

RABINDRANATH TAGORE THOUGHT ON EDUCATION AND ITS RELEVANCE IN PRESENT SCENARIO

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ABSTRACT

Tagore's educational accerrions were absolutely intellectual and logical. As such the procedures were activity-oriented and teaching learning was always light hearted and amusing. Singing, reciting, acting, debating, sketching, dancing, playing, gardening and travelling etc. Were completely curricular activities. These were significant features of education – property of knowledge. As regards the qualitative part he devoted all his life to all his writings- songs, poems, novels, essays, letters and travels. He aspired to develop the personality, the character of the pupils and the humanity. He brought this message to the humanity that we are the members of a single global family. He endeavored to ensure Internationalism in his educational philosophy. Philanthropic spirit was the character of his philosophy. He insisted on the all-round development of the pupils. His principles were to build up 'complete man'.

KEYWORDS: *Intellectual, Pearsonality, Humanity, Internationalism and Philanthropic*

INTRODUCTION

“Education is a permanent part of the venture of life. It is not like a painful hospital treatment of curing students of the malady of their ignorance, but it is the formation of health and the natural expression of their minds”

Rabindra Nath Tagore

Education is the process of development of human personality, development for complete manhood, for enlightenment and self- realization. In the field of Education also when the education system going to be collapsed and we see in value degradation in the field of Education there are R.N.Tagora, Vivekananda, M.K.Gandhi, Rousseau etc. They showed new light, new vision, a new path, new shape, new look to improve the standard and quality of education or to meet the challenging need of the individual and demands of society.

Tagore defined education as, “The highest education is that which does not merely gives us information but makes man's life in harmony with all existence”. It enables the mind to find out the ultimate truth which emancipates us from the bondage of the dust and gives us the wealth not of things, but of inner light, not of power, but of love”. He had a belief that “The widest road leading to the solution of all our problems is education”. In short, education not only imparts information and knowledge to us but also promotes love and fellow feeling between us and the living being of the world.

According to Tagore, this universal man is known by the individual, not through direct realization. He says “Reality, in all its manifestations, reveals itself in the emotional and imaginative background of our mind. We know it, not because we think of it, but because we directly feel it. It has not vanished from our conscious mind.

Tagore’s philosophy is very much influenced by the Indian scriptures like the Gita and the Upanishads. However he is also very much influenced by the western classical and modern educational thought like Swami Vivekananda, he synthesizes the ancient vedantic tradition with the modern scientific attitude in formulating the goal of education.

Tagore thinks that intellectualism takes us away from nature and creates a gulf between man and man. In fact, the intellectual aim of education, according to Rabindranath is the development of intellectual faculties such as logical thinking, critical appraisal, and assimilation.

CONCEPT OF EDUCATION

Education means to draw out the best in child and man. It involves the process of modification of behavior, socialization, social efficiency, adjustment to environment harmonious development of personality.

According to R. N. Tagore “Education emancipates us from the bondage of dust and gives us wealth not of things but of inner light, not of power but of love, making the truth its own and giving expression it”.

Rabindranath gives a spiritual approach to Education. He considers that the aim of education is self-realization. Self-realization according to Rabindranath means the realization of the universal soul in one’s self. Man’s aim in life is to achieve this status. It is a process which cannot be realized without education.

Rabindranath does not find any dichotomy between thought and life, Philosophy and education. He believes many contemporary Indian philosophers like Gandhi, Swami Vivekananda that everyone is potentially divine and everyone can realize this potentiality.

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OBJECTIVES OF EDUCATION

- To develop and educate the child in the lap of Nature.
- To provide spiritual training to the student.
- To educate the children in an atmosphere of freedom and love.
- To propagate both Eastern and Western culture.
- To create a contact between the teacher and the taught like parents and children.
- To impart knowledge through mother tongue.
- To foster vocational and social efficiency in the child.

- To develop nationalism and internationalism so as to bring about unity in diversity and develop the spirit of world humanity.
- To provide a natural, harmonious, free, open and simple atmosphere in the school for the spiritual, intellectual and physical development of the child.
- To train up the children to have simple living and high thinking.

PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHTS OF EDUCATION:

Harmony with all Things

The student must learn to live in harmony with the environment. Rabindranath says “True education consists in knowing the use of any useful material that has been collected, to know its real nature and to build along with life a real shelter for life” Through education, the student should imbibe cultural heritage and should be able to use it in the interaction with the environment. Elaborating the concept of education, he says, “if we believe that the chief aim of education for an Indian, 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 should receive the place of honor in our schools...our true education is possible only in the forest, through intimate contact with nature and purifying austere pursuits.”

Freedom

Rabindranath believes in complete freedom of all types. Freedom of intellectual decision, knowledge, action, and worship. This freedom can be achieved by the practice of equanimity, harmony, and balance. Education, according to Rabindranath is progress of self realization. This self-realization in the attachment of freedom when intelligence, feeling, and determination work freely. It is not the absence of control but self-control, once it is achieved there is no danger of straying from the right path because the senses, intelligence, emotions, feelings and mental powers of the educated person are guided by his own self.

Tagore thinks that an ideal educational system should aim at man’s perfection. Perfection means the development of all aspects of human personality. The sole aim of education is the development of human personality. “This again should be realized on a universal scale since unless the individual acquires an abiding faith in the universal soul, he cannot realize himself. Thus education should lead to the realization of the universal man.

Creative Self- Expression

Tagore felt that mere intellectual development cannot bring about all-round personality development. Therefore, education should take place through some activities and direct experiences for promoting creative self-expression. He said, “Handwork and arts are the spontaneous overflows of our deeper nature and spiritual significance”. Tagore recommended the teaching of leather work, art, craft, music, drama, drawing, painting, dancing and other creative pursuits for the creative self-expression of the student.

Active Communication with Nature and Man

Rabindranath gave importance to the environment. All contemporary educational psychologists give importance to the natural environment. It is through the natural environment that the child trains the senses by contact with plants and trees, flowers and leaves. Education according to Rabindranath should be imparted “in an institution where the first great lesson is the perfect union of man and nature, not only through love but through active communication, it can be had unobstructed.

Internationalism

Through his education trinity, Rabindranath aims to develop an ideal educational system in India. G.R Sharma rightly says “His aim of education is one of the most comprehensive including various aspects of human personality and different strata of Indian society and the world community. He lays emphasis on physical, mental, moral, religious, spiritual, in fact, all the aspects of man’s education”. The curriculum in Tagore’s educational institutions is not fixed but changes according to the needs of the students. His only emphasis is on life, a life of the individual of the rural masses of the poor Indians and that of man as a member of an international community.

EDUCATIONAL THOUGHTS OF TAGORE’S

Table 1

Aims of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical development • Moral and Spiritual development • Mental or intellectual development • Harmonious development • Individual development • Social development • Development of national feelings • Development of international understanding • Development of tolerance • Economic development
Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive curriculum which should satisfy the child’s aesthetic, creative, spiritual and vocational needs.
Methods of teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching while walking • Activity method • Heuristic method • Direct experience • Debate and discussion method
Discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No suppression of the child • Sympathy for the child • Self discipline • Freedom • Brahmacharya
Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher should behave with a child with great love, affection, sympathy, and consideration. • To provide a conducive environment to the child so that he engages himself in useful and constructive activities and learn by his own experience. • To motivating the creative’s capacities of children.
School and Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School should have a natural harmonious, free, open and simple atmosphere to provided Education for the children.

TAGORES EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVES POINT OF VIEW

Table 2

Religious Education	Tagore believed that religious education cannot help to have an experience in the spiritual world; it can be gained by living in the world. In his own words, "True religious lies in gladly recognizing the values of man as man".
Mass Education	Poverty and the ills and maladies of the country are due to lack of education. Therefore, Tagore laid stress on the need for mass education. For this purpose, he suggested : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary and secondary levels of education free and compulsory. • Adult education Education should be given through the medium of the mother tongue.
Rural Education	Tagore assigned maximum emphasis on rural education. He wanted that there should no difference between rural and urban areas. He used to say that service of the country should be to reforms in villages. For this purpose, compulsory free education and adult education have to be given in rural areas.
Women Education	Tagore emphasized the importance of women's education and prepared an outline for their educational management. He classified knowledge into two departments, that is, pure knowledge and utilitarian knowledge. He stressed that pure knowledge should be made available to both man and women equally. He was of the opinion that women should be thought of home science so as to enable them to perform the roles of wives and mothers better.
Vocational Education	Tagore believed that the poverty of our country can be eradicated through action only. As a majority of our population lives in the village, they depend on agriculture, small-scale, and cottage industries. Hence, he gave maximum importance to agriculture and practical arts.
National & International Education	Tagore was both nationalist and internationalist. In order to develop nationalism and internationalism, he prepared a comprehensive curriculum. His curriculum included games and sports, social service, student self-rule, fine arts, national and international languages, literature and culture of the East and the West.

CRITICAL ESTIMATE

In Rabindranath's philosophy of education, man is the center of all his thinking his Philosophy-religion, literature, poetry, social activities, and educational programmers. He is a humanist in the real sense. He is not a naturalistic humanist. He can be considered as an integral humanist.

Tagore did not deny the need of reason but believes that there is something higher than reason in men. He does not think that science alone can deliver the goods. Thereby it does not mean that he has not accepted the efficacy of science. Tagore is a nationalist, but at the same time, he is a true internationalist. To him, the ultimate God is the universal man and the only aim of all the man's activities was the realization of this god. His aim is universal regeneration and his educational system is a means to achieve this aim. Tagore therefore bases his educational system on essential human virtues such as freedom, purity, sympathy, perfection and universal brotherhood. Like other Indian thinkers of his time, he opposed British system of education. He felt that those who are educated through English medium got alienated from the people. He felt the children should be taught in their mother tongue which helps the students to understand the subjects easily and learn quickly.

Tagore wanted to build up educational institutions with these noble ideals. He wanted to remove the defects of the then existing educational system which was introduced by the British government. He studied different problems of Indian society particularly that of the rural people and tried to remove them through education. His educational system was a

synthesis of an east and west ancient and modern and happy blend of science and Vedanta. It is because of its noble vision, national leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and other eminent educationalists considered Viswabharati as the true representative of India.

Humanyun Kabir, one of the eminent writers and thinkers of modern India wrote “Rabindranath Tagore was one of the greatest humanists that the world has known. The keynote of his life was resistance to tyranny in all forms. He struggled against economic exploitation, political subjugation, social inertia and injustice, and religious intolerance and insensitiveness”.

The humanism of Rabindranath is generally expressed in his literature. In his works, he laid emphasis upon the uniqueness of the human individual, his greatness in the world of living beings and his intimate relationship with nature and god. Tagore’s educational philosophy is no less an example of his humanism than his literature and religious writings. He tried to build up an ideal educational system and experimented in all its branches such as aims, medium, means, curriculum administration, and extracurricular activities.

CONCLUSIONS

Rabindranath Tagore, by his efforts and achievements, is one of a global network of pioneering educators, who have striven to create non-authoritarian learning systems appropriate to their respective surroundings. Tagore did not neglect the lesser aim of life and education, where the focus of the colonial system of education was ultimately on employment. His intention was to correct this conception, without ignoring science, technology, and efforts on rural empowerment. For without these, it is impossible to revive the poor condition of people living in rural areas.

Tagore felt that young generation should aware of their national cultural heritage, grasp its significance for them, and persuaded them to learn cultures from other countries. Tagore put great emphasis on the use of a national language as the vehicle of education at all stages of education. He wanted Indian universities to integrate themselves with society and make an effort to educate people living in the countryside. Conclusively, he did not want education to remain confined to the cities and to particular classes of society.

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