

E-Content
Department of Education, Patna University.
M.Ed Semester II
Paper-C.C.5

By: -

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Unit V: Indian Philosophies of Education.

Topic: Rabindranath Tagore.

Objectives:-

After going through this content, the students will be able to—

- Understand biographical sketch of Rabindranath Tagore.
- Explain philosophical thought of Rabindranath Tagore.
- Discuss Educational thought of Rabindranath Tagore.

Tagore - a brief life sketch

Rabindranath was born on 7 May 1861 Calcutta. His father Debendranath Tagore was a leading light in the Brahmo Samaj – a reforming Hindu organisation which sought to promote a monotheistic interpretation of the Upanishads and move away from the rigidity of Hindu Orthodoxy which they felt was holding back India. Debendranath Tagore also encouraged his family to learn English.

Rabindranath began writing from an early age and impressed with his free-flowing style and spontaneous compositions. He mostly rejected formal schooling; he spent much time being taught at home. In 1878 he travelled to England and sought to study law at University College, London, but he left before finishing the degree.

After returning to India, in 1901, Tagore moved to Shantiniketan to found an ashram which became his focal point for writing and his view on schooling. He chose the name for the ashram – Shantiniketan meaning ‘Abode of Peace.’ He died on August 1941.

Tagore’s Philosophy

Philosophy of Humanism:

Tagore observed, “The best and noblest gifts of humanity cannot be the monopoly, of a particular race or country”.

Synthesis of culture:

Tagore said, before we are in a position to stand in comparison with the other cultures of the world or try to cooperate with them. We must bare our own culture on a synthesis of all the different cultures we have.

True culture:

Culture brings fulfillment from the depths of the self to the faculties and aptitudes of a man as a whole; under its influence man spontaneously attains an all-round fulfillment and the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake and the enthusiasm for unselfish action become natural. True culture sets greater store by natural courtesy than mechanical observance of custom and convention. A cultured man will rather injure than humiliate himself. To be envious of others success is to humiliate himself.

Tagore – A Universalist:

As a messenger of freedom of mind and peace, Tagore has expressed his feelings in the following verses.

“Where the mind is without fear

And the head is held high,

Where knowledge is free.

Where the world has not been broken in to

Fragments by narrow domestic walls,

.....

Into that heaven of freedom, my father

Let my country awake”

Aims of Education According to Tagore:

The aims of education as reflected in educational institution founded by Rabindranath Tagore in Santiniketan are as follows:

(i) **Self-Realization:**

Spiritualism is the essence of humanism; this concept has been reflected in Tagore's educational philosophy. Self-realization is an important aim of education. Manifestation of personality depends upon the self-realization and spiritual knowledge of individual.

(ii) **Intellectual Development:**

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

(iii) **Physical Development:**

Tagore's educational philosophy also aims at the physical development of the child. He gave much importance to sound and healthy physique. There were different kinds of exercises. Yoga, games & sports prescribed in Santiniketan as an integral part of the education system.

(iv) **Love for humanity:**

Tagore held that the entire universe is one family. Education can teach people to realize oneness of the globe. Education for international understanding and universal brotherhood is another important aim of his educational philosophy. The feeling of oneness can be developed through the concepts like fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man all creatures are equal on this earth.

(v) **Establishment of relationship between man & God:**

Man bears the diverse qualities and potentialities offered by God. These qualities are inborn and innate. The relationship between man and God is strong and permanent. However the dedication to spiritualism and sacredness will lead to the harmonious relationship with man, nature and God.

(vi) Freedom:

Freedom is considered as an integral aspect of human development. Education is a man-making process, it explores the innate power exists within the man. It is not an imposition rather a liberal process that provides utmost freedom to the individual for his all round development. He says, "Education has meaning only when it is imparted through the path of freedom".

(vii) 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.

(viii) Mother tongue as the medium of Instruction:

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.

(ix) 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.

(x) Social Development:

According to Tagore, "Brahma" the supreme soul manifests himself through men and other creatures. Since He is the source of all human-beings and creatures, so all are equal. Rabindranath Tagore therefore said, "service to man is service to god". All should develop social relationship and fellow-feeling from the beginnings of one's life. Education aims at developing the individual personality as well as social characters which enables him to live as a worthy being.

Tagore's Views on Different Aspects of Education:

The aim of education according to Tagore is creative self-expression through physical, mental, aesthetic and moral development. He stressed the need for developing empathy and sensitivity and the necessity for an intimate relationship with one's cultural and natural environment. He saw education as a vehicle for appreciating the richest aspects of other cultures, while maintaining one's own cultural specificity.

(i) Meaning of education:

Education is short of the highest purpose of man, the fullest growth and freedom of soul. To the child, the environment will provide an ever-ready back ground for its spontaneous activity. Our true education is possible only in the forest through intimate correct with nature.

(ii) Freedom of mind:

The objective of education is the freedom of mind, which can only be achieved through the path of education.

(iii) Children as children:

It is a mistake to judge by the standards of grownups. Adults ignore the gifts of children and insist that children must learn through the same process as they do. This man's most cruel and most wasteful mistake. Children's subconscious mind is more active than their conscious intelligence.

(iv) Discipline and Freedom:

Living ideals cannot be set into clockwork arrangement. Tagore wrote, I never said to them; don't do this, or don't do that..... I never punish them. An ideal school is an Ashram where men have gathered for the highest end of life. Tagore observed to give spiritual culture to our boys was my principal objective in starting my school at Bolepur.

(v) **Living contact between the teacher and the taught:**

In teaching, the guiding should be personal love based on human relations. In education, the teacher is more important than the method. The teacher is Guru. He is to guide and stimulate the students. He remarked, a teacher can never truly teach unless he is still learning himself. A lamp can never light another lamp unless it continues to burn in its own flame. So a teacher must always be teacher.

Relevance Of Tagore's Educational Thoughts In Indian Education

Tagore is critical of the prevalent system of education which lays role emphasis upon bookish learning. The intellectual aim of education, according to him, is the development of the intellectual faculties' which should be developed through education. These are the power of thinking and of imagination. Tagore's educational ideas have been shared by other educationists and many of his innovations have now become part of general educational practices, but his special contribution lay in the emphasis on harmony balance and total development of personality. The visionary and the great educationist in Tagore solved the problem of today as far back as fifty years. Economic forces compel the teachers of today to look for pupils, but in the natural order of thing it is the pupil who should look for the teacher. The teacher student relationship designed by Tagore is a model in this context. It became one of earliest coeducational programs in South Asia. It's establishment led to pioneering efforts in many directions, including model for Indian higher education and mass education as well as pan Asian and global cultural exchange. As one of the earliest educators to think in terms of the global village, Tagore's educational model has a unique sensitivity and aptness for education within multi-racial, multi-lingual and multi-cultural situations amidst conditions of acknowledged economic discrepancy, political imbalance and social evils.

Tagore's Contribution To Modern Education

Tagore was fully dissatisfied with the prevalent system of education at that time and called the schools as factories of role

learning. Then he advocated the principle of freedom for an effective education. He said that the children should be given freedom so that they are able to grow and develop as per their own wishes. A man through the process of education should be able to come out as a harmonious individual in time with his social set-up of life. He suggested creative self-expression through craft, music, drawing and drama. Tagore's major contribution to modern education is the establishment of shantinikethan at Bolepur, in 1901. the school which was modeled on the ancient ashrams grew into a world university called Viswa Bharati. It is an abode of peace where teachers and students live together in a spirit of perfect comradeship. The motto of the institution is 'where the whole world forms its one single nest. It has open spaces and atmosphere of freedom surrounded by natural environment. It is open to, all irrespective of country, race, religion, or politics. It is centered around simple living and high thinking and has spiritual and religious atmosphere. Tagore advocated teaching while talking as the best method and stressed on tours and excursions. He supported teaching and learning through debates and discussions which develop the power of clear-cut thinking. He adopted activity method which makes the learner physically sound. He also held heuristic method where the student is in the position of a discoverer. He stressed on free environment which makes learner self-disciplined. In Tagore's philosophy of education, the aesthetic development of the sense was as important as the intellectual; and music; literature; art, and dance were given great prominence in the daily life of the school.

Santhiniketan And Viswa Bharathi

As an alternative to the existing forms of education, he started A small School of education in 1901. later this school was developed into a university and rural reconstruction centre, known as Viswa Bharati, where he tried to develop an alternative model of education that stemmed from his own learning experience.

Students at Santhiniketan 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 inspirations from the many visiting artists and writers. The main characteristics of the Santhiniketan School are the following.

- It is a community school where there is no distinction of caste and creed.
- Co-educational and residential institution.
- It is a self-governing institution – has a dairy farm ,post office hospital and workshop.
- It is based on the concept of freedom of the mind.
- Mother tongue is the medium of instruction.
- It is studied in natural surroundings and it provides for manual labor.
- There is well- equipped library.

Rabindranath Tagore envisioned as a learning centre where conflicting interests are minimized, where individuals work together in common pursuit of truth and realize that artists in all parts of the world have created forms of beauty, scientists discovered the secrets of the universe, philosophers solved the problems of existence, saints made the truth of the spiritual world organic in their own lives, not merely for some particular race to which they belong, but for all mankind.

Check your progress:

- Evaluate the educational thoughts of Rabindranath Tagore.

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