and their works have been considered as the area of study.

**KEYWORDS:** Western education, Maria Montessori, Mary Wollstonecraft, Nel Noddings, Matthew Arnold, Herbert Spencer, John Milton, Oliver Goldsmith.

### INTRODUCTION

In order to equip students to live fulfilled lives in accordance with the society's standards and treasured values, education must include a process of imparting moral precepts (Gayen, 2023). While the education system is a framework that has been standardised and used as a reference by teachers to teach their students in a communicative, informative, and insightful way, education is the living knowledge, information, and skills throughout life. According to Tagore, the emphasis of the educational process should be on the holistic development of the student, as knowledge acquisition and application to the welfare of humanity are the main goals of education (Mondal & Gayen, 2021). In fact, the educational system serves as an indicator, keeping track of how well instruction is being carried out within a framework that works to achieve a particular objective enabling pupils to perform at the required level within a given time frame (Hassan et al., 2010). Due to their distinct cultures, the East and West's educational systems are diverse, which indirectly reveals both cultures' strengths and flaws (Kim, 2005). First, Western educational theory places a strong emphasis on active learning, which entails students actively participating in class and in group discussions. Such instruction increases pupils' speaking confidence in front of the class, producing outspoken, self-assured people who are not afraid to express their opinions. Additionally, it teaches students to respect and accept the opinions of others while also fostering interpersonal relationships as they converse and share ideas (Hassan et al., 2010). The present study deals with the different western educationists and their contribution to the field of education.

### MARIA MONTESSORI

Since her first appearance in front of the public, at the International Women's Conference in Berlin in 1896, feminist educator Maria Montessori has been successful in capturing the attention of the media. Her paper on female emancipation, which she wrote, gave her more notoriety in addition to the fact that she had a captivating personality. She had a flair for public speaking, which helped her transition into society easily (Adhikari & Saha, 2021b). According to her theory, children go through various stages of development, which are reflected in how the Montessori programme is set up for kids (Adhikari & Saha, 2021c). The Montessori educational philosophy was developed in a way that supports and encourages a child's natural desire to be independent. In this environment, kids are allowed to explore independently and have access to a range of opportunities for 'real work'. Due to these challenges, the pupils are able to execute their daily activities with assurance and self-esteem (Adhikari & Saha, 2023). Maria Montessori played a key role as a female educator and very similar to the role played by Durgabai Deshmukh, Tarabai Modak, Pandita Ramabai etc. in the Indian context (Adhikari & Saha, 2021e).



### **MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT**

Mary Wollstonecraft, a British author, philosopher, and ardent supporter of women's rights, lived during the French Revolution and died in 1797. Wollstonecraft's writing is permeated with a profound and urgent concern for education, particularly the raising of girls, and this concern persists even after her career ends abruptly (Adhikari & Saha, 2023). Mary Wollstonecraft's posthumous work is fortified with such dominant political statements (Adhikari et al., 2023). Up until the abrupt end of her career, Mary Wollstonecraft's writing was infused with a deep and urgent concern for education, especially the upbringing of girls and women. Her most major work, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, starts as an appeal for the equitable education of women and includes an ambitious and long-range proposal for a national school system. *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters*, the title of her first book, speaks for itself (Adhikari & Saha, 2022a). In view of republican polemics against reliance, it is enlightening to take into account what Wollstonecraft has to say regarding female dependence (Adhikari & Saha, 2022b). Apart from all these, her writing bears the touch of sexuality and it has also been asserted by Godwin (Adhikari & Saha, 2022c). She also bears the tag of being a feminist and her writing *An Historical and Moral View of the French Revolution (1794)* clearly demonstrates that tag (Adhikari & Saha, 2022d). It is generally accepted that *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* by Mary Wollstonecraft, which was published at the beginning of 1792, was met with shock, horror, and mockery. To counter this ambitious endeavour to promote women's equality, the forces of opposition purportedly gathered and spattered the Amazon with their pens (Adhikari & Saha, 2022e).

### **NEL NODDINGS**

For her contributions to educational theory, philosophy of education, and care ethics, Nel Noddings, an American educator, philosopher, and feminist, has won praise from all around the world (Adhikari & Saha, 2021a). According to Noddings, the primary goal of education should be to create competent, compassionate, loving, and likeable individuals. Her approach to caring may appear implicitly religious, yet her view of education is wholly pragmatic. According to Noddings, pupils should acquire the knowledge and abilities needed to assist them navigate the world while also showing compassion for younger people, the elderly, animals, and the environment (Coleman, Depp, & O'Rourke, 2017). Like Socrates, Nel Noddings views knowledge as "justified true belief." According to Nel Noddings, pupils in schools assert their knowledge based on what they have learnt from reputable sources. They are frequently questioned "how they did it" rather than "why their answers are true," so if they can provide an account based on legal means, we give them credit for knowing.

### **MATTHEW ARNOLD**

English poet and critic Matthew Arnold lived during the Victorian era. In the wake of Alfred Lord Tennyson and Robert Browning, he is frequently regarded as the third-greatest poet of his generation (New World Encyclopedia, n.d.). Every moniker, whether disparaging or complimentary, that promotes standards, unity, order, and impersonality in criticism has been used to describe Matthew Arnold, including "classicist," "unnerved conservative," and "persistent critic". As a result, it is unquestionably possible to say with some certainty that Arnold emphasised impersonality, praised unity, emphasised order, and emphasised standards (Adhikari & Saha, 2021d). In a famous paragraph from *Culture and Anarchy*, where he exhorts us to seek knowledge of "the best that has been thought and said," he captures his influence on educators. This has been often regarded as an early support for the western canon. Arnold has been called a cultural elitist as a result of the quote, which has been used as a criterion for curriculum selection. In reality, when taken out of context like this, Arnold's catchphrase is too nebulous to be helpful. It also runs the risk of portraying him incorrectly as someone who is primarily concerned with maintaining tradition through education. He has a complex perspective on the goal of education, as we shall discover (Parents and Teachers for Excellence, 2020).

### **HERBERT SPENCER**

British positivist philosopher, sociologist, and advocate for improved education Herbert Spencer. He was a pioneer of "Social Darwinism" and put out the idea of using evolutionary theory in sociology, particularly in the context of education and class conflict. Spencer, according to Harvard University's president, was a great educational pioneer (Rhys, 1911). Herbert Spencer has a strong background in experimentation. His approach to education is utterly unconventional. A good education must put the student in a position to learn on their own through observation and objective attachment. The learner should be situated somewhat in the middle of objective reality (Maji & Saha, 2013). The objective of education, according to Herbert Spencer, is to teach everyone how to live fully. Spencer promoted automatic learning based on the needs of the pupils and emphasised the importance of interest in the educational process (Liu, Li & McLean, 2017). Spencer proposed that the most crucial moral principle in moral education is individual self-preservation and created the formula for moral evolution. He supported the idea of natural consequence in terms of discipline and opposed punishment (Richards, 2010).

### **JOHN MILTON**

John Milton (1608-1674) was born in Cheapside, London's Bread Street, and had a wild childhood. He had never experienced traditional education. Although he began his elementary education at Cambridge and St Paul's School in London, he never finished



it. He temporarily moved into Horton and thought about imaginative music and art (Maji & Saha, 2012b). Nothing can be a better teacher than suffering. Milton learned a valuable lesson from his blindness and was guided by disasters throughout this tale. Milton had developed the optimum educational structure during this period. 'Repair' is the main goal of education. It is repair in the sense that it fills in his deficiencies and eliminates his excesses.

### OLIVER GOLDSMITH

When one is impoverished, poverty serves as the finest possible teacher. The pitiful representation of Oliver Goldsmith and his life was tested by such a tragic fate. Many great educational masters who conducted in-depth analyses of educational practises were accessible through British literature. In this situation, Goldsmith is quite far up the order (Maji & Saha, 2012a). The worries and anguish that Goldsmith has depicted are largely artificial and unreal. Goldsmith was close with Jusah Reynolds. And the poem was dedicated to Mr. Reynolds. He was the one who attacked Goldsmith. However, such made-up anxiety and fear might not be accurate or believable. Oliver Goldsmith was clearly a recognised educator in 18th-century Britain, it can be admitted.

### CONCLUSION

The ideal education should combine elements of both Eastern and Western pedagogies. The western education philosophy looks at the learning process at educational institutions in order to produce knowledgeable and competent students, but the eastern education philosophy emphasises a meaningful life in developing an ideal life of the individual and focuses on values that shape the lifestyles. This is a result of the students' capacity to put what they learned in class into practise in their daily lives (Muhammad, 2003). The role of teacher also differs in Eastern and Western pedagogies. A teacher is revered in the classroom and is also a unique character with a variety of ideals that might affect how the students are taught (Ahmad, 1998). To conclude, a teacher is the torch bearer of the educational philosophies of both East and West. And to transmit such philosophies and culture a teacher should keep in mind that he is there to serve the ordinary people (Gayen et al., 2021).

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