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Rabindranath Tagore: An Analysis of Indian Educational & Contribution of Indian Education

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Abstract

This paper basically highlights Rabindranath Tagore's philosophy of education in India and Tagore's educational view. This paper focus on Rabindranath Tagor's, especially in his educational ideas. Thus, this paper attempts to perceive the approaches and the values in two gigantic educational philosophies, education system from the West and East that is Tagore's. Here, I use the comparative methodology to analyze Tagore's educational philosophy vis-à-vis western educational philosophy. The culture and tradition of the society itself had shaped in development of both philosophies, revealed how far these disciplines are contrast to each other. To accomplish this I will first look at the educational philosophies of these two major international educational players in the history of India. The following comparative analysis will be emphasized on several aspects, namely the originality, principles, aims, medium of learning, school Environments, distribution of knowledge, and harmonization of national visions.

Key words: *Educational philosophy, School Environment, curriculum, Contribution, Aims etc.*

Introduction:

Education in India: A - Historical Background: Before Rabindranath was born, British in India had been consolidate and the general foundation of a colonial system of education had been laid. The stated aim of British policy was the promotion of English studies with English language as the medium of instruction and the creation of a class of Indians who had been brought up in an English way. As a result, the traditional system of village, Sanskrit and Islamic schools languished.

National universities had been established at Bombay, Madras and calcutta, but secondary schools and universities were still the reserve of a small elite. The gulf between the fortunate upper classes and the vast masses of rural poor continued to widen. On the other hand, great socio-economic changes were taking place in the country, and especially in calcutta and in other town as they grew in size.

Railways were build; factories sprang up; municipal water supplies arrived. A new class of people come to adopt European dress, manners, attitudes and life styles. Old values and traditions came to be questioned. It was a period of social upheaval and reforms in India.

Toward the end of the nineteenth and in the early -20th centuries the middle class, which had come into being following the establishment of Universities in 1857, began to protest against the imposed system of education and its parallel language policy. It is true that in the middle of the nineteenth century, when the British system was being introduced, a powerful group of urban classes expressed their preference for such studies.

But, seeing the consequences and with a growing awareness of the Indian culture heritage and history, the middle classes had come to resent the education which was being offered, while Tagore preferred the traditional system to the new one, he did not want to bring it back without considerable changes this period also saw a rise in Indian nationalism. There was resentment against an imitation of British lifestyles and against British rule, coupled with increased awareness and appreciation of India's cultural traditions. Tagore educational and other writings of the period reflect this nationalist trend. His concern with educational reform grew in intensity after 1901, and more so after 1905. Dissatisfaction with the existing system of education let to a general concern with reforms.

A tragic series of family bereavements probably caused Tagore's withdrawal from the growing national struggle for independence in the country. He retired to his Ashram school to concentrate on its development and on the task of village reconstruction that he had initiated at Seliadah.

Objective of Education According to Rabindranath Tagore:

1. To study the mind of Man in its realization of different aspects of truth from diverse points of view.
2. To bring into more intimate relation with one another through patient study and research, the different cultures of the East on the basis of their underlying unity.
3. To approach the West from the standpoint of such a unity of the life and thought of Asia.
4. To seek to realise in a common fellowship of study the meeting of East and West and thus ultimately to strengthen the fundamental conditions of world peace through the free communication of ideas between the two hemispheres.
5. And with such Ideals in view to provide at Santiniketan a centre of culture where research into the study of the religion, literature, history, science and art of Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Zoroastrian, Islamic, Sikh, Christian and other civilizations may be pursued along with the culture of the West, with that simplicity of externals which is necessary for true spiritual realisation, in amity, good-fellowship and co-operation between the thinkers and scholars of both Eastern and Western countries, free from all antagonisms of race, nationality, creed or caste and in the name of the One Supreme Being who is Shantam, Shivam, Advaitam.

Some Basic Problem of Social & Educational Philosophy: With these pre-requisites of the Socio-cultural background of Rabindranath's thinking in general let us acquaint ourselves with some basic problems of social philosophy. Because only with a clear understanding of the basic problems of social philosophy, a fruitful effort can be made to relate Rabindranath's reflections to these core problems of social existence. Philosophy, as said earlier, is rooted in life and its problems. So, philosophers should realize that philosophy does not only mean metaphysical speculation and logical analysis but it has a social significance as well. Philosophy should not ignore its social role. If it does so, philosophy will become a barren discipline. A day will come when philosophy will fail to evoke any respect and credibility as a meaningful intellectual discipline. No other branches of knowledge will come to philosophy for inspiration and guidance. In the discharge of its social role, philosophy cannot decline to examine man's social existence in its multi-dimensional manifestations. The significance of social philosophy lies in interpreting social phenomena and the fundamental principles underlying them with a view to present a coherent picture of our social existence. Social philosophy is a philosophical interpretation and evaluation of the fundamental principles and concepts of social life with a view to effect a higher synthesis in the light of some fundamental values cherished by the mankind in its long history of civilized existence. Social philosophy studies the conceptual questions and logical implications of the methodology of the social sciences. It also studies some meta-sociological issues relating to individual-social reality.

As regard the mode of functioning of social philosophy we find that socio-philosophical study has epistemological and axiological aspects. From the point of view of epistemological aspect, the function of social philosophy can be brought under three heads- 1. Ontological, 2. Criteriological and 3. Synthetic. In its ontological function, social philosophy aims at the examination of the fundamental principles and concepts of social life, such as men, society, justice, freedom, equality, happiness etc. in its criteriological aspect, social philosophy enquires into the validity of the presuppositions of sociological studies and the conclusion resulted therefrom. Synthetic function is involved in every synthetic study of science. But synthesis function is involved in every synthetic study of science. But synthesis which social philosophy aims at in fulfilments of its synthetic activity belong to an order other than sociology. The socio-philosophical synthesis is elevated to the realm of philosophy where an integrated picture of men in social situation emerges.

Social philosophy has a valuational aspect as well. It examines social values, social development and social progress. Social philosophy being value-loaded discipline comes very close to ethics. Ethics aims at the determination of the highest good. But as the highest is inconceivable apart from social setting, ethics is obliged to study social relations. Though valuational mechanism of social philosophy is not exactly similar to that of ethical valuation, nevertheless for social philosophy is concerned with the entire social life of man, while ethics is concerned with the ethical excellence of an individual action. When the question of dynamic comes, social philosophy is interested to investigate whether social mobility is determined by the conscious and deliberate efforts of the social beings. Social

philosophy is also concerned with ethico– teleological study of society. The activities of self-conscious human being in a social environment are not all mechanical or repetitive but creative and appreciative. As a creative- appreciative or repetitive but creative and appreciative. As a creative- appreciative being, man gives momentums to her reshaping of society which is perpetually undergoing change. Social philosophy studies the nature of social telesis and examines how the telic principles operate in the social plane and how the social telesis give orientation to the cultural advancement of society.

Social philosophy should also aim at the study about the society of future. Social philosophy as the philosophy of the society cannot ignore to give rational guidance to individuals and rational ordering of the society. As a social philosopher one must have clear understanding of the significance of the past, a proper perception of our present concern and commitments and a vision of future possibilities. A social philosopher must search for a thread of continuity in the midst of historical changes. The task of social philosopher is to work out the full implications of the meaningful alternatives for the future of humanity and to enquire into the possibilities of their realisation.

Aims of Education According to Tagore: According to Rabindranath Tagore, the aim of education is self-realization. He is a poet and a saint who thought his imagination and insight, realized the universal soul within himself and in Nature. According to him this realization by every one is the goal of education. Self-realization according to Rabindranath, means the realization of the 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. In the absence of education in individual will be deprived of self-realization. Rabindranath dose not find any dichotomy between thought and life, philosophy and education. He believes that everyone is potentially divine and every one can realize this potentiality. His philosophy is very much influenced by the 'Gita' and the 'Upanishads'. He is, however, well aware of the educational ideas prevalent in the west. Therefore, like Vivekananda, he synthesizes the ancient vedantic traditions with the modern western scientific attitude in formulating the goal of education.

Like Swami Vivekananda and M.K Gandhi Rabindranath condemned the prevalent system of education which partially exercised the intellect only to the entire neglect of the body. According to Rabindranath, 'location of the body in the real sense dose not exist in play and exercise but in applying the body systematically to some useful work.' Thus one of the aims of education according to Rabindranath, is physical development. It is hence that he so much emphasizes games in school education. Pointing out the value of physical activities in the child's education he says, "Even if they lean nothing, they would have had ample time for play, climbing trees, diving into pond. Planking and tearing flowers, perpetrating thousand and one mischiefs on Mother Nature, they would have obtained the nourishment of the body, happiness of mind and the satisfaction of the natural impulses of childhood."

Besides the physical aims of education, Tagore equally lays emphasis upon the mental aims of education. Like Vivekananda and Gandhi he is critical of the prevalent system of education which laid sole emphasis upon bookish learning. Presenting this attitude, he says, "We touch the world not with our mind, but with our books. This is deplorable. Intellectualism takes us away from Nature and creates a gulf between man and man."

In the end, the aim of education, according to Tagore is the harmony of the educant with the environment. The educant should know his environment and create harmony with it. To quote Rabindranath, "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,"

Special Contribution to Indian Education: R.N. Tagore was really a great philosopher and an educationist. Establishment of Santiniketan is a unique experiment in the history of Indian education. Through it, Tagore established that India was still in a position to show light to the world by reviving its ancient spirit and wisdom, philosophy and way of life.

R.N. Tagore inspired a number of contemporary educationists as models for his followers not only in the field of education but also in literature, arts, painting and drawing. Tagore had a message to give to the mankind, a message of unity of mankind, internationalism, brotherhood of man and service to humanity, illiterates, sufferers and backwards.

Prof. Taneja had rightly said, "Tagore profound, logical and penetrating. He was practical idealist and a dreamer he set an ideal of beauty and truth, individual, natural, international as a counter-balance to the materialistic philosophy."

Tagore combined in himself the ingredients of naturalistic, idealistic, humanistic, realities and pragmatic philosophies and successfully established a happy blending of the philosophies of the East and the West. Vishwa Bharti is his great contribution. It is an outstanding institution—an international university, which is a living symbol of Tagore's philosophy of life and education.

School Environment According to Rabindranath Tagore: Tagore believes that school is the place which lays seed for development in man. It should be situated in a free, natural open and simple environment. To him school is of great importance when he says some words about Shantiniketan, "this school should be a home and temple in one, where teaching should be a part of worshipful life."

Rabindranath Tagore that 'outdoor classroom' which still exists at Santiniketan large number of alumni responded favorably to this learning environment. Recently a professor in the United States, said that open-air environment atmosphere very relaxing and hope to introduce this outdoor environment into his own teaching when "the appropriate class appears" one of educationalist argue that the natural environment associated with the outdoor classroom introduce "always an expectation for change.....suddenly thousand of migratory birds would cover the sky.....there would be change in the nature which was made each the day given another experience. Mukherjee visit Santiniketan during in the

1958, he observed that there was “an increasing tendency noticeable among the senior students and even among staff, to value curricular studies and examination result at the expense of those other activities which constitute the heart and soul of the school of the institution.” Ujjwal states that “the environment was a really pleasant one, and the open-air based classes were very helpful in boosting our ideas and enriching our knowledge”. These experience are in keeping with Tagore's philosophy that learning involved appreciation of life and one's surroundings. Tagore identity few objective regarding the children effectiveness.

1. **Freedom:** Children should be provided with a free environment and they should be treated with utmost love, sympathy and consideration. He emphasised that education should be imparted to the child through his mother tongue so that students will be able to grasp and understand ever the most difficult subject easily. According to him, Educations should be given according to the interest and nature of the child. He also asserted that a child should be free to learn by his /her own efforts and experience. This leads to permanent learning and will prove useful for his future life.
2. **Harmony with nature:** According to Rabindranath Tagore, the aim of education not only given information but making life in harmony with the existence. He argue that child should be learn through the nature. Tagore completely avoid the class based education.
3. **Active communication with nature and man:** Tagore believed that there is a spiritual relationship between nature, God and man. A child must get the opportunity to develop the power of communication with nature.
4. **Creative Self- expression:** Rabindranath Tagore believed that education must promote creative self- expression. Tagore give important to a music drawing crafts...etc.
5. **Essential unity of mankind:** Tagore believed in the essential unity of mankind. His vision on mankind admits no division between body and mind, matter and life, community and nation and empire and the world.

Tagore gives practical form to his educational philosophy. He opened Shantiniketan in Bolpur on 22 December, 1901. He said, “The school was a work of art and not a pedagogical laboratory”, Special characteristics of Shantiniketan are also following:

- > Reflected ancient Indian culture.
- > Contacts with nature.
- > Religious and spiritual environment.
- > Natural environment.
- > Education through mother- tongue,.
- > Environment based on principle of simple living and high thinking.
- > Maximum freedom.

Tagore's views on curriculum are summarized as under:

- 1. Curriculum Broad– based:** In order to achieve the above mentioned aims and objectives of education. Tagore emphasised the necessity of broad based curriculum. According to him, curriculum should be so broad that all aspects of child's life - physical, intellectual, social, economic, moral, aesthetic and spiritual may be developed. He also recognised the importance of co- curricular activities in the development of study, activity and actual living.
- 2. Mother Tongue– A Prominent Factor:** Tagore advocated teaching through the medium of mother-tongue, but he was not against the teaching of English provided a way for the Western culture and literature.
- 3. Education through the Medium of Emotions:** Tagore pleaded for education through emotions in the medium of music, fine arts, painting, dance, dramatics, and craft which are mean of self-expression and fulfilment. He struck a balance between the education of Nature and the education of man through art, music, dance etc.
- 4. Manual Training for Spiritual Aspect:** Tagore emphasised manual training not for its utilitarian and social aspects but for the spiritual aspects, because he found God in the labourer, the path-breaker and the tiller.
- 5. Prominent Activities and occupation:** Rabindranath Tagore promote the activities like Dramatics, Dancing, Music, Game and Sports, Drawing and Painting, Agriculture and Gardening, Excursions, Regional Study, Laboratory work, Self Government, Social Service.
- 6. Main Subjects:** Tagore introduce following subjects which one discussed the below:
 1. Language and Literature Mother tongue, other Indian languages, English and other Foreign languages like Russian, German, French, Latin and Chinese.
 2. Mathematics
 3. Natural Sciences like Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Botony, Zoology, General Science and Health Education.
 4. Social Sciences like History, Civies, Geography, Music, Dance, etc.
 5. Agriculture and Technical Subjects
 6. Arts, Music, Dance etc
 7. Philosophy, Religion and Psychology.
- 7. Physical and Social Sciences:** Tagore believed that at the higher level Science must lead to material contribution for the progress of the country. Regarding social sciences. Tagore considered History as a study of cultural legacy. Besides History of India, he advocated the study of World History. He wanted to broaden the vision of students beyond Indian culture. To him our real legacy is the cultural heritage of the whole community. There is need for assimilating rich value for Indian culture in world perspective.
- 8. Trust in Actual Living and Community Service:** Life at Shantiniketan is practical and full of vigour. Everyone is an active member of the community and has to render service and manual labour. Department of Rural Reconstruction is a centre of attraction in this respect. Very explicitly said Tagore in this regard, "It must not only derive its contents but also its substance and inspiration from the social life at large.

Thus we observe that Tagore recommended a comprehensive curriculum for the development of the full man satisfying the spiritual, the social for the creative, the intellectual, the aesthetic, the physical and the the vocational aim of education.

Conclusion: 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 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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