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**AN ANALYSIS ON IMPORTANCE OF
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PHILOSOPHY/THOUGHT OF EDUCATION IN
MODERN INDIA**

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An Analysis on Importance of Rabindranath Tagore's Philosophy/Thought of Education in Modern India

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Abstract – Rabindranath Tagore was a universal personality. His genius was versatile. He was influenced by the Christian conception of the fatherhood of God and by Shakespeare, Goethe, and Wordsworth etc. But the roots of his intellectual creativism and emotional make-up lie in the Upanishads, in the poetry of kalidas, in the lyrics of Vaisnavas, in the mystic poems of Kabir and the religious atmosphere of the Brahmo Samaj. Tagore's inspired poetry and prose becomes the literary vehicle of the regeneration of a fallen race. His songs and messages were like inspirations to social and political workers. 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 objective of the paper is to analyses the educational thoughts of Tagore, his basic conception of education and its process. The paper is primarily based on secondary sources like the Books, Journals and Articles etc. The method used is historic-analytic method. Tagore was a great champion of education for international understanding.

Rabindranath Tagore was a great philosopher, thinker, educationist, social activist and intellectual of 20th century. Tagore was a charismatic figure who had a rare great personality, exhibited multidimensional ideas and which has relevance in present era too. It represents important social and cultural changes of the present and rejects claims of classical social thinkers. He establishes a highly pluralistic and diverse view about the education.

It represents important social and cultural changes of the present day and rejects the claims of classical social thinkers about the universalistic ideas about individuals; society and the world .It establish a highly pluralistic and diverse view about society with no grand narratives guiding its development. It suggests multiple quotations, cultural cross over and multicultural borrowing even in the field of education in general and society.

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INTRODUCTION

Rabindranath Tagore was a universal personality. His genius was versatile, synthetic and original. He was influenced by the Christian conception of the fatherhood of God and might have been inspired in his early years by Shakespeare, Goethe, Wordsworth, Ruskin, Shelley, Keats and Browning. But the roots of his intellectual creativism and emotional make-up lie in the Upanishads, in the majestic poetry of kalidas, in the lyrics of Vaisnavas, in the mystic poems of Kabir and the religious atmosphere of the Brahmo Samaj.

Different philosophers have described the character of Tagore's philosophy differently. Hirendrenath Datta describes his philosophy as Concrete Monism. It is monism because reality is conceived as one, and it is

concrete because the one reality is not an abstract principle negating completely the reality of the many, but does a concrete whole, comprehend the many within its bosom. 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 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.

According to Tagore (1931) every individual surrounded by education which provide the path of knowledge and cultural link with wider world. The higher education should disseminate information capable of making our existence harmonious. However, it was witnessed that the education was systematically ignored in schools and severely repressed. It is pathetic that whatever we learn since childhood in our life, it accentuates from our very nature and our mind as well consequent up on which the world are set in opposition culminating that sort of education we had is neglected and we are made to lose our world to find bag full of information. Thus, it kills hunger of child for epic, because it was supplied with chronological facts and figures. This state of affairs compels the child to assign higher value to protest acting as a calamity ensuing power of suffering subdued at last into science by punishment.

The themes inherent in Tagore's philosophy of education has sufficient and unavoidable relevance for present world which is characterized by contradictions and chaos in all walks of life. The contributions made by Tagore was understood by people in order to learn and develop relations not only with ourselves but also in relation to other nations, their religion and culture with special reference to nature. According, to Tagore, life is incessantly creating and to live in creativity is an art. His contributions are scattered from art, literature, music, painting, philosophy to education and social constructions. Through his experiences, Tagore tried to convey his learning to the contemporary generation and made relevant to the future generations. As a social and educational reformer, he initiated to establish institutions like Vishwa Bharati and Shantiniketan as an effective models of new education system.

The existence of crisis that was in the minds of the students drew attention of Rabindranath Tagore. He found that an authoritative system of education has been creating fear in the delicate minds of children. Rabindranath Tagore's focus of educational thoughts were not limited to job creation but it attempted to play a facilitative role in overall development of humanity. He wanted schools to be more live and enjoyable. He furnished equal importance to spiritual and scientific knowledge. Rabindranath Tagore was against pouring of information into the mind of learners. Tagore believed that education should be open for all that believed in globalization of education. The globalization of education broadens one's mind and induce more tolerance to differences created by boundaries of one's home, culture and nation. According to Tagore, nation is like a family and for families constituting society, the members should be educated for which we have to eradicate illiteracy and inculcate skills. He advocated skilled based learning in the curriculum.

Being a social reformer, Rabindranath Tagore advocated educational tool for social change by turning young people into independent and creative thinkers rather than blind followers of rituals and traditions. Burden of memory is our obstacle in the flow of learning. Understanding enables learning to deepen and consolidate as well as open itself to creative experimentation. Thoughts and actions can integrate continuously leading to newer ways of thinking the bridging at once the past with the present future. Rabindranath Tagore emphasized freedom of the child which is essential for learning and acquisition of skills and knowledge. A child should be fearless in expression. He had three aims for the students: (1) Enrich literature and other arts to reform education and develop village. (2) to develop capability to think in terms of entire mankind. (3) to enable the students which empowers them to go beyond limitations of their animal nature and to complete the journey of humanism. Tagore views on spirituality was like that 'God is Satyam, truth.' 'He is ananda rupam amritam' water, earth and sky have imposed bindings on us in many ways and of various sorts. But the ground festival of myriad beauty that is held by the varied colours fragrances, and music within water- air sky do not force itself upon as is the least.

THE CONCEPT OF UNIVERSAL MAN

Tagore Philosophy of Education cannot be understood without understanding his Meta Physical theory. In this theory the concept of universal man is very important. Referring to universal man as the ultimate reality Rabindranath elaborates the concept. He says – truth is the infinite pursued by science, while reality is the definite of the infinite, which relates truth to the person. Reality is human, it is what we are conscious of, by which we are affected, that which we express.

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 back ground of our mind. We know it, not because we think of it, but because we directly feel it. It is not vanished from our conscious mind.

The concept of universal man in his philosophy agrees with the cosmic vision of divine in Gita. The universal man is at the back of all movements, all change, all order and system in the universal. Man is very much a part of him. Man and nature cannot be conceived separate from god. The universal man includes both.

Rabindranath himself says: I have never looked at god, man and nature as problems which can be considered in isolation from each other. I could never conceive of their occupying watertight compartments.

According to Tagore this universal man is in every individual person. He lives even in the humblest man. Therefore we should not neglect even the most poor, illiterate and humble human being. He said "He is there where the tillers are tilling the hard ground and where the path maker is breaking stones. He is with them in sun and in shower and his garment is covered with dust. Put off the holy mantle and even like him come down on the dusty soil.

For Rabindranath personality is not something limited and mundane but also unlimited and supramundane, while in the human being it is found in the first form in universal man it may be seen in the second meaning. Tagore, explaining this meaning of the universal man said "This personality which is the conscious principle of oneness, the centre of relationships is the reality – therefore the ultimate object of attainment. I must emphasize this fact, that this world is a real world only in its relation to a central personality".

According to Tagore god is the perfect person. Human beings are persons in an imperfect sense. While man is an individual god, god is universal man. He is the supreme person. This supreme person is in two forms, Saguna and Nirguna. Both are two aspects of the same universal man god is the perfect idea type of man. He possesses human qualities. Tagore says, "All human qualities find their suggestion in god".

God has even the trait of action which is characteristically human. Action must be attributed to him, otherwise how could he give himself?99 He is the meeting ground of man and the world. It is in him alone that human beings exchange their experiences.

TAGORE'S PHILOSOPHY: A GENERAL PERSPECTIVE

Tagore's philosophy reflects the blending of Western and Eastern ideas. He was deeply ingrained by the Vedas and Upanishads in one hand and on other

hand, his thoughts represent the culmination of concepts and ideas which were the symbols of enlightenment. Human consciousness is the starting point of all philosophical inquiry .Tagore opined that the contradictions of human life provoke the quest for truth. Man is a finite-infinite being. He combines in him spirit and nature. "At one pole of my being I am one with sticks and stonesbut at the other pole of my being I am separated from all." As a link in the natural chain of events, man is subject to the law of necessity, as a member of the spiritual realm of ends, he is free. It is this contradiction which is encountered in science, art and morality that demands a solution. The individual aspires after perfect truth, perfect beauty and perfect goodness. Tagore was an „individualist“ and „naturalist“. He believed in the right and freedom of the individual to shape his life in his own way. But he ultimately wanted the unity of mankind. He said that in every one of us the Creator manifests in a unique manner and every individual tries to realize the Creator in his own way through which unity could be found not only amongst human beings but also between man and nature. According to Tagore, nature is the manifestation of the Creator (Brahma).Through its various forms, colours and rhythms the Brahma reveals Himself more clearly through nature than through man. He, therefore, wished human beings to have a close communion with nature and with its purifying and vitalizing influences.

"Experience of the spiritual world, religion as the right centre of life's activities and the unity of thought and truth" was the keynote of Tagore's great philosophy. There should be spiritual relationship between man and man. Tagore's individualism, therefore, is compatible with the growth of social units. He encouraged the individual to reorganize the social groups on the basis of the individual's spiritual worth. By that he never meant parochialism-intellectual, social, political and spiritual. He wanted the essential unity of the universe. He advocated internationalism but not economic or political internationalism. He wanted the spiritual bondage of the universe. Having faith in the fundamental unity of mankind he preached human brotherhood.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE

In Tagore's philosophy of education, the aesthetic development of the senses was as important as the intellectual if not more so and music, literature, art, dance and drama were given great prominence in the daily life of the school. This was particularly so after the first decade of the school in which the arts would become instinctive. One of the first areas to be emphasized was music. „We felt we would try to test everything," he writes, „and no achievement seemed impossible...We wrote, we sang, we acted, we

poured ourselves out on every side." In keeping with his theory of subconscious learning, Rabindranath never talked or wrote down to the students, but rather involved them with whatever he was writing or composing. The students were allowed access to the room where he read his new writings to teachers and critics, and they were encouraged to read out their own writings in special literary evenings. In teaching also he believed in presenting difficult levels of literature, which the students might not fully grasp, but which would stimulate them. And students at Santiniketan were encouraged to create their own publications and put out several illustrated magazines. The children were encouraged to follow their ideas in painting and drawing and to draw inspiration from the many visiting artists and writers. The core of Tagore's educational theory puts greater emphasis on the complete harmonious development of individual personality. He believed that education should help an individual to attain complete manhood, so that all his powers may be developed to the fullest extent for his own individual perfection as well as the perfection of the human society in which he was born. He believed that education was not merely a means for the growth and fullness of the individual, but it was also concerned with the whole physical and social milieu in which his life was lived. He wanted the boys and girls to be fearless, free and open-minded, self-reliant, full of the spirit of inquiry and self-critical, with their roots deep in the soil of India but reaching out to the world in understanding, neighborliness, cooperation and material and spiritual progress. Tagore's concept of ideal education covered the description of ideal atmosphere, institution, teacher, and method. Actually Tagore's success lies in the fact that he did not try to control directly the ideas, feelings, and values of his children but imaginatively designed an environment and a program of activities and experiences which evoked the desired responses. He also believed that the education of a country acquires shape and substance only against the entire background and it is important that there is a strong relationship between education and society.

Educational policy having coherence with the demands and needs of the immediate socio-cultural milieu of the people should have benefitting effects for all members of society. Education in relation to minds of the individuals is not just a formal system rather it should be an attitude of teaching and learning in a spirit of sharing with strong departure from give and take like material things. The existing crisis which is in the minds of the learners at present is calling for an educational system, in which new thoughts and ideas can be poured entailing realities of life. To establish coherence with the changing environmental, social and political scenario, the educational principles of Tagore have great relevance and implications. The unity of West and East, natural growth in natural circumstances, Discard book-centered education, Independence of the learner, adoption of real and practical teaching, place of fine arts, educational for rural reconstruction are some examples.

TAGORE'S AIMS OF EDUCATION:

Tagore, not being an educationist in the strict academic sense, did not talk about the aim of education in a well formulated logical way. His statements scattered in his writings do give some idea about his philosophy. The Aims of education as reflected in educational institution founded by Rabindranath Tagore is Santiniketan are as follows:

1. INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT:

Tagore also greatly emphasized the intellectual development of the child. By intellectual development he means development of imagination, creative free thinking, constraint curiosity and alertness of the mind, Child should be free to adopt his own way learning which will lead to all round development.

2. NATURAL GROWTH IN NATURAL CIRCUMSTANCE:

Tagore envisaged that nature is the best teacher to the pupil. Nature will provide the student with necessary situation to earn knowledge. No pressure should be exerted upon the student to learn anything. It is nature which will be the guiding force to inculcate the spirit of learning in the mind of a student to pursue the education he likes. It will shape his behavior and character.

3. FREEDOM TO LEARNER:

Tagore had championed the cause of freedom. The same he wanted to implement in the field of education. With that object he had opened Santiniketan, Sri Niketan and Brahma Chari Ashram. Accordingly, he gave free choice to students to develop their interest in any field they like. To him, education should be after the heart of a man. He explained freedom in three-categorized ways i.e. freedom of heart, freedom of intellect and freedom of will. Education imparted in a natural way will lead to the fulfillment of these three freedoms. One may pursue the vocational education or education of an intellect.

4. SELF REALIZATION:

Spiritualism is the essence of humanism. Manifestation of personality depends upon the self-realization and spiritual knowledge of individual.

5. LOVE FOR HUMANITY:

Tagore held that education can teach people to realize oneness of the globe. Education for international understanding and universal brotherhoods another important aim of his educational philosophy.

6. PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT:

Tagore's educational philosophy also aims at the physical development of the child. He gave much

importance to sound and healthy physique. Yoga, games & sports are prescribed in Santiniketan as an integral part of the education system.

7. TEACHING - PRACTICAL AND REAL:

According to Tagore, teaching should be practical and real but not artificial and theoretical. As a naturalist out and out, Tagore laid emphasis on the practicality of education. That will definitely increase the creative skill within a learner. That creativity will bring perfection in the learning process and the student will be a master in his own field but not a slave to mere theoretical knowledge which one delves deep.

8. CO-RELATION OF OBJECTS:

Co-relation exists with God, man and nature. A peaceful world is only possible when correlation between man and nature will be established.

9. PLACE OF FINE ARTS (DANCE, DRAMA, MUSIC, POETRYETC.):

Tagore attached great importance to the fine arts in his educational curriculum. 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".

10. MOTHER TONGUE AS THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTIONS:

Language is the true vehicle of self-expression. Man can freely express his thought in his mother-tongue. Tagore has emphasized mother tongue as the medium of instruction for the child's education.

11. MORAL AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT:

Tagore emphasized moral and spiritual training in his educational thought. Moral and spiritual education is more important than bookish knowledge for an integral development of human personality. There must be an adequate provision for the development of selfless activities, co-operation and love fellow feeling and sharing among the students in educational institutions.

12. SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT:

According to Tagore, „Brahma“ the supreme soul manifests himself through men and other creatures.

Since he is the source of all human-being and creatures, so all are equal. Rabindranath Tagore therefore said, **“Service to man is service to God”**. All should develop social relationships and fellow-feeling from the beginnings of one's life. Educational aims at the individual I personality as well as social characters which enables him to live as a worthy being.

13. UNITY OF WEST AND EAST:

Tagore's education marked a novel blending of the ideas of the East and West. The spiritualism of Indian philosophy and progressive outlook of the western people were blended together to give rise to an educational philosophy which mark edits distinction in comparison to other educationists of India.

14. GOODBYE TO BOOK-CENTERED EDUCATION:

For the first time in the arena of education, Tagore established a new mile-stone. With boldness and firmness, he rejected a book-centered education for students. To him it is not just to confine the mind of boys and girls to text-books only. It will kill the natural instincts of a student and make him bookish. It will kill his creative skill. So, students should be freed from the-book centered education and should be given a broader avenue for learning.

15. 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.

THEORY AND PRACTICE

Rabindra Nath Tagore was not merely a thinker and dreamer. He put in to Practice, his educational ideas by starting three institutions, Sriniketan, Viswabharathi and Sri Niketan. Explaining educational Trinity in the educational philosophy of Rabindranath, S.S Sinha writes, "Santiniketan, Visva Bharati and sriniketan may be said to constitute Tagore's educational trinity through which he endeavored to develop his educational theme in three different complementary directions. The school came first in the field and was far away the most important as it embodied all the poets' main teachings about education. The three institutions thus displayed a discernible pattern of growth and expansion, illustrating their underlining creative unity.

Santiniketan-The most important in this trinity is the Santiniketan. About the idea of it he wrote to Sri J. C. Bose. I am trying to start a school at Santiniketan. It will be conducted just on the lines of Residential institutions of ancient times. There shall not be the least trace of luxury. We shall not be able to become true Hindus if we do not learn rigid Brahmacharya. Frivolity and luxury are degenerating us. Wants of all descriptions are over-powering us only because we are failing to accept poverty with equanimity.

Santiniketan was started on a small scale with a school and boarding house. It was called as, Brahmacharyasram and inaugurated on 22nd of December 1901. Its aim was to provide all round development of the students. In brief, it was the student's own world in which they themselves managed everything and developed through this experiment. Explaining this pattern of school education Rabindranath says, "I always try to impress upon their minds that are their own world, upon which their life ought fully and freely to react. In the school administration they have their place and in the matter of punishment we mostly rely upon their own court of Justice."

Visvabharati-Tagore travelled widely in Europe and Asia. He felt the need of harmony and good will and mutual understanding of eastern and western culture. Both the east and the west have much to give and take. He wanted to build up an educational institution for integrating the East and the west. Such a place was developed in the form of Visvabharati at Santiniketan.

Tagore's comprehensive system-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, life of the individual of the rural masses of the poor Indians and that of man as a member of an international community.

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 a 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.

Freedom and growth-Rabindranath tries to utilize the buildings of modern western educational psychology as well as the ancient wisdom of India. According to him, educational process is mainly functional with activity as its basis. Teacher and the taught must be always active and both learning and practice should go together.

Rabindranath is against corporal punishment. Discipline through rod is not at all necessary in educational institutions. Use of it leads to depression and humiliation.

CONCLUSION:

Rabindranath Tagore believed that all faculties of human beings, intellectual, physical, moral, aesthetic should be nurtured, cultivated in a good educational system. He emphasized the cultivation of intellect in order to counter balance emotional immaturity and instability where it exists, and he appreciated the contribution that western science can make to the progress of India. He strongly believed that if reason, with its uncompromising dedication to truth is not reinstated on its lonely pedestal, rejecting superstition and the undue cult of the supernatural in every field, neither education nor the general intellectual life of the people will be released from its fetters. However, this intellectual cultivation, power of reasoning cannot be gained through mere book reading. He was aware that "since childhood, instead of putting the entire burden on the memory, the power of thinking, and the power of imagination should also be given opportunities for free exercise". Tagore's impact on education in India has not been well recognized and through discussion it was found that educational work of Tagore deserves more scrutiny. It needs to be recognized and evaluated by educationists around the world. His impact on education has been felt more but it has not been articulated by researchers, or educationists. Present writing opens avenues for further research on Tagore as an educationist by making further suggestions and presenting an extensive bibliography on Tagore's writings on education.

Education is continuous process of learning and the existence of present is always in shoulder of past and ultimately from present it will be passed on to the future. Thus, it is concluded that the teaching and methodologies of Tagore are still have relevance and great applicability in the present era of education system being practiced in our country and even around the globe. Establishing educational institutions amidst nature is instrumental in bringing about change in the leaning atmosphere which may play significant role in developing creative mind and facilitate nation building with highest harmony, productivity, happiness and flourishing of all kind in the citizens of the great

Indian nation that has a great repository of knowledge, philosophy, traditions of teaching and learning without harming nature and their cohabitants.

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