Preface

There are very few personalities in any generation who join the stream of life and leave behind an indelible imprint on subsequent generations. Two such great personalities were Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) and Maria Montessori (1870-1952). Both of them serve as embodiments of intellectual achievement, not only within their respective countries but also throughout the world. Both firmly asserted the fundamental fact that children are 'humans' and the ultimate focus of education is the learner. Their lives and writings have exerted a profound influence on the evolution and practice of modern educational thoughts and applications. Both adopted innovative ways of thinking which decisively improved the quality of education for children.

Rabindranath Tagore and Maria Montessori were profoundly dissatisfied with education, as it was practiced during their own times. Their rigorous criticism of the prevalent educational system throws light on the aims, methods and challenges of education of the twentieth century. Their writings also shaped the educational theory and pedagogical practice, throughout the world. Their educational thoughts, principles and innovative methods of implementation are still relevant today. This research attempts to clarify their respective positions, the interplay of various diverse influences and to compare their respective philosophies which shaped their educational thoughts. Undertaking such a comparison is of crucial significance in the present context, particularly in view of the efficacy of the thoughts and principles of both these educators in the modern world.

The researcher wishes to express her gratitude to Dr. Sridipa Sinha, Associate Professor, Department of Education, University of Calcutta for her enduring patience and careful scrutiny of various drafts of the thesis right through to the final stage of completion. Her feedback and invaluable suggestions throughout this prolonged academic exercise were extremely helpful, effective and much appreciated.
The researcher is immensely grateful to Prof. (Dr.) Mita Banerjee, Professor (On lien) Department of Education, University of Calcutta; Vice Chancellor, West Bengal University of Teachers Training Education Planning and Administration (WBUTTEPTA), for her generosity in sparing her precious time and providing invaluable advice at different stages of the work. The researcher conveys special thanks to her for her deep interest in the research project and compassionate guidance through all phases of this study until its completion.

The researcher would also like to extend sincere gratitude to the staff members of the following libraries for their kind cooperation and assistance in the research work: Library of University of Calcutta (Alipore Campus), National Library, British Council Library, Library of Visva Bharati, Library of Theosophical Society Adyar (Chennai).

The researcher also takes this opportunity to thank the Ph.D Convenor Prof. (Dr.) Nimai Chand Maiti, Professor, Department of Education, University of Calcutta, Prof. (Dr.) Jayanti Das, Head of the Department of Education, University of Calcutta, Senior Faculty members of the Department and to all the teachers for their kind encouragement, suggestions and well wishes.

The researcher wants to acknowledge her brother Dr. Argha Banerjee for his constant encouragement and guidance. She is grateful to her mother Mira Banerjee, father-in-law Gopal Chatterjee, mother-in-law Anju Chatterjee, husband Ranjan Chatterjee and daughter Auridraa Chatterjee for their enduring patience and support. Lastly the researcher wants to dedicate her work to her father Sudhir Kumar Banerjee, who could not see the completion of this thesis.

Any omissions are unintended.

Kolkata 2017

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