

INDIAN BASIC EDUCATION SYSTEM & RABINDRANATH TAGORE

ARINDAM KANTA BANERJEE

President, Sadbhavna College of Education for Women, Punjab, India

Professor, Department of Surgery, RKDF Medical College, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India

ABSTRACT

Education is the basis of all development of Human Resource. One of the most prominent Indian educational thinkers, Sh. Rabindranath Tagore defines it as an enlightening journey throughout the walks of life towards wisdom. He devised his distinct & dynamic philosophy of basic education, including some unique curricular aspects. Today's India had made tremendous progress. However, it had fallen short of inculcating academic virtues and values as propounded by Tagore into its gen-next. So, in 2K15, instead of finding an Indian identity in education, we are again marching to the West to teach us.

KEYWORDS: Indian Education, Basic Education, Tagore

INTRODUCTION

Education is a ladder of development. It is the bedrock of human progress. Though its definitions, interpretations and applications are different for different sections of society, education is a continuous and dynamic life-process providing the emancipation from ignorance.

Cambridge English Dictionary defines education as the process of teaching or learning, especially in a school or college, or the knowledge that you get from this. Oxford Dictionary stipulates that education is the process of receiving or giving systematic instruction, especially at a school or university. Merriam Webster Dictionary defines it as the knowledge, skill, and understanding that you get from attending a school, college, or university. Thus almost all centers of readymade knowledge equalize education with instructions received in an organized institution, turning the pupil into a moving storehouse of information.

In contrast, philosophers define education as an enlightening journey throughout the walks of life towards wisdom. The ancient Philosophy of Education in India says "Dhio yo no prachodayat," endow us with the illumination of education, leading to life-changing wisdom. It defines 'guru' as a person who 'dispels the darkness.' It defines "acharya" as a person who inspires by exemplary leadership through his conduct. The original name of India, "Bharata" is derived from Sanskrit words 'Bhya' meaning 'knowledge' and 'ratah' meaning 'occupied.' Thus India is a land where the inhabitants are always occupied in search of knowledge.

Modern India was the workplace of one of the greatest philosophers, **Rabindranath Tagore** with his distinct but dynamic philosophy of education, and a unique curriculum.

Tagore was a poet, philosopher and a great humanist. He was born in 1861 and died in 1941. This contemporary transformer of modern India was greatly influenced by his own life-experiences and perceptions of the then prevalent global environment.

TAGORE & HIS PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

- Tagore's '*idealism*' speaks of the supreme originator and oneness of all souls; leading to "universalism."
- Tagore's "*romanticism & naturalism*" accepts nature as a great and lively teacher and so, is the best environment for teaching-learning process.
- Tagore's "*realism*" blend Indian Culture with Modern Western Science; leading to 'complete life' with self-reliance, self-esteem with intact spiritual roots.
- Tagore's "*pragmatism*" resists 'indoctrination' and propagates to verify all ideals before accepting the 'truth.'
- Tagore's "*humanism*" idealizes all human beings as reflections of God himself. Thus all human souls are respectable and dignified.

TAGORE'S PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Tagore idealizes education to develop all aspects of one's personality. His educational system integrates the physical, intellectual, social, economic, ethical and spiritual training. His philosophy of education is marked by naturalistic & aesthetic values. He believed that education can develop an ordinary life into a Universal Man. He laid much emphasis on the blending vocational training with spiritual education and aesthetics to develop the pupil's intellect and creative sensitivity. He gave much importance to literature, fine art, and performing arts in a pupil's routine. He believed that "The widest road leading to the solution of all our problems is education."

TAGORE'S AIMS OF EDUCATION - 'ANANDA'

- **Self Actualization:** The manifestation of all potentials present already in a human being is the ultimate aim of education.
- **Freedom:** Education is not an imposition but liberalization. It provides utmost freedom to explore all innate powers that exists within the man.
- **Physical Health:** Education is a man-making process. It develops a sound and healthy physique through exercises, yoga, games & sports.
- **Mental Health:** Development of creative sensitivity, curiosity, imagination, and ability to apply mind to adopt his own way learning free from "dogmatism."
- **Social Health:** Education is for 'Character Building.' It propagates the idea that "Service to man is service to God" through development of social relationships.
- **Spiritual Health:** Blending an inseparable & harmonious relationship between Man, Nature and God.
- **Morality & Value Education:** Provision for unselfish activities, co-operation, love, sympathy, fellow-feeling and sharing among the pupils. It is more important than memorizing information
Humanity: Perception of the common God, singular origin of all human beings, equality and universal brotherhood
- **Medium of Instruction:** Language is a vehicle of expression. A pupil can freely express, so also imbibe, in his mother-tongue only

TAGORE'S EXPERIMENT WITH EDUCATION - VISHVA BHARATI

On making of Vishva Bharati, Tagore professed, "I prepared for my children a real 'home-coming' at my school in the Ashrama. Among other subjects learnt in the open air under the shade of trees they had their music and picture-making; they had their dramatic performances, activities that were the expression of life. A large part of man can never find its expression in the mere language of words. It must therefore seek for other languages—lines and colors, sounds and movements. Though our mastery of these, we not only make our whole nature articulate, but also understand man in all his attempts to reveal his innermost being in every age and time. The great use of Education is not merely to collect facts, but to know man and to make oneself known to man with his own creative nature. Teaching of religion, religion of man - to be precise, can never be imparted in the form of lessons, it exists where there is religion in living, and to learn it one has to live it. Religion is not a fractional thing that it can be doled out in fixed weekly or daily measures as one among various subjects in school syllabus. It is the truth of our complete being, the consciousness of our personal relationship with the infinite. It is the true center of gravity of our life." This amply explains the principles of Tagore's hand-on experiment with institutionalizing education.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Numerous Studies on Educational thoughts and experiments of Tagore showed that he perceived that education is the most powerful weapon that can be used for socio-economic progress, material advancement, political evolution and moral development of an individual and the society. His concept of education was founded on ethics, morality and spirituality. Tagore stressed in allowing the pupil to grow in a natural environment where all his senses can imbibe life-building, man-making, character-developing education and liberal arts from Mother Nature.

Sona Thakur (2006) concluded that Tagore emphasized upon harmonious development of women through education. He recommended domestic science for women in his curriculum. He laid stress on the mother-tongue as medium of instruction. Kaur (2009) displayed how Rabindranath Tagore devised a modern system of education based on scientific pedagogy, self expression, discipline, education for women and stress on mother tongue. Indian system of education is based on Morality with aspects like faith, non-violence, concept of religion and discipline. Though today's India had made tremendous progress, it had perhaps, fallen short of inculcating values and morality propounded by Tagore into its gen-next.

EDUCATION IN INDIA 2K15

As on today, it is evident that the Indian Policy-makers on Education did not adhere to neither of these two thinkers. The reasons may be

- **Demise of Tagore without Strong Legacy:** As per the wish of Tagore, in 1951, Vishva Bharati University was adopted by Govt. of India as a Central University. It committed financial support to it in a structured and regulated manner. But the responsibility of propagation of ideas of Tagore was left to the University autonomously. The then Govt. did not show its interest in projecting the revolutionary concepts of Tagore. Gradually the university succumbed to the prevailing market-driven system of education and lost its unique identity.

- **Practical Problems:** logistic problems: Indian Govt. did not have resources to dismantle the running education system inherited from the colonial rulers
- **Changing Educational Philosophy of the World:** The world's perception about definition, philosophy, application and utility of education has undergone a sea change since 1948, the year of Gandiji's demise. Indira Gandhi said, "Education is a liberating force and in our time, it is also a democratizing force cutting across all the barriers of class and caste smoothing out all inequalities imposed by birth and other factors."

CONCLUSIONS

Rabindranath Tagore's 'humanistic' philosophy of education blending man, nature and God, is basically not limited to any time, type of society, ethnography or religion. His principles can be revived or re-established in any geographic location at any point of time. But its implementation at a national scale needs a gigantic reform-movement. Hence it could not practically be revived in Post-Independence India, even after 68 years. So, in 2K15, instead of finding an Indian identity in education, we are again marching to the West to teach us.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author acknowledges the inspiration and instructions received from Prof. Dr. AN Mishra, former-Principal, Sadbhavna College of Education for Women, Raikot, Punjab for this article, as well as the assistance of Ms. Parampreet Kaur & Ms. Manpreet Kaur, Lecturers, Sadbhavna College of Nursing, Punjab for data-mining & making of reference-list

REFERENCES

1. Sona Thakur and Tej Preet Kaur Kang (2005): Edutracks Mar 2006 Vol.5 (7) pp: 34-37
2. Kaur Ravinderjit(1986). A Comparative Study of the Educational Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi and John Dewey. Unpublished M.Phil thesis, Patiala: Punjab University.