

## A STUDY OF EDUCATIONAL THOUGHTS OF RABINDRA NATH TAGORE IN PRESENT ERA

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### INTRODUCTION:

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), is internationally known as a great poet. He was born on May 1, 1861, in Calcutta, Bengal, at a time when the first uncritical admiration for the West had worn off and there was a more balanced appraisal for it. Simultaneously, there was increased knowledge of and regard for the values of the East. His father, Maharsi (great saint) Devendranath, was a deep student of Indian and Islamic mysticism. From his earliest days, Rabindranath grew up in a house where all the surging tides of the Indian Renaissance were flowing around his daily life.

### 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.' (Rabindranath Tagore, My Reminiscences 1917: 141) 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.

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES:**

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 which greatly influenced the idea of the unique school of Santiniketan. His theory has been categorized under the titles- **Aims of Education, Ideal Education, and Congruency between Educational and Social Life.** Tagore's educational theory was put into practice in his school at Santiniketan, which started with only five students on the roll. 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. In 1922, the Department of Village Welfare at Santiniketan was further developed to include extended work on rural reconstruction, village education, craft-training, agricultural research and training and was named Sriniketan. Tagore 's practical aspect of education also includes a description organization of daily activities in which freedom, games and sports, art, and entertainments at night are emphasized. Tagore's organization of curriculum was not narrowed down to only textbook learning, but it provided a fullness of experience for children from multiple sources. He interpreted the curriculum not in terms of certain subjects to be learned but in terms of certain activities to be undertaken.

**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 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.

### 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, 1351 B.S., p. 12). ***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 open avenues for further research on Tagore as an educationist by making further suggestions and presenting an extensive bibliography on Tagore's writings on education.

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