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RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION AND ITS IMPACT ON EDUCATION IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) was a great universal personality. His genius thoughts and philosophy was versatile. He was influenced by many religions ideals and many great philosophers thought like Christian conception of the fatherhood of God, philosophy of Shakespeare, philosophy of Goethe, Wordsworth etc. But the roots of his intellectual thoughts, idea and philosophy make-up lie in the Upanishads, Gita and Vedas, in the poetry of Kalidas, in the lyrics of Vaisnavas, in the mystic poems of Kabir and the religious atmosphere of the Brahma Samaj. Tagore's also famous for his poetry and prose. His songs, messages and spiritual values were like great inspirations to social and political workers. Tagore was played key roles for Indian freedom. Apart from his political and social thoughts his educational thoughts were also standing as a landmark in the educational system of India. He tried to give India an educational system so that it could meet the spiritual and natural needs of human beings. The aims and objective of the present paper to analyse and focus the educational thoughts and philosophy of Rabindranth Tagore and its impact on Education in India in relation to meaning of education, aims and objectives of education, methods of education, curriculums, nature of educational institution, discipline and freedom, learning through mother language, religious education, learning in natural environment etc. Educational Thoughts of Rabindranth Tagore has implications for primary education to higher education of India. This study is primarily based on secondary sources like the Articles, Books, Journals and Website etc. The method used is historic-analytic method. Tagore was a great philosopher of education for international understanding.

KEYWORDS: Rabindranath Tagore, Universal Soul, Educational philosophy, Gita and Upanishadic Philosophies, Creativism, Humanism, Education.

TAGORE'S PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

Rabindranath Tagore was born into a distinguished Bengali family in Calcutta, West Bengal on 1861. His father's name was the Maharishi Debendranath Tagore, a well-known Hindu reformer and mystic and his mother was Shrimati Sharada Devi.

Tagore received his education at home. He was taught in Bengali, with English lessons in the

afternoon. He read the Bengali poets since his early age and he began writing poetry himself by the age of eight. Tagore did have a brief spell at St Xavier's Jesuit school, but found the conventional system of education uncongenial. His father wanted him to become a barrister and he was sent to England for this reason.

His earliest poetic collections *Manasi* (1890), *Chitra* (1895) and *Sonar Tari* (1895) used

colloquial Bengali instead of the usual archaic literary form. In 1901 he founded the famous Shantiniketan near Calcutta. This was designed to provide a traditional ashram and Western education. His ideals were simplicity of living and the cultivation of beauty. In the year 1913 he won the Nobel Prize for writing *Gitanjali*; 1917 knighted—later resigned and 1915 met Gandhi. In August 1941, Shri Rabindranath Tagore was moved from Shantiniketan ashram to Calcutta for an operation. In the same year i.e. 1941, he passes away in the same house in which he was born in.

INTRODUCTION

Rabindranath Tagore was a great universal personality till today. His educational thought was versatile, synthetic and original. He was influenced by the many philosophers and many religions morals like Christian conception of the fatherhood of God and philosophy of Shakespeare, Goethe, Wordsworth, Ruskin, Shelley, Keats and Browning. But basic roots of his intellectual creativism and emotional make-up lie in the Upanishads, Gita, Vedas, in the majestic poetry of Kalidas, in the lyrics of Vaisnavas, in the mystic poems of Kabir and the religious atmosphere of the Brahma Samaj. Different philosophers have described the character of Tagore's philosophy differently. Radhakrishnan says, "We do not know whether it is Rabindranath's own heart or the heart of India that is beating here.

Tagore in his educational philosophy tries to revive the ancient ideals of life; and then, they have been re-stated in accordance with the needs of the present times. The traditional philosophical notions of India have been brought out by Tagore from the dark abyss of abstraction, where they were lying all the time, into the open to be viewed in the light of the present philosophical beliefs. Tagore was a writer of deep originality and creative attainments. He was a patriot. During the day of the agitation against the partition of Bengal his stirring words rang with strength and he was later on venerated as a national poet. He stood for social reform, *Swadeshi* and the solidarity of the country. He was not a politician but a political prophet who taught unity, harmony peace and co-operation. He has given to modern India a philosophy of world-and-life-affirmation.

Rabindranath was a believer in cultural synthesis and international unity. He decried the aggressive cult of the nation. He became one of the intellectual leaders of Indian nationalism. After Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya, it was he who strengthened the movement of Bengalee literary renaissance. This literary renaissance was the intellectual background of a political ferment and consciousness. Tagore's inspired poetry and prose becomes the literary vehicle of the regeneration of a fallen race because in his writings he embodied some of the noblest ideals of Indian culture. His

songs and messages were like inspirations to social and political workers. Hence, although not in the trick of the political fight for independence, Tagore was venerated as a seer of Indian freedom.

Apart from his political and social thoughts his educational thoughts were also standing as a landmark in the educational system of India. He tried to give India an educational system which can meet the spiritual and natural needs of human beings. The aims and objective of the present paper to analyse and focus Rabindranth Tagore's Philosophy of Education and its impact on Indian Education in relation to meaning of education, aims and objective of education, methods of education, nature of educational institution, discipline and freedom, learning through mother language, religious education, learning in natural environment etc. Educational Philosophy of Rabindranth Tagore has implications for primary education to higher education of India. Tagore was a great philosopher of education for international understanding.

METHODOLOGY

The present study is primarily based on secondary sources like the Articles, Books and Journals etc. The method used is historic-analytic method.

OBJECTIVE OF THIS STUDY

The objective of this Study is to analyse the Tagore's Philosophy of Education and its impact on Education in India.

TAGORE'S PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Tagore's philosophy of education related to the aesthetic development. He was given less important to intellectual education. In education he included music, literature, art, dance and drama etc. Rabindranath writes that in his adolescence, a 'cascade of musical emotion' gushed forth day after day at Jorasanko. "*We felt we would try to test everything, and no achievement seemed impossible, we sang, we acted, we poured ourselves out on every side*". (Rabindranath Tagore, *My Reminiscences* 1917: 141) Rabindranath Tagore was more than a resounding leading Indian thinker of India in the twentieth century. A prominent figure through his poetic brilliance that belongs to the traditional group of Indian philosophers of education, inspired by the ancient Indian philosophy of education. He bitterly criticized the defects of British philosophy of education and western educational approach in India, for its aim and means were against Indian national interest, and thus presented educational philosophies.

Tagore considered lack of education as the main obstacle in the way of India's progress and at the root of all its problems According to him, academic learning becomes joyless and purely mechanical if it is looked upon merely as an instrument for getting jobs and for material and

financial gains. Academic learning should enable us to understand the situations in which we are placed and to adopt proper attitudes towards them. The aim of education should be to develop and nourish our beliefs, emotions, and imaginations, which enable us to assess, evaluate, and take up appropriate attitudes towards our experience.

Tagore viewed the traditional academic learning as merely a knowledge-factory, a mechanical system producing students with machine-ground knowledge for the purpose of being examined and graded.

TAGORE'S PRINCIPLES OF EDUCATION

Tagore believed that the main principles of education that was based on self-realization. Education provides a sense of one's identity as a total man and to bring education in harmony with life, it is self-realization. He believed that the main goal of education was this self-realization. According to him Indian society required education on the basis of self-realization in order to establish a well-balanced relation with all human beings in the world.

In regards to thought, life and philosophy Tagore never find any opposition or differences. But he believed that every human being has potentialities to progress towards the super human being, the universal soul. Self-education is based on self-realization, which its process is as important as education itself. The more important thing is that the educator must have faith in himself and universal self, underlying his individual soul. According to Tagore educator must follow three principles concept of self-education, these are as follows:

- **Freedom for the child**

Tagore always believed that one can turn to self-guidance with help of complete freedom of any kind –it's may be intellectual freedom, satisfaction, decision, heart, knowledge, actions, and worship.

- **Perfection**

Perfection denotes that the student must try to develop every aspect of his personality, all the abilities and powers he has been endowed by nature. The prime goal of education is development of the child's personality which is possible only when every aspect of the personality is given equal opportunities and importance.

- **Universality**

According to Tagore one of most important principle is Universality and it exists all human being from his birth. So it is important for all human being to identify the relationship between one's own soul with the universal soul. This search is achieved by knowledge, worship and action. Once this realization of the universal soul is achieved, it becomes easier to progress further.

Aims of Education:-

According to Rabindranath Tagore, the aims of education are self-realization. According to him, this realization by every one is the goal of education. Self-realization, according to Rabindranath, means the realization of the universal soul in one's self. Man's aim of life is to achieve this status. But it is not possible to achieve without education. That's why Tagore always said – the solution of all human beings problem is true education. Following are some important aims of education of Tagore –

- Education should be develop a creative mind
- Education should aim at develop aesthetic sense
- Education should prepare an individual for a vocation.
- Education should be develop international understanding.
- Education should be develop values of simple living.

Methods of Instruction:-

Tagore always criticised the traditional methods of instruction. He believed that only one method of instruction cannot be successful for true education. He said that method of instruction should be according to situation and nature of educational environment. According to him the method of instruction will be selected through following principles –

- According to freedom.
- Creative self-expression.
- Active communication with nature and man etc.

In methods of instruction Tagore also focus on project methods, education through connecting nature and teacher made methods of instruction.

Curriculum:-

Tagore recommended a curriculum for the full man satisfying the spiritual the creative, the aesthetic and the vocational aims of education. Besides providing for the teaching of ordinary schools, Tagore developed many educational ideas, years ahead of others. Now-a-days educationists talk so much about the educational value of crafts, projects, music, dancing, fine arts, etc. But it is indeed very significant to note that the poet provided for the teaching of most of these subjects from the very beginning and the rest were added soon. In his experimental school at Shantiniketan, Science (especially the experimental science) was taught to children in various classes. Shantiniketan School had a very well equipped laboratory for performing experiments whereas in other schools, the midst of nature became a daily practice by the pupils in expressing immediately what they are learning. The central point in educational activity according to Tagore is joy which should pervade all types of activities. "Work should be wedded to

joy.” Tagore also emphasised the principle of curiosity and interest, and the spirit of play. He advocated fullness of experience, physical, mental, aesthetic and emotional. All this truly accords with the modern pedagogy.

Medium of Instruction:-

According to Rabindranath Tagore medium of instruction would be Mother tongue and also told about other Indian Languages and one foreign languages like English, it is important for acquire foreign literature, knowledge and skills.

Role of the Teacher:-

Tagore laid great emphasis on the attitude of the teacher. He wrote, “I have found that little children learn more quickly the attitude of the teacher than the knowledge imparted by him.”

Tagore felt, “Most teachers do not know that in order to teach boys they have to be boys. Unfortunately schoolmasters are obsessed with the consciousness of their dignity as grown up persons and as learned men, and therefore they always try to burden the children with their grown up manners and their learned manners, and that hurts the mind of the students unnecessarily”. His concept of a good teacher is stated in these words, “A teacher can never truly teach unless he is still learning himself. A lamp can never light another lamp unless it continues to burn its own flame. The teacher who has come to the end of his subject, who has no living traffic with his knowledge, but merely repeats his lessons to his students, can only load their minds; he cannot guide them. Truth not only must inform but also inspire.”

Institution & Discipline:-

Tagore considers an educational institution as “an open house in which students and teachers are at one. They must live their compact life together.” He observes that an education institution “must not be a dead cage in which living minds are fed with food artificially prepared”. He further remarks that “students are not dancing Wrookeys’ or bear.” About the discipline of the educational institution he founded, he states, “I never said to them: Don’t do this, or don’t do that. The boys were encouraged to manage their own affairs”

IMPACTS OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE’S PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION IN INDIA

In Tagore’s view vocational courses and traditional livelihood occupations like sewing, book-binding, weaving, carpentry, pottery etc. which were under craftsmanship and cultural courses such as dance, music, painting, art etc. should be integral parts of main stream education and he was in favour of including them in main stream curriculum. It was an idea to promote the local and traditional small scale industries as they had a great and significant role to play in socio-economic condition of the then economically and socially backward sate in India. Research shows

that Tagore’s insight to understand the relationship between educational development and social upliftment was great in many ways. He realised that the society needs to address the core economic and social issues to promote education and making it a part and parcel of human life. His idea was to give people the freedom of following their family occupation in a more modified and structured way. It helped people to be educated and finically independent. His thoughts and ideas are very much relevant in addressing present day issues like unemployment and skill shortage. It has been a talk in the country recently to promote vocational education more popular to job seeking unemployed youths. It supports the thoughts of Rabindranath Tagore in promoting vocational education.

It is evident from Tagore’s writings and philosophy that he was a believer and promoter of universal brotherhood. His thoughts and ideas represent that almost all the major religious philosophy had great impact in his personal and literary life. India is traditionally a country of mixed culture. People of different religion, cast, creed and race have been living together in brotherhood and social, religious and cultural harmony since time immemorial. Tagore’s philosophy of universal brotherhood has contributed immensely to Indian cultural and religious heritage.

Tagore is known worldwide for his literary creations. His concept of catering education was very much artistic and scientific. He believed in using different methods of literature in catering lessons and education. Drama is one of the most popular forms of spreading thoughts and educating minds. Drama is used as a medium of expression to spread mass message and to organise social and environmental awareness programmes. Dramas are also used in formal education in India for making teaching learning process interesting for teachers and learners. It is also popularly used in nursery school, primary school and teacher training programmes.

Tagore’s educational thoughts focus on Mother Language as a medium of education and also other Indian Languages and one foreign language like English for acquire foreign literature, knowledge and skills. In regards to education of India Mother Language used as a medium of education and English also use as a foreign language.

As method of instruction Tagore always criticised the traditional methods of instruction and preferred various instructional methods like project methods, education through connecting nature and teacher made methods of instruction etc. and all of those methods are very much impact on education in India.

Tagore educational thoughts focus on role of teacher like teacher should behave with child with great love and affection, sympathy, affection, instead if emphasizing on book learning, the teacher should provide conducive environment to the child so that he engages himself in useful and constructive activities and learn by his own experiences, teacher should always be busy with motivating the creative capacities of the children so that he remain busy with constructive activities and experience. So in reference to education in India the role of teacher according to Tagore has a great impact because in present day of education in India those activities are popularly followed.

Tagore's educational thought's there so many activities and values are found like - Social work and the promotion of co-operative schemes, Multi-cultural exchange, Spiritual training to the students, Help the children for the cultivation of love of nature and sympathy with all living creatures, educate children by providing an atmosphere of freedom, educate children by making them alive to their natural surroundings, educate children by providing an environment of living aspiration, based upon living contact between the teacher and the taught, community school where there is no distinction of caste and creed, provide students adequate opportunities for choosing their hobbies and occupations, provide peace education, physical exercise, moral education, religious Education etc. And all of those values and activities according to Tagore have great impact on education in India.

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