“Methodology is applied Ideology”
- Mason Cooley
Chapter-3

METHODOLOGY
3.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with Methodology followed in the study. Research Methodology is a way to find out the results of a given problem on a specific matter or problem that is referred as research problem. In methodology researcher uses different criteria for searching and solving the given research problem. Different sources use different type of methods for solving a particular problem. The methodologies of educational research are based, in most instances, on research methods in behavioural and social sciences. The commonly used researches are experimental, historical or descriptive.

3.1 Type of Research

A philosophical, comparative and historical research was conducted by the researcher. It was a philosophical research as the researcher analyzed the philosophical ideas of Rabindranath Tagore and Maria Montessori. It was a historical research because the roots of Tagore and Montessori’s philosophy were traced from various primary and secondary sources. Further the research was comparative as the common ideas as well as the dissimilarities between the educational philosophies of the two great educators were identified, critically analyzed and explored. Now let us see what is philosophical research and historical research.

3.1.1 Philosophical Research

The educational researches are designed to achieve the following four objectives:

- To formulate new theory, principles and laws,
- To establish a new truth or reality,
- To find out new facts and
- To suggest new applications.

These objects are achieved by conducting different types of research like historical, experimental, survey and philosophical researches.
Philosophy tries to comprehend lived experience or concrete action. It is a disciplined, orderly, logical study of the universe. Philosophical inquiry is a reflection upon human experience in order to decipher the fundamental principles of reality and eventually the principle of existence of itself. The term “philosophy of education” refers to either the academic field of applied philosophy or to one of any educational philosophies that promote a specific type or vision of education, and which examines the definition, goals and meaning of education. A philosophical analysis of education if it is to serve the discipline must be as rigorous and articulate as any other philosophical investigation.

To engage in philosophical inquiry is to theorize, to analyze, to critique, to raise questions about the problems that we are investigating. Philosophical inquiry is concerned with the nature of reality, knowledge, and value. Philosophical inquiry can be descriptive, normative, and/or analytic. It can be interpreted and/or critical. Modes of philosophical inquiry have interests: interpretive inquiry has an interest in understanding; critical inquiry has an interest in emancipation. Critical inquiry is a mode of philosophical inquiry that questions reality, looking for contradictions. Critical inquiry is a change/action-oriented. The major task of philosophy is the posing of questions. It is the foundation of research. Without good questions there is no inquiry. Philosophical inquiry is philosophical research. There are two types of problem which are undertaken in the area of philosophy of education.

- The problem is concerned with ascribing a system of thought and master ideas of a nation, people, community at a given time.
- The other gives us a critical appraisal of thought of a great personage and demonstrates it in his or her life and utterance.

The present study falls under the second category. In this study, analysis of the educational philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore and Maria Montessori has been undertaken and it also seeks to show how their philosophy determines the nature and form of education.
The historical approach to the study of philosophical thought brings one into direct involvement with the point of view of the philosopher. The historical research and philosophical research are complementary to one another. If history clothes the dry bones of facts with flesh and blood philosophy breathes life and spirit into it. In philosophical research our interest is primarily in idea and theory or principles underlying educational practices. The historical truth is always concrete and particular and philosophy on the other hand, seeks the principles of things which constitute education.

Philosophical research does not require any elaborate technique. It is a matter of eradication and analytical insight. The library technique and content analysis technique are used in this type of research. The two major types of studies which are conducted in the area of philosophy of education are:

A system of thought: First one is concerned with ascribing a system of thought or certain dominating concepts and master ideas of the nation, people, community user group at a given time and demonstrating them as reflected in their life, achievements, practices and literature.

A critical appraisal of the thought of great personage: Second approach of the thought of a great personage or group of persons and demonstrates it in his or her or either utterance, private or public life and achievements.

In this research second approach has been adopted. The educational thoughts of two great personalities Rabindranath Tagore and Maria Montessori have been explored in this research.

There are the usual stages of classification and collection of data from original sources; its analysis and careful shifting; its organization into a meaningful whole so that an intelligent circle of ideas is exhibited with neatness and economy; followed by researchers comment and a final summary statement. In this study a philosophical approach has been taken, but since both the personalities belong to the past a historical
approach has been adapted to gather facts. So we need to know what Historical Research is.

3.1.2 Historical research

Historical Research is the technique developed to discover and present the past events in their correct perspective. It helps one to know how to write history, which is not an easy job, because of the nature of historical facts. As History is both a science and art, the method to be used in history writing would be different from those of other disciplines. Historical approach denotes an effort to reconstruct some aspects of past life. Historical research involves digging into the past in order to re-enact the past in its entirety, to reconstruct the past events as fully as they must have happened, to explain the meaning and significance of those events, to correct the wrong notions so long prevalent, if any and to elaborate, analyze, synthesize, and philosophize the ideas in the light of the knowledge we possess.

Historical research has been defined as the systematic and objective location, evaluation and synthesis of evidence in order to establish facts and draw conclusions about past events. It is an act of reconstruction undertaken in a spirit of critical enquiry designed to a faithful representation of a previous age. Significant historical research has a clear functional purpose rather than a merely academic one. To profit by the experience of the past in the solution of the present day problems justifies the worthiness of historical research.

The particular value of historical research in the field of education is unquestioned. Although one of the most difficult areas in which to undertake research, the outcomes of enquiry into this domain can bring great benefit to educationists and the community at large. It can, for example, yield insight into some educational problems that could not be achieved by any other means.

The Historical type of research is of value in enabling us to account the influence of the past and to face present day problems with confidence, if not with optimism. Nothing is more likely to depress the educational practitioner and to paralyze his
efforts than the reiterated, but quite unfounded statement that the present cannot compare with the old education. The glory of the past, nevertheless, tends to fade the light of facts obtained by modern investigation. Research in the history of education, if properly directed may reinforce progressive tendencies and should consequently not be ignored in, or excluded from programs of educational research.

An understanding of the historical background of education should enable the educators to recognize fads and frills, which advocated as the just discovered cure for educational ideas when in reality, they are simply rejuvenated versions of ideas tried years ago and found to be wanting.

Historical research involves three major steps. They are:

(i) Collection of relevant data from the primary and secondary sources.
(ii) Internal and external criticism in order to assess the validity of the data.
(iii) Presentation of facts in a readable and most appreciable form involving the problem of organization, composition, exposition and interpretation.

The researcher may not have lived during the time they are studying and may be removed from the events they investigate, they must often depend upon inference and logical analysis, using the recorded experience of others, rather than direct observation. To ensure that their information is as trustworthy as possible, they must rely on primary or first-hand accounts. Finding the appropriate primary source of data requires imagination, hard work, and resourcefulness.

The act of historical research involves the identification and limitation of a problem or an area of study, sometimes the formation of a hypothesis, the collection, organization, verification, validation, analysis, and selection of data, testing the hypothesis or answering questions were appropriate for writing a research report.

3.2 Sources of the research

There are two types of sources of historical data. They are: Primary and Secondary Sources
1) **Primary Sources:** Primary sources are eyewitness accounts of events reported by an actual observer or participant in an event. They are reported by an actual observer or participant in an event. “Finding and assessing primary historical data is an exercise in detective work. It involves logic, institution, persistence, and common sense.” (Tuchman, 1994) Such important sources which are commonly used, are mentioned below:

   a) **Documents:** Documents are those records which are kept and written by actual participants or direct witness of an event. Documents which are included as primary sources are official minutes or records, constitutions, certificates, declarations, licenses, deeds, wills, affidavits, books, diagrams, paintings, pictures, newspapers, catalogues, films, advertisements, maps, handbills, recordings, findings of research, reports and so on.

   b) **Remains or Relics:** Remains or relics are objects which are associated with some persons, groups or periods. Fossils, skeletons, tools, weapons, food, buildings, furniture, pictures, paintings, coins and art objects are examples of those relics and remains that were not deliberately intended for use in transmitting information or for use as records. These sources may provide clear evidence about the past.

   c) **Oral Testimony:** Oral testimony is the spoken account of a witness or a participant in an event. This evidence is obtained in a personal interview and may be recorded or transcribed as the witness relates his or her experiences. This category also includes interviews with administrators, teachers and other school employees, students and relatives, school patrons or lay citizens, and members of governing bodies.

2) **Secondary Sources:** Secondary sources are accounts of an event that were not actually witnessed by the participant or the reporter. The writer of the secondary sources is not the actual scene of the event rather he merely reports what the person, who was there, said or wrote. Many books on history and encyclopedia are examples of secondary sources because they are often far from the original contents.
In the present study the following **primary sources** included the books written by Rabindranath Tagore and Maria Montessori and the letters of communication between the two educators. Special focus has been given to the educational writings of the two educators. Some of the educational writings of Tagore ‘Siksar Herfer’ ‘Siksa-Samasya’ (1906), ‘Tapovan’ (1910), ‘My School’ (1916) ‘My Boyhood Days’ (1945) ‘Religion of Man’ (1961), ‘Reminiscences’ (1962). The educational writings of Maria Montessori that have been consulted in this research are ‘The Montessori Method’ (1912), ‘Absorbent Mind’ (1949), ‘Discovery of Child’ (1948) and ‘The Secret of Childhood’ (1937).

**Secondary Sources** are reports of a person who relates the testimony of an actual witness of or a participant in an event. A number of books, journals and articles have been consulted for this research work, but four books that require special mention are ‘Rabindranath Tagore –The poet as Educator’ by Kathleen M. O’Connell published in 2002. This has come to be recognized as one of the standard works of Rabindranath Tagore’s educational ideas and experiments. ‘Rabindranath Tagore- A biography’ was written by Krishna Kripalini and published in the year 1962. The biography gives an account of Rabindranath Tagore as a whole man in various occupations like writer, musician, actor, painter, teacher patriot and ambassador to the world. ‘Maria Montessori- Her Life and Work’ by E. M. Standing, was published in 1957, five years after Dr. Montessori died. It is a glowing tribute to Dr. Montessori and her work by a close friend and collaborator, and provides detailed, often unavailable in other published sources, about the genesis of the techniques and traditions of the Montessori approach. In recent decades the most cited biography ‘Maria Montessori- A Biography’ is the one written by Rita Kramer, which first appeared in 1976 and presents a more critical stance. It provides a broader historical context for the genesis of Montessori’s ideas and a more exhaustive, though not uncontested, account of her nomadic and often dislocated life.
3.3 Analysis and interpretation of data

The analysis and interpretation of the data involve the collection of objective materials by the researcher, his/her subjective reactions derived from the data and the meaning of the data in relation to the problem. Analysis of the data means studying the organized material in order to discover inherent facts. The data are studied from as many angles as possible to explore the new facts. Analysis requires an alert, flexible and open mind. It is worthwhile to prepare a plan of analysis before the actual collection of data.

Interpretation of the data must be made from the standpoint of whatever research questions the data will most adequately support. Isolated facts have no meaning and a mere listing of historical occurrence is not research. It is necessary that data be considered in relation to one another and synthesized into generalization or conclusion which places their overall significance in focus. Interpretation part of the study was done by the researcher on the basis of the data collected. The process of appraisal which is used to derive usable and trustworthy data is known as historical criticism.

Trustworthy, usable data in historical research are known as historical evidence. That body of validated information can be accepted as a trustworthy and proper basis for testing and interpretation of hypothesis. Historical evidence is derived from historical data by the process of criticism, which is of two types external and internal.

3.3.1 External Criticism: External criticism is used to find out the authenticity of the data. It is also concerned with establishing the genuineness of the data. It is therefore aimed at the document itself rather than the statement it contains, with analytic forms of the data rather than the interpretation or meaning of them in relation to the study. It therefore sets out to uncover frauds, forgeries, hoaxes, inventions or distortions. Before examining the content of the document itself, which had fallen into his hand, the investigator must ensure whether it is a genuine one. Here the investigator may apply the principle of external criticism. External criticism stands for authenticity and provenance. This has been done by the researcher by trying to find out the answers of the following questions:
1. When was the source, written or produced (date)?

2. Where was it produced (localization)?

3. By whom was it produced (authorship)?

4. From what pre-existing material was it produced (analysis)?

Final inquiry about a source is called internal criticism. External criticism function is to save us from using false evidence; whereas internal criticism has the function of telling us how to use authenticated evidence. Internal criticism stands for historical reliability.

3.3.2 Internal Criticism: The task of internal criticism is to evaluate the accuracy and worth of the data contained, to establish the credibility of the author of the document. Many documents in the history of education tend to be neutral in character, though it is possible that some may be in error because of these kinds of observable characteristics. It is in the nature of historical sources that the concern of their originators differs greatly from those historians who know them. After the detection of authenticity of historical documents or relics were established, there are still problems of evaluating their accuracy, for those questions are to be asked as to whether they reveal a true picture, whether the writers are competent, honest, unbiased, and how they acquired the facts, whether they were too antagonistic or too sympathetic to give a true picture. Often these questions are found difficult to answer, but the researcher presumes that the data were authentic and accurate.

In this case researcher tried to find out the author's trustworthiness in each piece of evidence extracted and it was weighed individually. It includes-

1. Determining the value of the Source.

2. Interpretation of the Source and

3. Establishment of the facts.
While interacting with the source the researcher was committed to objectivity as a value or an ideal. The sources were interpreted by researcher carefully. The data were subjected to analysis, validation, comparison and criticism by the researcher.

### 3.4 Delimitation of the study

In this study only the educational philosophy, educational aims, curriculum and method of teaching as propounded by Rabindranath Tagore and Maria Montessori have been explored. The researcher tried to find out how these educational principles were implemented in their educational experiments. These include Rabindranath Tagore’s ‘Santiniketan’, ‘Visva-Bharati’ and ‘Sriniketan’ and Maria Montessori’s ‘Children’s House’.

### 3.5 Conclusion

The chapter discussed in details the methodology adopted by the researcher in this research. The study was a philosophical and a historical research. As a philosophical research it tried to analyze the educational philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore and Maria Montessori and how their thoughts influenced their educational ideas and practices. The study was based on the past history of the two educators so it was also a historical research. The primary and the secondary sources had been pointed out by the researcher. Internal and external criticisms of the data were done to ensure the relevance of the sources. The delimitation of the study was also pointed out in this chapter.
Chapter References


