

The Concept of Education in Rabindranath Tagore's Thought

Abstract

Rabindranath Tagore, the great poet of the modern world was a prophet of humanity. Although he was not an academic philosopher in the strict bear of the term, yet he had advented some notable philosophical ideas through his different works. He observes that the world has significance only in terms of human values. Man is not merely an individual being. "But as a person, he is the organic man, who has the inherent power to select things from the surroundings in order to make them his own." (Tagore, p.96)¹ Man differs in capacity character and equality or opportunity is compatible with differences in achievements. Education helps man to develop their capacities and potentialities.

Keywords: Brahmacharya, Humanitarian, Brahmavidyalaya, Upanisadic, Atmason Vidhi, Theism, Bous, Vaishnavism, Little Self, Higher Self

Introduction

The word 'education' is derived from a Latin word 'educare', which means bringing up children physically and mentally. It is not only means to go school but it prepares the child for future life so that he acquired the necessary equipment to discharge his responsibilities successfully. It is preparation of life.

Education plays an dominant role in Tagore's thought. He maintains that all problems like political, social, economic etc. arise due to ignorance and lack of education. As he says, "The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but make our life in harmony with all existence." (Tagore, p.21)² It is clear that Tagore's educational thought emphasizes the harmony between nature and man, which is derived from his consciousness of the unity that underlies all beings. The poet declares that, the most important factor in education is the inspiring atmosphere of creative activity. So the primary function of educational institute should be constructive work promoting knowledge. True education displays how our training and knowledge have organic connection with or environment. Tagore adopts the educational ideas of the Vedic age in which the individual was allowed to grow up in harmony with our environment. On the basis of such as ideal, Tagore started a school, which later on developed into a university. So Tagore writes: "My view is that we should follow the ancient Indian principles of education. Students and teachers should live together and in natural surroundings and the students should complete their education by practicing brahmacharya. Founded on the eternal truths of human nature, these principles have lost nothing of their significance, however, much our circumstances might have altered through the ages." (Tagore, pp.74-75)³ Education becomes the preparation for a complete life of man in such a place. Like our physical organs our mental qualities grow at every stage of our life. The power of thought and imagination is indispensable to us for discharging the duties of life. Tagore states that we must cultivate them from our childhood by getting proper education. Education and life must be one. It is the pressing problem of education. Tagore states that the union of education and life can be achieved only by mother-tongue. As a true humanist, Tagore points out that, the duty of the guardians is to build up first the humanitarian traits in the child's personality. He prefers the idea of expiation instead of punishment to student. The aim of education is to help one to realize the inner principle of the unity of all knowledge and all the activities of our social and spiritual being. According to Tagore, it is not difficult to be a businessman, or a scholar, but it is difficult to be a human being.

R. N. Tagore was conscious about the problem of education before the movement of independence in India. The Brahmavidyalaya of Bolepur propagated his ideal of thought at that time. The children memories mechanically the necessary lessons to get through in the examination, which is also a noticeable factor of the problem of education

**Panchami Bhattacharyya
Borah**

Associate Professor,
Deptt.of Philosophy,
J.B. College,
Jorhat

at the present age. According to Tagore, it is hindrance in the path of personality of the children. The joy of extensive study can increase our thinking capacity and imaginative power. The syllabus must be framed by keeping it in conformity to the socio-cultural life style of the students. True education can extinguish our blind faith. Education must bridge the gap between the theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge of our student. The school of pre-independent India was described by Tagore as a factory and teachers were recognized as parts of that factory.

According to Tagore, the real desire of our soul is to go beyond all our possessions. Man's happiness is not in the possession of everything, but in giving himself up for a cause greater than himself viz., for his country, humanity, God etc. our existence will be meaningless, if we do not aspire to realize perfection, according to Rabindranath. Education as necessary for that purpose within its limitations. Because, we can never know the infinite being through intellect, as intellectual knowledge is partial. Tagore also supports the view of Gautom Buddha, that, to get relief from pain, man must free his self from ignorance. Tagore also stresses that man must come out of the shell of his individual self in order to enter into the larger self of humanity. The Upanisadic maxim "Atmason Vidhi" is also the main theme of Tagore's concept of education and his philosophy.

Tagore persistently urging man to realize himself through humanity which he recognizes as the universal man. That is why A.K. Srivastava writes, "Tagore offers a good system in Indian philosophical thought of the twentieth century in which the theism of the Bhagavatgita, the metaphysics of the Upanishads, the mysticism of Bouls and the philosophical principles of Vaishnavism in synthesis." (Srivastava) Tagore emphasizes the need of the spiritual awakening in this machinage. In Viswa-Bharati there is a prayer house, where every Wednesday, prayer is conduct, and in every reopening of the school, after a long vacation, there is a candle-light prayer conduct in the evening. These activities has given a spiritual environment to Viswa Bharati University. To put in his words "Prevently physical dominance is mechanical and modern achieved are merely exaggrating our bodies."

According to Tagore, music is the purest form of art. This world is a song, which is never separated from the singer. Every aspect of the universe is a note of this music and that is why every aspect of the universe reflects the infinite. He accepts that education remains incompleated in the absence of exercise of aesthetics and creativity. He particularly emphasises on this crucial and vital aspect of education and categorically states that even learning or living for doing cannot ignore aesthetic and creativity. In fact, in his own school Sikha-Satra—a legend in the history of education for teaching aesthetics and creativity is an unambiguous natural atmosphere." The aim of 'Siksha-Satra' is though experience in dealing with the over-flowing abundance of child life, its charm and simplicity, to provide the utmost liberty, within the surroundings,

that are filled with the creative possibilities with opportunities for the joy of play the reaping of succession of novel experience, to give the child freedom of growth which the young free demands for its tender shoot, that field for self-expression in which all young life finds both training and experience. (Tagore, p.9)⁴. The Visva-Bharati Bulletin, Visva-Bharati No 9, 1928) Tagore accepts the ashramic education and that is why he establishes Sikha-Satra, later on which was called as Visva-Barati University, Santiniketan. He feels the role of education in the field of social awareness and National Integration. Tagore takes it as a challenge for introducing a new system of mass education to overt the curse of the bondage of human mind. For Rabindranath, education makes room for wider avenues of freedom. Education helps individual to find out the best in himself and can exercise his own potentialities under favourable atmosphere and to be critical and creative from every aspect of education. Tagore holds that, education is primarily necessary for completness of the whole man. This type of education teaches every learner to conquer his own little self and heralds his higher self. The education that wideness one's outlook and Brodeness the spirit of unrefined devotion to service humanity and patriotism. As a humanist, Tagore feels that education of the whole man this incorporates the idea of universalism whereby the whole world is transformed into a world of humanity.

Conclusion

The true education aims at the emancipation of true individuality, which is free from selfishness. Education makes a man liberal, obedient and discipline also. But Rabindranath painfully experienced the sad lot of education directly or indirectly in schools, colleges and universities, where advancement of learning is equivalent to the scoring of marks and marks through the parrot's learning in lot memorization.

References

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