



A STUDY ON THE INFLUENCE OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY ON THE PRESENT EDUCATION SYSTEM.

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ABSTRACT:

Educational thoughts are the basic weapon for the social, religious, political, economic progress and reform of a country. According to Tagore's writings and activities exposed, Rabindranath Tagore became more focused in educational reform to modernizing India. Tagore's philosophical thoughts on education in particular, are found in many dimensions, such as the aim of education, educational practices, curriculum designing, teacher-student relationship, and the role of teacher. Tagore believed that education should help an individual to attain complete manhood. This research mainly analyzes the attributes of educational philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore; how his educational philosophy made every individual a complete human being; and providing new recommendations to the field of education. This research was purely theoretical based. Data of the research was collected from primary and secondary sources to be analyzed qualitatively. Historical methodology, analytical methodology, and descriptive methodology are used here as research methodology. The conclusion of the research that, Rabindranath Tagore's educational system can develop an individual intellectually, physically, morally, socially, and spiritually while paving ways to an individual to attain complete manhood. When Tagore's educational and philosophical thoughts incorporated in the policy of education, the student will be able to excel not only in education but also in extracurricular activities with spiritual, moral, and aesthetic values which will enable them to acquire knowledgeable human qualities. These values form the basis for the students to build a non-violent and non-discriminatory society.

KEYWORDS: Naturalism, curriculum, Pragmatism, Harmony, Intellectual development, Idealism, Gurukul, Realism.

INTRODUCTION

Viswakavi (World Poet) Rabindranath was born on May 9, 1861 in Bengal. His father Maharihi Devendranath Tagore was a rich man and an aristocrat and his mother was Sarada Devi. Rabindranath Tagore was not sent to any school. He was educated at home by a tutor. Rabindranath was not happy, getting educated within the four walls. He was a curious and creative child.

Though he was educated at home, he studied many subjects and there was a method in his studies. He would get up early. After physical education he would study Mathematics, History, Geography, Bengali and Sanskrit. In the afternoon, he learnt drawing, English and play games.



On Sundays he would learn music and conduct experiments in science. Reading plays was of special interest to him. He was happy to read plays of Kalidas and Shakespeare. He had a special interest in Bengali, which was his mother-tongue.

For further studies, he was sent to a public school at London, where he became a student of Prof. Henry Morley whose lectures influenced Rabindranath to take interest in English literature. He developed interest in English culture, traditions and literature. While studying in England, he wrote a poem “Broken Heart”. After 18 months in England, he returned to India without taking any degree.

Rabindranath started writing poetry. “Gitanjali” is a well-known collection of his poems. Rabindranath Tagore was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1913. Rabindranath Tagore was the first Indian to get a Nobel Prize and the British Government conferred on him knighthood and gave the title of “Sir”.

Rabindranath started a school at Bolpur, a village 112km. north of Kolkata. This school developed into Shantiniketan. Students come to Shantiniketan from many countries. It specializes in arts, crafts, music and dance besides rural reconstruction.

He established Viswabharati University near Santiniketan in 1921. It is now a university of the Central Government.

Rabindranath Tagore was also a good artist. He started to learn painting at the age of 60. He drew more than 2000 pictures, which were exhibited in many countries. What makes Rabindranath Tagore special for Indians is “Jana gana mana” and it is our National Anthem. Rabindranath Tagore wrote it when he visited Madanapalli in Andhra Pradesh on the eve of the Rishi Valley School Anniversary at the invitation of Dr. Arundale, the Principal. Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru had the greatest respect for Rabindranath Tagore. He was a great philosopher and a teacher. He was called “Gurudev” by all. He breathed his last on August 7, 1941, leaving his thoughts and ideas for all to follow.

Rabindranath Tagore & Naturalism:

Rabindranath Tagore & Naturalism: Like Thomas Hardy, Rabindranath also believes that men's ultimate happiness lies in the lap of nature. Rabindranath has a deep affection and a deep passion for the Tapoban-based Gurukul education system of that time. Driven by that passion, he established the Ashramic Vidyalaya in Santiniketan in 1901, which is familiar now as the Visva-Bharati University, a world-renowned centre of learning (Das, P. & Bera, S., 2020). Tagore has a strong faith on the nature base education system. He remembers that nature is our ultimate destination. So he wants to give emphasis on natural education more than formal institutional education. He makes it clear in one of his education-based essay “Sikshar Herpher” where he wants to create a clear and transparent satire on the formal institution by telling it as the Cage and students are as the bondage parrots. According to Tagore, man and nature have an interesting compromise. He felt that children were deeply dissatisfied with the traditional mechanics of reading in school. 8.2 Rabindranath Tagore & Idealism: Rabindranath Tagore’s philosophy of life shows that he was basically an idealist. He believes in Upanishadic thought very strongly. Rabindranath said on the context of the root of creation of the world that the world is created through the amalgamation of all-pervading Paramatta (the supreme soul)



the spiritual power. Among all the things in the world has great power, in whose magnificence this universe is full of various varieties. In the field of education, Rabindranath Tagore emphasized the complete independence of students. According to him, the physical, mental, spiritual, social nature of the student can be fully developed through the freedom. Upanishads can perceive loving forms. Rabindranath believes on the education that acquaints the student with universality, education exposes the qualities of the substratum. These unfolding traits yield positive results through desire, creativity, and motivation.

Rabindranath Tagore & Pragmatism:

Rabindranath Tagore always believes in the practical knowledge more than textual knowledge. He always remarked that practical knowledge can able the students to apply the theoretical knowledge from the soul into their real life situation. So he established a school like Sriniketan amidst the wilderness of nature where practical based education has given priority more than theoretical based education through formal institution. He always seeks to convey the message that the application of textual knowledge can generate new invention and experience. In this way, Rabindranath is considered to be a pragmatist.

Rabindranath Tagore & Idealism:

Rabindranath Tagore's philosophy of life shows that he was basically an idealist. He believes in Upanishadic thought very strongly. Rabindranath said on the context of the root of creation of the world that the world is created through the amalgamation of all-pervading Paramatta (the supreme soul) the spiritual power. Among all the things in the world has great power, in whose magnificence this universe is full of various varieties. In the field of education, Rabindranath Tagore emphasized the complete independence of students. According to him, the physical, mental, spiritual, social nature of the student can be fully developed through the freedom. Upanishads can perceive loving forms. Rabindranath believes on the education that acquaints the student with universality, education exposes the qualities of the substratum. These unfolding traits yield positive results through desire, creativity, and motivation.

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Rabindranath Tagore & Realism:

Rabindranath Tagore was steeped in the idealism; he was largely a realist in the application of pedagogy. Educational philosophy of Rabindranath was generated in the context of his life philosophy. The seeds of Rabindranath's life philosophy were planted and turned into a big tree and has delivered the essence of education to the door of the human being on the journey of time. So in the world of education, Rabindranath Tagore is considered as one of the eminent realist.

Rabindranath Tagore's educational philosophy:

Tagore attached great importance to the fine arts in his educational curriculum. To him, game, dance, music, drama, painting etc. should form a part of educational process. Students should take active part in these finer aspects of human life for these are very essential to enrich soul.

In his words "Speaking is for mankind and music for nature speaking is clear and limited by its needs; whereas music is mystic and expressive for a romantic eagerness. That is why; speaking creates nearness between man and man, while music helps us to identify ourselves with nature. When the harmonies of sounds are released with our expression then speaking loses much of its limited significance, but on the contrary getting together of the two muses had an all pervading character".

Education for rural reconstruction:

Tagore was aware about the rural poverty of our country. So, he wanted to eradicate it through education. The practical training imparted in different crafts to the students will make them skilled artisans in their field. They can remove the poverty of the rural bulk by applying their education helping thereby in the process of rural reconstruction.

Basic Principles of Tagore's Philosophy:

Harmony with all things-

One of the basic principles of the philosophy of Tagore is 'harmony with all things'- harmony with nature, harmony with human surroundings and harmony in international relations. According to him, the highest education is that which makes our life in harmony with all existence. His philosophy of education is based on naturalism, humanism, idealism and internationalism.

Principles of Freedom-

Tagore was the ardent exponent of freedom for children. He believed that children should be brought up and educated in an atmosphere of freedom and liberty. Restrictions should not be imposed on children. Tagore remarked, "Education has its only meaning and object in freedom-



freedom from ignorance about the laws of universe and freedom from passion and prejudice in our communication with the human world”. Tagore was not in favour of a conventional and sophisticated type of school. Natural surroundings will enable the child to develop in a natural way. The great advantage of freedom is that the child will develop a love for nature and finally love for knowledge. After gaining knowledge he will realize his life with ripened wisdom.

Principle of creative Self-expression-

Tagore held that education should promote creative self-expression. For achieving this purpose, Tagore assigned an important place to arts, crafts, music, drawing, dancing and dramatics in his scheme of education. He stated, “Handwork, music and arts are the spontaneous overflows of our deeper nature and spiritual significance”.

Active communication with Nature and Man-

Tagore finds a fundamental unity between man and nature. The child’s education must be organized in natural surroundings. It will help the child in developing the power of communication with nature. Tagore believed that there is a spiritual relationship between nature and God, nature and man and hence between man and God. He remarked, “We should have the gift to be natural with nature and human society”.

Rabindranath Tagore’s Method of Instructions:

(1) Teaching through Tours and Trips:

Tagore believed that the subjects like history, geography, economics and other social sciences can be effectively taught through excursions and tours to important spots. By this students will get an opportunity to observe numerous facts and gain first-hand knowledge through direct experience.

(2) Learning by activities:

Rabindranath Tagore said that for the development of child's body and mind, learning through activity is essential. Therefore he included activities like climbing tree, drama, jumping, plucking fruits, dancing etc. in his educational programs.

(3) Narration-cum-discussion and debate method:

Narration-cum-discussion and debating activities were organized Tagore's education center to develop oratory abilities of the students. Students were encouraged to solve problems of various areas through rational debate and thorough discussion.

(4) Heuristic Method

Rabindranath Tagore introduced heuristic method as an important method of teaching in his educational institution. In this method first, the students, are asked questions to clarify their doubts on topics and teachers try to satisfy them by their correct answers. Then the teacher asks the questions to students to evaluate how far the students are able to comprehend the topic discussed in the class.



Contributions of Rabindranath Tagore to the reforms of Indian education system:

Rabindranath Tagore contributes a lot to the reforms of Indian education system in the following way:

Shilaidah & Education:

In the 1890s, Rabindranath was put in charge with overseeing the family's rural properties in the region adjacent to Shilaidah in East Bengal. It was there that he had his first experiments and observations in adult education. During his stay in Shilaidah, he gradually became aware of the acute material and cultural poverty that permeated the villages, as well as the great divide between the uneducated rural areas and the urban elite. This experience then made him determined to do something about rural development and later inspired him to work in Santiniketan to train students and teachers in literacy and promote social work and cooperative projects. In this way, Shilaidah adds to Rabindranath's life a series of philosophical thoughts related to his experiences and education and gives him individuality.

Santiniketan & Education:

In 1901, Rabindranath decided to open a school in Santiniketan to educate his children in traditional education. The land given to build the school belonged to his father and his nephew Balendranath Tagore briefly opened a school at the site, which was closed since 1899. Rabindranath School was first called Brahmachayashram. Later from 1908 onwards the institution started admitting girls as students and the institution became a co-educational centre. Rabindranath kept in touch with academics from different countries through travel and other activities. He made his school more democratic in 1912/13. From 1925 this school came to be known as Path-Bhavan.

Foundation of Sriniketan:

In 1912, Rabindranath bought a house with lots of land at a place called Surul, which later became famous as the new name Sriniketan. He sent his son Rathindranath, who had been trained in agriculture in America, to improve rural life. A malaria outbreak at that time halted the program, which was only revived when American Leonard Knight Elmhurst (1893–1974) and his later wife and millionaire Dorothy State Whitney began supporting it in 1921. Later in 1923, the institution named Sriniketan became the Institute of Rural Reconstruction. The main aim of the institute was to improve laboratory research conducted to improve productivity. Also important aspects of Sriniketan included health, social life and education. Co-operatives in banking, grocery and handicrafts were established through this institution to improve rural life.

Women Education:

Rabindranath sent his university students to teach handicrafts mainly to the villagers who were mostly girls and women. Women's education also took an important place in Sriniketan. Apart from a special school for girls in the village there were various educational projects which



included- child rearing, nutrition etc. In 1929, work began with a total of 315 apprentices. Sriniketan also started many educational programs like evening schools for adult women and children. In 1940, 16 of these schools had an enrollment of 500 students. Its institute "Siksha Charcha Bhavana" imparted teacher training which was oriented towards a more holistic curriculum that included music, agriculture, sanitation, scouting and handicrafts.

Adult Education:

The field of adult education was initiated through methods such as fairs and performances, discussions, training camps and Bengal's first public circulating library. An educational system was introduced in a distant university with the help of a social organization called "Loka-Shiksha Sansad". Bengali was introduced up to B.A. level. All these projects strongly increase literacy and agricultural productivity.

Basic Education: Siksha Shastra:

In 1924 Rabindranath, Elmhurst and teacher Santosh Majumdar founded a school called Siksha-shastra (meaning: "where education is given free"). This school was initially started in Santiniketan but later shifted to Sriniketan, with the main objective of educating the poor children of the village. Rabindranath had a stronger understanding of the concept of pedagogy than in his first school, where parental expectations (such as preparing children for university entrance exams) hindered their understanding. Classes in these schools were more strongly based on personal interest, direct relevance to life, and learning by doing.

Higher Education: Visva-Bharati:

In an article entitled "Centre of Indian Culture" in 1918, Rabindranath presented his plan for a university as a center in direct connection with Indian life, first establishing a link with all Asians and then opening its doors to the whole world. In the same year Rabindranath established such a university and formally inaugurated it in 1922 and named it "Vishvabharati" meaning the connection between India and the world. The motto of this university is "Yatra Visvam Bhavati Eknidam" i.e. "Where the whole world meets in one nest". Over time Visva Bharati became especially famous for her artistic activities. In particular, the university gained fame in the two fields of Kala-Bhavna (fine arts) and Sangeet-Bhavna (song). In 1951, Visva Bharati (including Sriniketan) became a state university under the control of the central government, which ensured financial security but narrowed the area of autonomy.

CONCLUSION

Tagore was a philosopher , poet , actor , composer, novelist, dramatist , educator and above all, a prophet of humanity. He has greatly inspired the young generation of India.

He had great faith in the unity of mankind which was a step towards internationalism. His thoughts on harmony between man and nature clearly indicates towards the adjustment of man with his social and natural environment. He was the first to visualise about the interdependence



of the East and West . Today, every nation acknowledges this fact.

Dr. Radhakrishnan writes about Tagore as , " Rabindranath did not claim to produce an original philosophy.His aim was not to analyses or speculate about the Indian tradition.He expressed it in his own vivid phrases and homely metaphors and showed it's relevance to modern life"

In the words of H.B.Mukerj" Tagore was the greatest prophet of educational renaissance in modern India . He waged a ceaseless battle to uphold the highest educational ideal before the country,and conducted educational experiments at his own institution, which made them living symbols of what an ideal should be."

We can conclude in the words of Calcutta University Syndicate as, " Through him (Tagore) India has given her message to mankind and his unique achievement in the fields of literature, philosophy, education and art have won imperishable fame for himself and have raised the status of India in the estimation of the world."

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