

Relevance of Tagore's Philosophy of Education in Post-modern Era- A Critical Analysis

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Abstract

Rabindranath Tagore has been one of the topmost educationist of India. His thoughts on education are worth studying. His theme of education as harmony with all existence is a clear indication towards individuals and social adjustment with the environment. Tagore for the first time visualised great truth that the synthesis between West and East would help in solving the problems of the world. Today all the nations admit this hard fact. Tagore emphasized on the change in society through education. He wanted to modernize India by making use of education as an instrument by combining the best of East and West. The visionary in Rabindranath Tagore and the great educationist in him solved the problem of today a century ago. So that we need to study Tagore's educational ideas and thoughts to re-examine the relevance of Tagore's philosophy of education in post-modern era.

Key- Words : Post-modern era and Tagore's philosophy.

Introduction

Rabindranath Tagore was a Bengali poet, philosopher, artist, dramatist, musician, novelist and song writer, who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913, becoming the first Asian Nobel laureate. He was born in May 7, 1861 and died in August 7, 1941. Tagore was born in Jorasanko, Kolkata, the son of Debendranath Tagore and Sarada Devi. Tagore was born

the youngest of fourteen children. Rabindranath Tagore develop an early love for literature and had begun reading biographies, poems, history, Sanskrit and several others by the age of 12. In 1887, he wrote his first poem, which was composed in a Maithili style. He joined St. Xavier's school in Calcutta and later went to England in 1878 with his brother Satyendranath. He came back to India in 1880 but without completing his studies. On 9th December 1883, he married to Mrinalini Devi. In 1884, he was appointed as a secretary of the Adi Brahma Samaj. Rabindranath Tagore was one of the very renowned writers of his time. In 1891, he wrote his first six short stories including post master. In 1894, Tagore became the editor of Sadhana. In 1901, he established the school at Santiniketan. Tagore received honours and recognitions from all over the world and is remembered for expressing and analyzing through his extensive literature all possible tenets of human characters and emotions.

This is why, his work is and will continue to remain relevant to us for times to come. Tagore's philosophy and writings were extremely important elements in the renaissance of Bengal and India at large in the early 20th century and shaped the Bengali literature and culture in a modern, progressive mould. His school, Santiniketan, flourished into a University called Visva-Bharati.

Theoretical background of the study

Education is meant to enlighten human life. Etymologically, the word education has a Latin derivation from, "educare" which means 'to learn out' or 'to draw out'. Education is basically a social process which involves how the student develops as an individual in group relations. Its aim is to prepare the individual for involvement in society and it act as a vehicle by which the culture of the group can be transmitted and propagated. But the contemporary education system fails in the task to cultivate a balanced child. The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence.

Tagore was the Renaissance man of modern India – the bridge from an Indian

cultural traditional education system. Being a writer, he was also a philosopher, musician, and painter as well as pioneer in education. Tagore did not write his educational philosophy in particular. They are dispersed in his writings and educational experiments at Shantiniketan. He visualized nature as the real teacher but associated to the cultures of the wider world, predicated upon pleasurable learning and individualized to the personality of the child (Tripathi, Mrs. Vandana, 2011).

Tagore did not stress any particular educational theory for the education but his principles of education in Indian context can be summarized as follows :- according to him, "all educational processes should be based in our own cultural traditions. He emphasized that the medium of instruction must be through one's own mother-tongue". Tagore's concept of school was based on Gurukul system. He placed great importance on children learning in a natural environment and said that nature herself was our greatest teacher. Tagore believed that the educational process should be one of self – discovery and free creation.

Tagore believed that school should be integral to society and intellectual

education should be linked with the arts and crafts which deal with human emotions. This is why his curriculum included music and literature. Tagore comprehends that we are an integral part of cosmic infinity. Therefore, our education should also involve spiritual or religious education. He emphasized in incorporating western values, science, and knowledge, within an Indian cultural, educational structure that would liberate us from poverty and ignorance. Tagore stressed the technical side of education. The emotional and the practical aspects of experience have to be connected, so that the growing child should be able to realize nature on both the levels, that of intuition, and that of understanding (Gupta, Uma. Das and Ray, Anandarup, 2009).

Tagore's educational ideals have been agreed by other educationists and many of his innovations have now become part of general educational practices, but his special role lay in the emphasis on harmony balance between materialism and spiritualism in total development of personality. Talking about the crisis of education, Tagore said that a child should be permitted to read books, he must read for his school work. Our education system is without delight. Small children are burdened with tons of

books. Tagore said that from childhood to adolescence and again from adolescence to manhood, we are coolies of the goddess of learning, carrying loads of words on our folded books. Tagore was always concerned regarding socialization. His educational institution represented a way of thinking, feeling, and living, both in society and in education.

The core of Tagore's educational philosophy was learning from nature, music and life. This is the reason why his education is easily acceptable by human mind. The visionary in Rabindranath Tagore and the great educationist in him solved the problem of today a century earlier. The problems of modern education are attendance, use of other unfair means and discipline etc. It is more certificates oriented, irrelevant of intelligence and correlation with nature. Tagore solved these problems in a grand way. Freedom in the class solved the problem of attendance, absence of invigilator solved the copying or use of unfair means. Thus, Tagore's educational system is a great achievement. It is regretted that we did not try to apply the formulas suggested by Tagore.

Rationale of the study

Education is a life-long process and an individual goes on increasing his store of experience through contact with the environment, he receives some education in one form or another. Education is basically a social process which is concerned with how the student develops as an individual and in group relations.

Its objective is to prepare the individual for participation in society and it serves as a vehicle by which the culture of the group can be transmitted and perpetuated. Education is preparation for life. Education is experience. The word education has sometimes been used in a very broad sense to designate the totality of influences that nature or other men are able to exercise on our intelligence or on our will.

But our present education system is joyless, lifeless, and colourless. They only emphasize on bookish language, memorizing, and cramming. The schools in our country far from being integrated to society are imposed on it from the outside. The courses, they teach are dull, dry, and painful to learn and useless learnt. India's current education system, focus on education as a means to future employment

creates an obsession with passing examination, which in turn forces text-book centered teaching. Learning has little relevance to student's lives and interests and thus is not enjoyed and valued as an end in itself.

The result of this system of education is lack of peace and joy. We have no choice but to change our school education system. In this respect, Tagore's concept of education is the best way to reconstruct our educational system and found that it is meaningful in all aspects of individual life. The present school education system has failed to produce the desirable results. The time has to come to adopt the Tagore's system of education in schools. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze the Tagore's philosophy in the context of postmodern era to undertake its importance in the present educational system.

Therefore, the researcher selected this research problem "Relevance of Tagore's Philosophy of Education in Postmodern era – A Critical Analysis", for the present research work.

Objectives

1. To study Tagore's philosophy.
2. To study Tagore's philosophy of education.
3. To analyze Tagore's philosophy of education in the postmodern era.
4. To examine the relevance of Tagore's philosophy of education in the postmodern era.

Methodology

Since in this study the research problem is to study the educational philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore and its relevance in post-modern era, therefore in this study, the philosophical method, the historical method, qualitative research, narrative research and documentary analysis were used to solve the research problem. These methods were mainly based on primary sources related to the educational philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore such as written work, articles, books, journals etc.

Analysis and interpretation

Objective 1. To study Tagore's philosophy

At a time, Tagore was idealist, naturalist, realist, humanist, individualist, humanist and internationalist. As a idealist, Tagore laid

stress on self-realization. He believed in the absolute values. Tagore was an individualist also. He believed in the rights and freedom of the individual. He was a realist and tried to revive the traditional culture of India. He wanted to link education with our complete life. As a naturalist he gave an importance place to 'Nature'. He said that child's education must be organised in natural surroundings. When he said 'Reality is human and Truth is human', he was a humanist also. Tagore laid great stress on International brotherhood and harmony. He was the champion of Internationalism.

2. To study Tagore's philosophy of education

The core of Tagore's philosophy of education is based on 3 cardinal principles i.e **i.** Freedom **ii.** Creative self-expression and **iii.** Active communion with nature and man. So that Tagore wanted freedom of mind, freedom of heart and freedom of will which lead to spontaneous self-expression. Education in this sense should be natural in content and quality. Education should take place through some activities and direct experiences, promoting creative self-expression through craft, music, drama, dance, drawing and painting. Tagore also

wanted that the children should be brought up in direct contact with nature. This will help in the realisation of the immediate relationship with nature.

3. To analyze Tagore's philosophy of education in post-modern era

In the globalised world, the main aim of education is to development of whole personality. For the development of personality Tagore advocated a well balanced curriculum which is based on subjects and also activities. Subjects should be taught on mother tongue. Teaching methods should be based on child's need and interest so that they can develop their talents in free atmosphere which is the heart of Tagore's philosophy of education. According to Tagore, a school is the place where teacher student interchange their ideas like friends.

4. To examine the relevance of Tagore's philosophy of education in the post-modern era Tagore's concept of education is still relevant in post modern era which he approximately proposed hundred years ago. Tagore described education as a means to develop the personality of the child to its

fullest so as to enable man to live in harmony with all existence. So, that Tagore's main aim of education are based on physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual development and international understanding. Tagore's concept of curriculum is based on subjects, activities and actual living. To conduct this broad curriculum Tagore prescribed teaching while walking, activity and heuristic method of teaching. He wanted self-imposed discipline in the school, where students get ample opportunities to develop their hidden qualities. According to Tagore, teacher is present only to stimulate and guide the students.

Discussion

Today, we all know that what the child imbibes at home and in school is far more important than what he studies at college, that the teaching is more easily and naturally communicated through the child's mother tongue than through an alien medium, that learning through activity is more real than through the written word, that wholesome education consists in training of all the senses along with the mind instead of cramming the brain with memorized knowledge, that culture is something much

more than academic knowledge. But our present education is dull, boring, painful, etc. They are only examinations oriented so that they are emphasized on bookish learning cramming, and memorizing. Children cannot find interest in such type of learning. Children cannot achieve that much of knowledge which is essential for become a dignified person. In this respect Tagore's philosophy of education is the best way to overcome the shortcomings of our postmodern education.

The critical analysis is defined as a process to discover the elements of ideas and philosophies, which is based on, to solve the problems systematically and identifying the relevance and importance of ideas.

Rabindranath Tagore was a great educationist and philosopher of 20th century. His educational ideas and thoughts are still relevant in today. The present education system is joyless, colourless, painful, lifeless etc, which are not produced to desired outcomes. It may be appropriate at this time to look at some of the modern great educationist of the past century and re-examine their educational ideas and thoughts for their relevance today. The main

focus of the India's current education system is a means to future employment creates an obsession with passing examinations, which in turn forces textbook-centered teaching. Learning has little relevance to student's lives and interests today and thus is not enjoyed and valued as an end in itself. With success attributed solely to science and technology skills, teachers, and parents disregard the development of creativity are artistic skills.

Tagore would see that starting the learning process with a textbook, rather than with those things close to a child's heart, had much to do with the endless desire for material goods and wellbeing and the meaningless pursuit of the instruments of war and power. Central to his vision of education was the nurturing of students souls. For him, the purpose of education was not just employment, but more importantly personal fulfillment and self-improvement. Tagore would want teachers to teach their students to critically examine all beliefs, traditions and statements and to accept only those that stood the test of reason, rather than blindly accepting them on the basis of authority. He used education as a tool for social change by making young

people rational, independent thinkers, rather than blind followers of rituals and traditions.

Promoting the freedom of the child is at the heart of Tagore's philosophy. Believing that the limitless development of human potential is possible only in an environment free from any kind of bondage, Tagore would have insisted that in an environment devoid of fear, students have the confidence to express their thoughts freely and believe in their own learning ability. He could have cautioned that fear of making mistakes prevents an individual from being free to venture a new thought, to experiment, to ask questions, to be creative and to innovate. Because he believed this, he was opposed to any form of corporal punishment as a means of discipline. Tagore considered the lack of education to be the main obstacle in the way of India's progress and at the root of all its problems. The basic objectives of any worthwhile national education system, such as promoting creativity, freedom, joy and an awareness of a country's cultural heritage.

Conclusion

Tagore's approach to education was unique in its approach to it. It gave much emphasis to the 'freedom of thought and

imagination'. Tagore's idea of education was driven by interest rather than need as is prevalent today. Tagore's educational philosophy is based on freedom, vastness and fullness, which are essential for harmonious development of the personality. Tagore believed that children education should be based on natural surroundings. The main aim of education is to realize the ultimate reality. So, the main aim of education is to develop the whole individual. Due to this development Tagore advocated a balanced curriculum, methods of teaching, discipline, aims of education, etc, which is most important in postmodern era. A postmodern student can develop the essential elements which are necessary for the postmodern era, here Tagore's scheme of education is the most appropriate solution for all the problems of present times.

Implications

For educational system in the post modern era

1. The educational policy and programmes can be developed in tune with Tagore's educational thoughts to fulfill the demands of postmodern era.

2. The objectives of education should be decided on the social needs and related aspects for a dignified life.
3. An educational framework may be developed for rural education which would be more effective for rural reconstruction and to fulfill the requirements of rural society in the postmodern global world.
4. The educational thoughts of Tagore will be more effective for establishing culture of peace and a society based on knowledge and equality.
5. A revolutionary change in educational system can be initiated when the entire ladder of education emphasizes on the freedom of the individual to shape his life in his own way based on his creative capacities.
6. The role of education is more significant than any other social subsystem like polity, economy etc.

For curriculum in the post modern era

1. The curriculum should lay emphasis on the development of higher order thinking skill, and fostering creativity.

2. The experienced based curriculum may be developed in tune with the educational thoughts of Tagore as far as work experience community work, constructive work and training of manual skills.

For teachers in the post modern era

1. The teacher should focus on a more student-centered environment in classroom, where opportunities for social interaction, independent study, the expression of creativity as well as provision for different learning techniques should be made available.
2. The teacher can improve themselves in more efficient and effective form with the use of the thoughts of Tagore.

For students in the post modern era

1. The students could improve themselves with the quality of real urge for the acquisition of knowledge, skills, social outlook and become conscious about their own self identity.
2. Student can understand their responsibilities for social reconstruction and participate in this movement.

Suggestions for further research

1. A study on the need of incorporating the educational thoughts of Tagore in the present globalised system of education should be done in the further research.
2. A research study may be pursued on the impact of postmodern philosophy in the present Indian educational thoughts.
3. A study on the need of vocational education in the postmodern era based on the ideals of Tagore may be a field of further research.
4. Postmodernist interpretation of philosophy of education with reference to Tagore can also be area of further research.

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