

ISSN: 2395-4132

# THE EXPRESSION

An International Multi-Disciplinary e-Journal

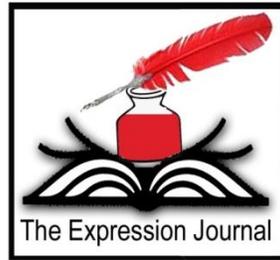
Bi-Monthly Referred & Indexed Open Access e-Journal



Vol. 1 Issue 1 Feb. 2014

Editor-in-Chief: Bijender Singh

Email: [editor@expressionjournal.com](mailto:editor@expressionjournal.com)  
[www.expressionjournal.com](http://www.expressionjournal.com)



## **TAGORE AND GANDHI: THEIR NOBLE DEBATE**

**Dr. Ami. U. Upadhyay**

**Professor and Director**

**School of Humanities and Social Sciences**

**Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India**

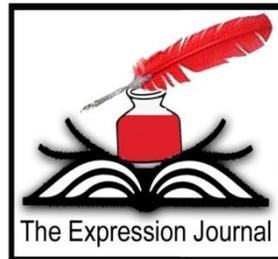
---

### **Abstract**

Gandhi and Tagore were two great towering personalities that influenced the entire humanity. Both were intellectual stalwarts and had their own ideology. Tagore and Gandhi represented each other but also differed on many issues. Tagore did not agree to Gandhi's boycott of foreign cloth, spinning on charkha, English education, non-cooperation, science and industries, superstition and faith and caste system. Tagore stood for equality, humanity, justice and freedom of mind. Gandhi experimented with truth, non-violence and satyagraha as tools to achieve independence. Tagore knew that Gandhi was more practical and successful organiser; however, he smelt political strategies in many of Gandhi's programmes. Tagore wanted liberalism, rationalism and free interaction with ideas from all directions. In spite their differences, they respected and loved each other. Their 'noble debate' shows true intellectual and democratic spirit.

### **Key Words/Phrases**

Intellectual stalwarts-differences on several issues- freedom of mind- practical organizer- intellectual liberalism- noble debate- emblematic of true democratic and intellectual spirit.



## **TAGORE AND GANDHI: THEIR NOBLE DEBATE**

**Dr. Ami. U. Upadhyay**

**Professor and Director**

**School of Humanities and Social Sciences**

**Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India**

.....

Gandhi and Tagore were the two Indian Visionaries who shaped Indian political and cultural thought during the last century. Both were committed to their cause and strove to uplift Indian people from slavery and mental poverty. Intellectually, both were well-equipped and upheld their ideology explain their stand and refuting the other's views in a true democratic manner. They differed from each other on many important issues but their respect and love for each other never diminished.

Roman Rolland wrote in March 1923 paying rich tribute to Tagore and Gandhi calling them "two great rivers like souls, overflowing with divine spirit." (Sen Amartya, 92) C. F. Andrews, an English clergyman and close friend of both Tagore and Gandhi had witnessed the discussion between the two on several subjects. Gandhi defended idol worship which Tagore opposed. Gandhi argued that for majority of people abstract ideas are not easy to understand. Tagore did want people to be treated like ignorant children all the time for Gandhi, nationalism was necessary; for Tagore it was a kind of madness that blinded people leading to enmity towards other countries and wars. Tagore stood for reasoning and scientific temperament. Gandhi detested science, technology and industrialism. For Tagore, economic and social development was keys to solution of many problems India' suffered from. For Gandhi simple life with minimum needs was a panacea for all problems. Tagore did admire Gandhi as a political leader and never doubted his integrity. He called Gandhi 'Mahatma' a great soul in spite of the fact that he could not agree to many things that Gandhi stood for.

Tagore died in 1941 and was saved from witnessing the communal genocide that took place at the time of partition in 1947. Gandhi was assassinated on 30<sup>th</sup> January, 1948 by Nathuram Godse a Hindu fanatic. Tagore in his last years saw hunger, poverty, ignorance and communal tension between Hindu and Muslims. He was

naturally very unhappy and despaired seeing India heading towards communal disaster. Intolerance, bigotry and parochialism kept the people of India chained to poverty and slavery.

For Tagore, nothing was more important than human freedom and human dignity. In his famous poem *The Gitanjali* he has epitomised his vision of a free and matured nation he wanted India to be. He supported freedom movement though he was never a nationalist in a narrow sense. For him, true freedom was not just freedom from the British rule but the freedom from dead habits of past, unnecessary traditions and taboos. He wanted India to be free from the tyranny of past and 'narrow domestic wall' (*Gitanjali*) that imprisoned the people of India depriving them of seeing beyond these walls and making them well-grogs of the well-known parable. Tagore writes:

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 striking stretches its arms towards perfection;  
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreamy desert sand of dead habit;  
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.”

*(The Gitanjali 49-50)*

Tagore was a highly sensitive poet with profound love for humanity and nature. However, he always stressed on the importance of reason and intellectual inquiry. He wanted people of India to think freely and fearlessly. He held that knowledge should be available to all without any control or restrictions. He said that world should not be broken into fragments and divisions like that of caste, creed, religion or class. Speech and action should be co-ordinated and therefore words should come out from profound well of truth. All people should be striving towards perfection and they should be blinded by faith and dead customs and traditions of past. Tagore understood the role of tradition but he was equally aware of their tyranny. He believed that past should be re-examined rationally and it becomes a burden, it must be thrown away.

Tagore admired Gandhi as an organizer and political leader but he was quite sceptical about his type of nationalism and orthodox views about Indian traditions and customs. He was against glorification of Indian tendency of neglecting rationalism and succumbing to blind faith in the name of spiritualism. He believed that

by encouraging people to follow such traditions, they would lose their capacity to question and inquire. This, he thought was a dangerous trend.

The arguments between Gandhi and Tagore were on a high intellectual and philosophical plane on certain issues, they could never agree with each other. However, they were always willing to learn from each other. Even when public opinion did not favour Tagore's debates, Gandhi never thought that the poet was encroaching upon the territory beyond his limits. There were many who strongly believed and argued that intellectual interferences in political struggle were unnecessary. Gandhi never thought so and welcomed the role of the poet whose sacred world of ideas he revered. Tagore believed that a poet has his own religion, *swadharna*, the religion of creativity and intellectual inquiry leading to complete freedom of thought irrespective of nation, state, faith, language or history. He believed that the poet never lays down his lyre. He sings eternally rejecting all dictates of society or political power.

During the non-co-operation movement, Gandhi became the leader of the masses who launched the boycott of British government schools, foreign cloth and English education in general. He advocated the use of *Swadeshi* goods. It was here that Tagore differed from Gandhi's actions and programmes. He favoured Hindi as the national language but stressed that it must be accepted voluntarily. The debate between the two stalwarts took place when the non-co-operation movement was at its climax. Articles and letters by Tagore and Gandhi appeared in 'Modern Review' and 'Young India'. Tagore's criticism was looked upon in a hostile manner by nationalists and many followers of Gandhi. Tagore's critique appeared in the form of letters to C. F. Andrews in 'Modern Review' (May 1921). Gandhi wrote his two famous pieces "Call of Truth" and 'The Great Sentinel' as a rejoinder. These articles by Gandhi and Tagore's detailed letters to C. F. Andrews throw light on differences of basic ideology between Gandhi and Tagore. The major issues on which both differed can be discussed under following heads.

### **Satyagraha:**

Gandhi's central ideology rests on his insistence on truth which he called 'Soul force' as the counter force of 'brute force'. He practised in South Africa and later in Indian independence struggle as a tool to fight against the British rule. Explaining Satyagraha Gandhi wrote:

"I have also called it love-force or soul-force. In the application of *satyagraha*, I discovered in the early stages that pursuit of truth did not admit of violence being inflicted on one's opponent but he must be weaned from error by patience and compassion. For what appears to be truth to one may appear to be error to the other. And patience means self-suffering. So the doctrine came to mean vindication of truth, not by infliction of suffering on the opponent but oneself." (Gandhi, M. K. Vol.19, 206)

Gandhi contrasted it to passive resistance as *Satyagraha* consists of three main attributes complete absence of violence its insistence upon truth in all circumstances and its strength, as an effective weapon to fight injustice. A true *satyagraha* is "object is to convert, not to coerce the wrong doer" (Gandhi M. K. 'Harijan'). *Satyagraha* sunned impatience, barbarity and undue pressure. The principle of non-co-operation was based on law of suffering. It implied moral upliftment of a person and the society at large.

Tagore could not agree to the use of *satyagraha* as an instrument. He felt that it was a political strategy like any other strategy which is usually corroded by untruth and hatred. He felt that masses would convert it into

mindless mantra strengthening bigotry and shallowness of an ideal like truth. He believed that magic-ridden slave mentality of Indian masses was the cause of poverty which needed to be removed. *Swaraj* could come only if this slavish mentality was completely uprooted. Tagore always affirmed that no country could take an isolated view as it was against the spirit of the new age. Injustice or inequality in any part of the world was injustice or inequality everywhere. He feared that in the name of Satyagraha, people were taking narrow view of the country and isolated themselves from the broader view of the world.

## **Swaraj**

*Swaraj* is another key concept of the Mahatma. For him, it was not a mere freeing of the people of India's from the British rule but all kinds of bondages. Gandhiji believed that "real *swaraj* will come, not by the acquisition of authority by a few, but by the acquisition of the capacity of all to resist authority when it is abused. In other words, *swaraj* is to be attained by educating the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority." (Gandhi. M. K. Young India, 1925 P. 41)

*Swaraj* means self-government that is free from all kinds of outside control. It is a sacred word connoting self-rule and self-restraint. It involves self-sacrifice and avoids violence and untruth in thought speech and action.

For Tagore individual freedom was paramount and he opposed any tendency that restricted freedom of mind. In this sense, Tagore's ideology was certainly anarchist and anti-statist. He held that the state had never been the core of the nation's life. It never was the part of the society as in the west. Therefore he was against tendencies that elevated the state above society. He was sceptical of the movement aiming at capturing the state power from other holder of power. He said, "Alien government in India is a chameleon. Today it comes in the guise of the Englishmen; tomorrow perhaps as some other foreigner: the next day, without abating a jot of its virulence, it may take the shape of our countrymen." (Tagore, 'The Call of Truth'). These words are truly prophetic as after six decades of independence, the people of the country how the state operates whether it is aliens or hometown. However, the stateless society is an ideal conceived by many great poets, thinkers and philosophers. It has ever taken a practical shape anywhere in the world. Tagore's '*Swaraj*' was for the soul, for the freedom of mind and creativity. He believed that the destiny of human mind is to create *swaraj* for itself and no restraint must ever deny it. No irrational traditions or creed must dictate human mind and its creativity. Tagore's platonic ideal of *swaraj* was the *swaraj* of the mind that involved the free exercise of intellect.

## **Nationalism:**

Tagore was certainly a great champion of Indian independence from the British Rule but he was sceptical about the kind of patriotism and nationalism that turned into ethnic and cultural chauvinism. Tagore had dissociated himself from the nationalist movement of the day because he felt that it often entailed rejection of everything Western. He felt that India could and India should learn freely and profitably from other countries including Britain. For him, patriotism could never be the ultimate refuge. It could not be anything less than humanity. However, Tagore's views were looked upon with suspicion both by Indian freedom fighters and the British Government. After the Jullianwala Bagh massacre of 13 April 1919, he returned his Knighthood to the British Government standing by the people of India rejecting the British honour in protest against the heinous act of cruelty and inhumanity.

Both Gandhi and Tagore were aware of limits of nationalism. Gandhi was also against excesses of nationalism. He reiterated that Indian nationalism was not exclusive. Patriotism devoid of narrow selfish exclusiveness was as good as humanity. It was never against humanity unlike Gandhi; Tagore admired many facets of the Western civilization and European thought and large hearted liberation of the 19<sup>th</sup> century English thinkers. Tagore could never agree to chest-thumping war-mongering in the name of patriotism. In spite of ideological differences both Tagore and Gandhi never doubted each other's true patriotic spirit that involved not merely the love for one's own country but the love for humanity in general. However, both Tagore's and Gandhi's broad liberal patriotism waned with the passage of time leading to the ugliest scenario of communal violence. In this sense, Tagore's fears proved right because the very nature of patriotism and nationalism is exclusiveness and intolerance towards the other.

### **Non- Co-operation:**

Tagore was not happy with the concept of non-co-operation with the West. He was critical of Gandhi's call to quit schools run by the British Government. The very idea no-co-operation was against the sensitivity of the poet's heart. He wrote: "The idea of non no operation as a political asceticism. Our students are bringing their offering of sacrifice to what not to fuller education but to non-education." (Tagore- Modern Review, 1921)

Tagore did not accept the fact that the Western education harms India. He believed that intellectual interaction with the outer world is always profitable and to reject such interchange of ideas is the worst type of parochialism and provincialism. The West has misunderstood the East and that is the cause of disharmony and conflict between them. He firmly believed that to take an isolated view of one's own country was against the spirit of the New Age as the new age is the age of assimilation and merging of the best from every direction.

Gandhiji wrote several letters in 'Young India' as his response to Tagore's anxiety. He believed that English education emasculated the English educated Indians. He wrote that English was studied for commercial purpose, for government jobs and passport to marriage. For many the true meaning of education was the knowledge of English. Gandhi felt that these were nothing but the signs of slavery and degradation. He wrote; "I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any." (Gandhi, M. K. Young India 1921)

Regarding non-cooperation, Gandhi stated that it was not meant to segregate but to pause the way for real co-operation, mutual trust and respect. Non-co-operation was according to Gandhi, 'a protest against an unwitting and unwilling participation in evil.' (Gandhi, 1921) It is the nation's notice that it is no longer satisfied to be in tutelage" (Gandhi, 1921). He affirmed that non-cooperation was courage to disobey and deny the wrong and the unjust. It amounted to India awakened and frees preaching the "message of peace and goodwill to a groaning world" (Gandhi, 1921)

The concept of non-cooperation is quite valid even today. It is based on non-violence and non-hatred. It is equivalent to the power of saying No to the wrong and unjust. Tagore's anxiety was about closing the windows and doors to the outside world. His defence of English education devoid of slavish invitation holds true even today. Gandhiji also did not object to free interaction with the world without losing one's roots.

### **Spinning and the Cult of Charkha:**

Gandhi's constructive programs included spinning on charkha and cleaning. For Gandhi, charkha was the symbol of the concern for the poor and the deprived. When one spins, one meditates upon the conditions of the poor. It aimed at bringing about confirming, oneness with the millions of people of India. He held that *swaraj* had no meaning if millions of people of India did not know how to employ them in constructive manner. Tagore could not agree to Gandhiji's insistence on spinning and charkha. He also opposed the burning of foreign cloth when millions of poor people shivered in half-nakedness. He stated that it was an economic issue and should be discussed that way. He believed that the rest of poverty in India lay in ignorance, illiteracy, slavery and superstitions and it could not be removed with mere spinning on charkha. "To give charkha the first place in our striving for the country's welfare is only a way to make our insulted intelligence recoil in despairing action. (Tagore, Modern Review)

Tagore argued that spinning on charkha was a dull, solitary activity and one who spins becomes a solitary, isolated machine. He wanted people to be involved in creative, co-operative and mentally illuminating activities to bring true *Swaraj*. However, Gandhiji did not budge from his views on charkha. In his article 'The Great Sentinel' in 1921, he had replied to Tagore saying that Tagore had missed the point. He said, "I do indeed ask the poet and the sage to spin the wheel as a sacrament." (Gandhi, Young India 1921). Full-fledged debate on charkha took place in 1925 when Tagore published his article "The Cult of the Charkha" in Modern Review on September, 1925 again. Gandhi's rejoinders "The Poet and the Charkha" and "The Poet and the Wheel" appeared in 'Young India', November 5, 1925 and March 11, 1926 respectively. He vehemently defended the charkha saying that Tagore had probably picked up his knowledge about charkha from table talk. He wrote that he did respect his views but held his ground with the firm faith in charkha as a pathway to *Swaraj*.

### **Science and Industries:**

Gandhi and Tagore differed from each other on their attitudes towards science. Tagore believed that Science is useful in understanding the physical world. It is also useful in curing diseases and eradicating poverty, ignorance and superstitions. In 1934, the earthquake took place in Bihar. Gandhi associated it with God's anger upon people for their sins of untouchability. Tagore could not agree to the unscientific superstition. He cautioned that such arguments would strengthen people's superstitious beliefs. Gandhi defended his contention by arguing that he had a profound faith in the connection between the cosmic phenomena and human conduct and human actions. Tagore always stressed on the importance of critical inquiry, observation and analysis.

Gandhi declared war against the tyranny of machines them to be eradicated. He believed that machines replaced human being making them jobless and insignificant parts in production. Tagore believed that science and technology should not be judged irrationally. He was aware of the dangers of science and technology but he believed that it depended on how they are employed machines should subjugate human beings but they should be used "to harness the forces of nature in man's service" (Tagore, 'The Cult of Charkha')

### **Superstition and Faith:**

Tagore felt that one of the major causes of poverty in India was superstitiousness of the people. This blind faith was fed and nourished by religious leaders, pundits and even politicians. He was of a firm belief that moral principles should not be associated with cosmic happenings. He could not agree with Gandhi when he connected the Bihar earthquake with divine wrath against untouchability.

Responding to Tagore's protest against Gandhi's remark of divine chastisement, Gandhiji wrote a spirited rejoinder in '*Harijan*' in February, 1934. He wrote: "Visitations like droughts, floods, earthquakes and the like, though they seem to have only physical origins, are, for me somehow connected with man's morals." (Gandhi, *Harijan*); He reiterated his faith that there is certainly the connection between cosmic phenomena and human behaviour.

### **God and Religion:**

Tagore was a mystic and in his writings one can see joyful and fearless relationship with God, as a lover or a friend. Many of his poems express this ambiguous spiritual experience. He did not believe in rituals institutionalised religion. For him, humanism was the greatest religion and he could see the face of God in the tone-breakers and tillers of the land. Gandhi was traditional *vaishnavite* and he had an unwavering faith in Lord Rama. He was deeply influenced by Indian scriptures, particularly by the *Bhagavad Gita* and *the Ramayana*. His favourite *bhajan* was '*Raghupati Raghav Raja Ram*' and he liked Narsinh Mehta's '*Vaishnav Jan*' that epitomised the traits of a true man of God. In Gandhi, can see an ideal mixture of traditional Hinduism and liberal humanism. As far as religious views of these two stalwarts are concerned, their differences are only superficial. Both sway the face of the divine in the teeming humanity.

### **Varnashram (Caste System)**

The most debated view between Gandhi and many other thinkers is that of *varnashram* (Caste system). In India, it referred to the system of social stratification. The word '*Jatis*' was used for endogamous hereditary groups grouped into four main divisions viz *Brahmins*, *Kshatriyas*, *Vaishyas* and *Shudras*. The *Shudras* were ostracized by all other castes and they were treated as untouchables- all other caste and they were treated as *Shudras* as the polluters in a highly objectionable manner from humanistic point of view. It is truly shocking that a great champion of non-violence and humanity like Gandhi would endorse *Varnashram*, the caste system which is the very foundation of all evils in India. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, a great champion of the rights of the Dalit's argued that the caste system infused a sense of inferiority among the untouchables, deprived them of human rights and traumatised them beyond words. No sensitive, intelligent or god-hearted human being can ever support this cruel system.

Gandhi was brought up in orthodox *Vaishnav* family and probably that is the reason why his views on *Varnashram* are conservative and they clash with his humanism and advocacy of untouchability.

"A *Shudra* can't be called a Brahmin even if he possesses all the qualities of a Brahmin by inheritance. He should never claim his right other than the *varna* in which he was born." (Gandhi, *Young India*) Gandhi said at

Round Table Conference in 1922 that, “As the time goes on everyday my belief in Varna system is strengthening that man has no existence without it.” (Gandhi, 1922)

Later Gandhi mellowed down to some extent and admitted that his ideal of a *Varna* system was to create classless and casteless India. He emphasized that untouchability must be eradicated at any cost. He admitted that violence is generated by inequality and non-violence by equality.

Tagore’s mysticism echoes both Buddhist and Quaker Universal fellowship. He believed in freedom and equality of all human beings. For Tagore, the caste system was a means of exploitation. He adored Buddhism because the message of universal brotherhood was core philosophy. Tagore was deeply pained by caste system and untouchability that resulted in human exploitation and sufferings of the millions of the people. He accused the Brahmins of creating artificial walls of differences between men and men. He revered Lord Buddha for liberating people from the slavery of *Brahminical* slavery Buddhism restored human dignity and human rights to those who were trampled under the cruel feet of the so called higher carter of the society.

### **Love, Women and Celibacy:**

Tagore and Gandhi both ewer loved and adored by women. Gandhi had experienced the onslaught of lust in his own life and developed aversion to sex and sexuality. He equated it with a sin, the fall and therefore to put him to test, took a vow of celibacy. For Tagore, love was the noblest emotion that humans canexperience. He was a mystic and his poems exhibit the profound mystery of love. He believed that women’s life and nature are shaped by love. Love, for him, was an emancipating power. It did not enslave but free Gandhiji condemned sex and sexual desire d experimented with it till the need of his life.

Tagore’s personal life had been full of miseries as far as women are concerned. He lost his wife in 190-2 after nineteen years of married life. (He was married in 1883). He never remarried. He longed for companionship but never got one. He had platonic attachment to his elder brother Jyotindranath’s wife Kadambari who loved poetry and literature. She died at the age of 25, just four months after Tagore’s wedding. Later in his life, on his tour to Argentina, he met victoria Ocampo, a highly talented and beautiful woman. They were close friends and admired each other. Ocampo wanted to be physically intimate with Tagore but he avoided it. But the fact remains that he too was drawn to her.

Tagore wanted women to be free from shackles of rigid traditions but the great poet himself had become victim of the evil customs like child marriage and dowry. His three daughters Madhuri, Meera and Renuka wer married off before they were fifteen. Tagore was not happy with Renuka’s and Meera’s mataches. He had to pay heavy dowries. Madhuri died at the age of 32/34 and Renu died at the age of 14 only. The poet had seen tragic dents of women in his own family. He advocated widow remarriage and opposed child marriage but it is an irony that he could not put it into practice. Bengali nationalist tendencies ignored women’s problems and Tagore also supported a social revolution in public life rather than solving the problems of women. Thus Tagore’s attitude towards women remained indecisive and ambivalent. Unlike Gandhiji, he did not advocate *Bramcharya* but the use of contraception and family planning. However, Gandhiji had been more outspoken and candid in discussing sex and sexuality.

### **East and West:**

Gandhi was highly critical of western civilization and its materialism. He held that money was their God and machines were their masters. They craved for more power, more money and more physical pleasures. Excessive activism poisoned their lives making them discontented and unhappy inside Tagore also rejected the western civilization as a materialistic civilization. He wrote to Gandhi that he did not believe in the physical body to be the highest truth in man.” (Tagore, 1921)

Like Gandhi, he believed that in spite of contented and happy. He contrasted the Western civilization’s frantic pursuit for materialism and hedonistic way of life with simplicity and harmony of the common men of India. He saw balance and harmony in their lives. Tagore was not unaware of the miseries of rural life but he found the Indian masses innocent and free from malice. However, he also believed that the East must learn certain things from the West such as the use of science for human welfare, eradication of poverty, ignorance and superstition. He firmly held that the East and West can meet and learn profitably from each other. Unlike Gandhi, he did not find Western education objectionable. He was against cultural separatism that created narrow walls. Tagore welcomed the positive influence of the western culture and yet refused to see the culture of India as so fragile that required protection from the influence of the West.

### **Education:**

For both Gandhi and Tagore, education was vital for individual and national development. Gandhi’s ‘*Nai Talim*’ and Basic Education focused on manual labour and the three H’s, the hands, heart and head. For Gandhi, head was the least important. He wanted students to be self-reliant, simple and labour loving. He wanted students to spin and wear *khadi*. He believed that education should be independent of state interference and also of state sponsorship.

Gandhi firmly believed that education should be imparted to the students in their mother tongue only. He opposed English education on the ground that it was a sign of slavery and degradation. Both Gandhi and Tagore wanted education emancipated from the colonial mould. Tagore emphasised on creativity and art; Gandhi on self-reliance and labour. Tagore did not want village children deprived of modern education with emphasis on science and English. Gandhi considered manual productive labour as a means of intellectual training. Tagore differed from Gandhi on several aspects but did not press his points accepting the fact that Gandhi’s approach was more practical.

One thing that Tagore would refuse to compromise was freedom of mind in education. He believed that lack of basic education was the root cause of many social and economic problems of India, such as poverty, superstitions, religious bigotry, caste divisions and so on. He had opposed charkha on the ground that it required no thinking. He also believed in co-educational schools, where intellectual flowering and self-motivation were more important than discipline and career-mindedness. Tagore wanted students to be in touch with nature and therefore the classes in Shantiniketan were generally held outdoors. There was a free flow of interaction and cultural exchange. Tagore’s liberalism is reflected in his attitude. Once in Santiniketan, a debate was held in presence of Tagore on relative merits of points of view of Gandhi and Tagore. Majority of

votes favoured Gandhian point of view even in his own school. Tagore in his presidential remarks stated that “It had vindicated the basic principle of education. He had taught his students not to conform but to think freely for themselves.” (Kriplani, Krishna, 339)

Gandhi was also equally open to Tagore’s opposing views on several issues. He helped Tagore in raising funds for Santiniketan and Tagore nominated Gandhi as a Life Trustee of Vishwa Bharti. Gandhi regarded Santiniketan as his second home. When Tagore was seriously ill in 1940, Gandhi wrote that humanity needed him and wished him speedy recovery. ON February 2, 1940, Tagore wrote to Gandhi that he had saved Vishwa Bharti from breakdown and requested him to take under his care when he is no more. Tagore died on 7<sup>th</sup> August, 1941 and Gandhi in his tribute wrote; “In the death of Rabindranath Tagore, we have not only lost the greatest poet of our age, but an ardent nationalist who was also a humanitarian.” (Pyarelal Papers Tagore-Gandhi debate is emblematic of true intellectual as well as democratic spirit. Romain Rolland called it a “Noble debate” that embraced the whole earth and entire humanity. (Romain Rolland)

## **References**

- Sen, Amartya. *The Argumentative Indian*. London: Penguin, 2005. Print.
- Tagore, Rabindranath. "The Geetanjali." *Www.mybebook.com*. 1 Dec. 2004. Web.
- Gandhi, M.K. *The Collected Works of Mahatma*. Vol. 19. 206. Print.
- Gandhi M. K. *Requisite Qualification, Harijan*, 25 March 1939.
- Gandhi, M.K. *Young India*, 29 Jan. 1925.
- Rabindranath, Tagore. *The Call of Truth- Collected Works of Rabindranath Tagore*. Vol. 24. Print.
- Tagore, Rabindranath. *Modern Review*, May 1921
- Gandhi. M. K. *The Poet’s Anxiety Young India* 1 June 1921
- Tagore, Rabindranath *Striving for Swaraj Modern Review* September, 1925
- Gandhi. M. K. *The Great Sentinel, Young India*, 13 October 1921.
- Tagore, Rabindranath. *The Cult of Charkha, Modern Review* September, 1925
- Gandhi. M. K. *Young India*, 11-24-27
- Gandhi, M. K. *Round Table Conference*, 1922.
- Kriplani, Krishna. *Rabindranath Tagore; A Biography*, Calcutta; 1980.
- Pyarelal. *Pyarelal Papers*. Courtesy; Pyarelal
- Rolland, Romain. *Romain Rolland to Tagore* 2 March 1923. (V. B. Archives)
- Tagore, Rabindranath. *Tagore to Gandhi*. March 1921.