

Reflective Analysis of Perceptions on Education of Rabindranath Tagore

Gourish Chandra Mondal

Abstract: Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), was not only Asia's first Nobel Laureate, but also a great philosopher and an educationalist in a non-academic sense. He was born into a prominent family known for its socio-religious and cultural innovations during the Bengal Renaissance in 19th century. Since his earliest days, Rabindranath grew up in an environment where all the surging tides of the Indian Renaissance were flowing around his diurnal life. The present paper highlights the philosophical contribution of Rabindranath Tagore to education. It relates the importance of Tagore's philosophy of education with different component of education and finally the implication of Tagore's Philosophy on education.

Keyword: Education; Educational Philosophy; Tagore's Contribution.

I. INTRODUCTION

Rabindranath Tagore was born on May 1, 1861, in Calcutta, at a period when the first uncritical admiration for the West had withered away and there was a more balanced appraisal for it. Tagore was born into a joint family, where he had thirteen brothers and sisters who were mathematicians, journalists, novelists, musicians, and artists. His cousins, who shared the family mansion, were leaders in theatre, science and a new art movement. The cultural richness of his extended family permitted young Rabindranath to assimilate and learn subconsciously at his own pace, giving him an open model of education, which he later tried to recreate in his school at Santiniketan. As it turned out, he found his outside formal schooling to be inferior and boring and, he refused to attend school. The only degrees he ever received were honorary ones bestowed late in life.

The truth is that, he saw education as a vehicle for appreciating the richest aspects of other cultures, while maintaining one's own cultural milieu. As he wrote: "I was brought up in an atmosphere of aspiration, aspiration for the expansion of the human spirit. We in our home sought freedom of power in our language, freedom of imagination in our literature, freedom of soul in our religious creeds and that of mind in our social environment. Such an opportunity has given me confidence in the power of education which is one with life and only which can give us real freedom, the highest that is claimed for man, his freedom of moral communion in the human world.... I try to assert in my words and works that education has its only meaning and object in freedom— freedom from ignorance about the laws of the universe, and freedom from passion and prejudice in our communication with the human world. In my institution I have attempted to create an atmosphere of naturalness in our relationship with strangers,

and the spirit of hospitality which is the first virtue in men that made civilization possible. I invited thinkers and scholars from foreign lands to let our boys know how easy it is to realize our common fellowship, when we deal with those who are great, and that it is the puny that with their petty vanities set up barriers between man and man".

The main essence of Tagore's educational philosophy puts greater emphasis on the complete harmonious development of individual personality. He believed that education should help an individual to attain complete maturity, 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 environment in which his life was lived. The paper is primarily based on secondary sources like books, journals and articles etc.

II. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To know the Educational practices of Rabindranath Tagore.
- To know the Educational aims of Rabindranath Tagore.
- To know the Educational philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore as reflected in his works.
- To realize Rabindranath Tagore's idea of Education.

III. DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The present paper will be concentrated on the contribution of Tagore in the inherent development of education in India and the pertinent educational philosophy.

IV. METHODS OF THE STUDY

For the current study, historical survey method will be followed along with analytical method. Data will be taken from various secondary sources. After collection of data those will be analyzed by different analytical methods like 'internal criticism' and 'external criticism' and the theories will be developed and facts will be established.

V. RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Rabindranath Tagore's concept of ideal education encompassed the description of ideal atmosphere, institution, teacher, and methodology. Actually Tagore's success lies in the fact that he did not try to control directly the ideas, feelings,

Revised Version Manuscript Received on 11 August, 2018.

Gourish Chandra Mondal, M.Sc, M.Ed, Assistant Teacher, Srikantabati P.S.S Sikshaniketan Raghunathganj, Murshidabad (West Bengal)-742225, India. E-mail: mail2gourish@gmail.com



Reflective Analysis of Perceptions on Education of Rabindranath Tagore

and values of his children but imaginatively designed an environment and a program of activities and experiences which invoked the desired responses. He also harboured the notion 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.

VI. RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S EDUCATIONAL CONCEPT

Tagore's educational writings constitute a voluminous literature, mostly scattered in independent essays, speeches and letters, only a small number of which have been collected in books and journals. The rest either are available in pages of old magazines and periodicals or lying in obscurity. This has deterred many educational researchers from working on Tagore. In a nutshell, he didn't literally pen down his educational philosophy. He believed that nature was the bona fide teacher.

However, to understand his theory correctly, it is necessary to know the educational system in India at that time and the childhood experiences of Tagore as a student. Tagore's educational theory was put into practice in his school at Santiniketan, which started with only five students during its infancy. A history of the origin and development of the institution reveals that from such a small start the school has grown to a University, Visva-Bharati, with different departments in humanities, science, art, music, education, Chinese studies, and advanced studies in philosophy and village welfare. We discuss Tagore's educational practices through the following points:

A. Inherent Intellectual Development

Tagore greatly stressed on the intellectual development of the child. By intellectual development what he meant was the development of imagination, creative thinking, constraint curiosity and alertness of the mind. A child should be free to adopt his own way learning which will lead to an overall development.

B. Natural Knowledge

As we have mentioned before, Tagore envisioned that nature is the best teacher to the pupil. Nature will provide the student with necessary situation and scenario to acquire knowledge. 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.

C. Self Realization

Spiritualism is the essence of humanism. Manifestation of personality depends upon the self-realization and spiritual knowledge of individual. This is a key feature of Tagore's philosophy on education and his pertinent practices.

D. Humane Nature

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.

E. Physical Growth

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.

F. Practical Teaching

According to Tagore, teaching should be practical and not artificial or theoretical. As a naturalist through and through, 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.

G. Fine Arts

Tagore attached great importance to '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 their soul and psyche. In his words: Speaking is for mankind and 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 a bond 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.

H. Mother Tongue As A 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. Later, the eminent physicist Satyendranath Bose had also emphasized a lot on instructing via mother tongue.

I. Moral And Spiritual Development

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

J. Social Development

According to Tagore, since 'Brahma' 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 personality as well as social characters which enables him to live as a worthy being.

K. Change of Conventional Book-Centered Education

For the first time in the field 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 children 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 educational methodologies and should be given a broader avenue for learning.

VII. CONCLUSION

Rabindranath Tagore, was basically the Renaissance man of modern India. Albeit not a professional educationist, he believed that all faculties of human beings, intellectual, physical, moral, aesthetic should be nurtured, cultivated in a good educational system. Tagore's educational ideals have been acquired by other reputed educationists and many of his innovations have now culminated to become a part of general educational practices.

REFERENCES

1. Ray, M. K. (2007), Studies on Rabindranath Tagore 1, Atlantic (published 1 October 2007), ISBN 978-81-269-0308-5, retrieved 16 September 2011.
2. Kripalani, K. (2005), Tagore—A Life, National Book Trust of India, ISBN 978-81-237-1959-7
3. Sen, A. (1997), "Tagore and His India", The New York Review of Books, retrieved 30 August 2011.
4. Dutta, K.; Robinson, A. (1995), Rabindranath Tagore: The Myriad-Minded Man, Saint Martin's Press (published December 1995), ISBN 978-0-312-14030-4.
5. Hogan, P. C.; Pandit, L. (2003), Rabindranath Tagore: Universality and Tradition, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press (published May 2003), ISBN 978-0-8386-3980-1.
6. Lago, M. (1977), Rabindranath Tagore, Boston: Twayne Publishers (published April 1977), ISBN 978-0-8057-6242-6.
7. Bhattacharjee, S. (2014), Relevance of Tagore's philosophy of education in postmodern era – a conceptual analysis, IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science, Vol 19 (9), pp. 34-40.
8. Singh, R. and Rawat, S. S. (2013), Rabindranath Tagore's Contribution in Education, VSRD International Journal of Technical and Non-Technical Research, Vol 4, 2013.
9. Daskumar, 'Sisir.' Eng Epic Beautiful'. Delhi: Sahitya Academy. 1994 pp.611-612.