



RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE IN CONTEMPORARY EDUCATION SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT:

Today, in the 21st century, among many contemporary Indian philosophers of education, Gurudev R.N. Tagore was a luminary of literature, music composer, playwright, painter, rural reconstructionist, and above all, a great humanist, environmentalist, educator, all rolled into his titanic personality as he was known by the epithet "Gurudev," i.e., master-trainer, for his creative genius in a wide variety of fields. Tagore (1861–1941) was a man of vision in modern India. The world poet Tagore put his educational ideas into practice by establishing the Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, earlier known as Brahmacharya Ashram. Tagore's thoughts on education were very futuristic, and it reflected the twin inner threads of harmony with nature and learning by doing. So, the efficacy of Tagore's thought lies in its cogent message to humanity that the fullness of life is integrally linked to our organic ties with nature, our mother Earth. With this realization, Tagore turned his attention and thought towards sustainable education development. This paper aims to comprehensively examine R.N. Tagore's educational ideas, revealing their relevance and resonance with contemporary educational discourse and the needs of our 21st-century period in association with education



for sustainable development. By critically engaging with Tagore's educational philosophy, we can draw valuable lessons and inspiration to inform and enrich our current educational practices and aspirations for the future of social, economic, and environmental sustainability. As an outcome of this work, researchers concluded that Rabindranath Tagore's educational ideas and praxis have tremendous implications for meeting the challenges of sustainable development goals commonly known as the 2030 agenda.

KEYWORDS: *Education, Sustainable Development, Educational Philosophy*

1. INTRODUCTION:

‘The young mind should be saturated with the idea that it has been born in a human world that is in harmony with the world around it.’

R.N. Tagore (my school, 1933).

Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941), Asia's first noble laureate, may well be characterized as a cultural icon. He was born into a prominent Calcutta family (the Jorasanko Tagore Family), known for its socio-religious and cultural innovations during the 19th Bengali Renaissance. The profound social and cultural involvement of its family would later play a strong role in the formulation of Rabindranath's educational priorities. R.N. Tagore was convinced that nothing influences children's education and upbringing more than the atmosphere in which they grow up. Tagore's philosophical environmental ethics emerges from the aesthetic of the environment (James, 1999). Deep concern for the environment has always been an integral part of the ancient Indian educational system and philosophy. Firmly rooted in the philosophy of Naturalism, R.N. Tagore's establishment of Visva-Bharati promotes a deeper



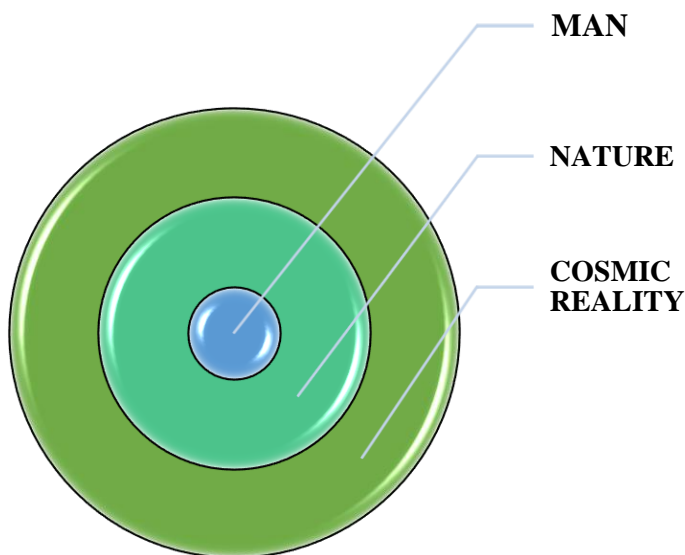
consciousness of nature. Rabindranath Tagore was a modernist and social reformer who supported the beauty and love of nature in his writings (Priya, R. 2020). Tagore's educational efforts were groundbreaking in many areas. R.N. Tagore was one of the first in India to argue for a human educational system that was in touch with the environment and aimed at the overall development of the personality.

2. NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY: In this study, the author selected such a problem because, nowadays, environmental issues are very burning and essential problems that need to be overcome. This study is based on Tagore's perception of the environment and its educational importance. Through this study, the author wants to explore the educational thought and practice of Rabindranath Tagore from an environmental point of view and its means. Gurudev's educational philosophy and educational practices deal with environmental sustainability or not? According to the previous study by Rabindranath Tagore, educational ideas and practices have many environmental implications. Gurudev Tagore emphasizes the three things, i.e., men, nature, and cosmic reality.

Tagore always wanted to maintain some harmonious relationship between man and nature. In Tapoban Tagore's writing, the amazing fact is that in India there is a mutual coexistence between rivers, ponds, plants, and human beings (Rabindra Rachanabali, Vol. 7, page 690). In "Atma Sakti" (Rabindra a Rachanabali, vol., vol-2, page 692) he wanted that to satisfy our ravenousness, we should not impair natural balance. Tagore wanted to convey in many of his writings under the label 'Prakriti Parjaay' where 'Prakriti' stands for nature and 'Parjaay' stands for the position that development activities are necessary but not at the irreparable cost of the environment. He was always in favor of a balance between

progress and preservation. Tagore dreams of a world that ensures congenial living not only for us but also for our progenies in this paper.

MAN ↔ NATURE ↔ COSMIC REALITY



COSMIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MAN, NATURE AND COSMIC REALITY

The horizon of Tagorian cosmological perception is confined only to the physical universe but he explored an unfragmented reality convergent with the physical universe or perceptual observable universe's origin and world and Tagore's Cosmological Perception towards the reality is behind of any separation and fragmentation.

3. OBJECTIVE OF THIS STUDY: The objective of this study is to review and analyse the R.N.Tagore Educational



thought and Practices in the light of Education for Sustainable Development.

4. **METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY:** Keeping the above Objective researchers collected both forms of data primary as well as secondary data, Tagore's own writing is considered a Primary Source of Data such as Gitanjali, Gora, Achalayatan, Post Master, Parkriti Parjay, Chalabala, Nirjhorer Sapno Bhanaga and so on.

Besides primary sources, researchers also collected data from various Secondary Sources such as Books, Journals, Newspaper, Research theses, Newspaper and so on.

5. **OBJECTIVE WISE DATA ANALYSIS:**

The objective of this study is to review and analyse the R.N.Tagore Educational Thoughts and Practices in the light of Education for Sustainable Development.

6. **EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY:** Tagore's philosophy of education, based on Ancient Indian, Upanishadic, and Buddhist philosophy, which reflected his music, literature, art, music, dance, drama, drama etc., was given great prominence in daily life. Gurudev Tagore was more than a resounding leading Indian thinker of the 20th century. Tagore considered the lack of education among humans in society to be the main obstacle to India's progress and at the root of all its problems. According to him, academic learning becomes joyless and purely mechanical; it is looked upon merely as an instrument for getting jobs and for material and financial gains. He feels academic learning should enable us to understand the situations in which we are placed and to adapt proper attitudes towards them. Tagore viewed traditional academic learning as merely a knowledge factory, a mechanical system producing students with machine-ground knowledge to be examined and graded. This is the reality of realities—the



external haunting for neatness, the boundless search for the life lost and mortgaged in bare linking—a fact apprehended most poignantly by Rabindranath, much more ahead of any other modern educational thinker of the world, and a fact to be evaluated in terms of communion of personal love and sympathy.

7. **IDEOLOGIES OF EDUCATION:** R.N. Tagore believes that education provides a sense of one's identity as a total man and brings education into harmony with life; it is self-realization. In order to reach this basic identity of a human being, one needs to undertake a process that can only be assisted through education. Besides, he believed that self-education is based on self-realization, which is a process as important as education itself for every human being. The more important thing is that the educator must have faith in himself and his universal self, underlying his individual soul. According to Tagore's concept of self-education, the educator must follow these principles:

- 1) **FREEDOM:** If Tagore believes in complete freedom of any kind Intellectual freedom, decision, knowledge, satisfaction, heart, and actions, then only one can turn to self-guidance.

- 2) **PERFECTION:** The entire student must try to develop every aspect of his personality, all the abilities and powers he has been endowed by nature. The sole aim of education is the development of the child's personality, which is possible only when every aspect of the personality is given equal importance. Tagore firmly believes that the major function of education is to bring fulness among the students, education for fulness is his dream goal. So, through the educative process, he wants to ensure harmonious development among the children.



3) UNIVERSALITY: It is an important aspect of an enduring faith in the universal soul, which exists within him. It is thus important to identify one's own soul with the universal soul. This search is achieved through knowledge, worship, and action. Once this realization of the universal soul is achieved, it becomes easier to progress further in human life.

Tagore's Principle of Self-Education:

1. FREEDOM

2. UNIVERSALITY

3. PERFECTION

1. **FREEDOM:** Trio Freedom i.e. 'Freedom of mind, freedom of action and freedom of Speech.' Tagore express concept and praxis of Freedom through his famous poem, 'Gitanjali'.

চিত্ত যেথা ভয়শূন্য, উচ্চ যেথা শির,
জ্ঞান যেথা মুক্ত, যেথা গৃহের প্রাচীর
আপন প্রাঙ্গণতলে দিবসশব্দরী
বসুধারে রাখে নাই খণ্ড ক্ষুদ্র করি,
যেথা বাক্য হৃদয়ের উৎসমুখ হতে
উচ্ছ্বসিয়া উঠে, যেথা নির্বারিত স্রোতে
দেশে দেশে দিশে দিশে কর্মধারা ধায়
অজস্র সহস্রবিধ চরিতার্থতায়,
যেথা তুচ্ছ আচারের মরুবালুরাশি
বিচারের স্রোতঃপথ ফেলে নাই গ্রাসি,
পৌরুষের করে নি শতধা, নিত্য যেথা
তুমি সর্ব কর্ম চিন্তা আনন্দের নেতা,
নিজ হস্তে নির্দয় আঘাত করি, পিতঃ;
ভারতেরে সেই স্বর্গে করো জাগরিতা



Tagore's own translation, in the 1912 English edition of *Gitanjali*:

‘Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;
Where knowledge is free;
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by
narrow domestic walls;
Where words come out from the depth of truth;
Where tireless striving stretches its arms toward perfection;
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the
dreary desert sand of dead habit;
Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening
thought and action
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.’

2. **UNIVERSAL MIND OR UNBROKEN MIND:** Tagore explored & explained the symptoms of Universal Man through his famous writing ‘*The Universal Man*.’ Where he mentioned that a universal man should have all kinds of freedom, freedom of will, freedom of action, and freedom of thought and he will be free from all kind of narrow domestic world. This approach of human perception is equally important for ensuring sustainable development and here Tagorian educational praxis and doctrine played the pivotal role in ensuring ‘Education for Sustainable Development.’ Now thinkers talking about alternative ways for ensuring sustainability but Tagore long back talked about education through nature and environmental protection is the key to the function of education. Through his Santiniketan experiment, Tagore cultivated nature and the environment through education.
8. **Innovative Thoughts on Education:** From our very childhood, habits are formed and knowledge is imparted in such a manner that our lives are weaned away from nature and our mind and the world are set in opposition



from the beginning of our days. Thus, the greatest education for which we can prepare is neglected, and we are made to lose our world to find a bagful of information instead. Gurudev himself as a person and his writings were not bound in a central educational treatise; rather, his ideas must be gleaned through his various writings and innovative educational experiments at Santiniketan (Visva-Bharati) spread all over the world. In general, he envisioned a sustainable education that was deeply rooted in one's immediate surroundings but connected to the cultures of the wider world. Nowadays, we find that his innovative idea of education is systematically ignored in most schools. Innovative, sustainable education depends on nature-based education. Such as Education and Peace, Discard book cantered Education, Learner Independence and Tagore, music, and drama.

9. **Tagore and Sustainable Education:** Tagore says "The fundamental purpose of education is not merely to enrich ourselves through the fullness of knowledge but also to establish the bond of love and friendship between man and man." Thus, the Tagore approach to education is humanistic, and the ultimate reality is integral. He believes in an inner harmony among man, nature, and gold. Gurudev Tagore believes in a multi-sided education with physical, intellectual, moral, and religious aims. The spiritualism of Indian philosophy and the progressive outlook of the Western people were combined to create an educational philosophy that distinguished itself from other Indian educationists. Almost a century ago, Rabindranath Tagore found in his times the relevance of the nature of education' that we as' students are subjected to the problems plaguing the current educational system.
10. **Tagore's Vision for Today, India:** Tagore's progressive educational philosophy is largely forgotten today. The experimental models in his schools, Santiniketan and



Sriniketan, remain mere experiments. His ideas have not found their way into India's schools; future generations have returned to rote memorization as the predominant learning style. Tagore's vision for education is one that modern India cannot afford to forget. Tagore insisted that education is the most important element in the development of a country. Gurudev realized the need for education in science as well as literature and the humanities. The central idea of Tagore's education vision was the nurturing of students' souls. India's democracy is in great danger if it fails to take Tagore's legacy to heart. Only the kind of education that Tagore envisioned can equip our citizens to meet the challenges of our modern, globalized world.

- 11. Conclusion:** The comprehensive exploration of Rabindranath Tagore's educational thought and practices reveals and synthesizes various educational ideologies from around the world. His ideas draw from diverse philosophical, psychological, sociological, pedagogical, socio-economic, and environmental perspectives, reflecting a nuanced understanding of the complexities of education. To fully grasp the significance of Tagore's educational contributions, it is imperative to conduct a detailed analysis of his ideas and activities within these dimensions.

Tagore's educational principles encompass a wide array of concepts that resonate with contemporary educational discourse. From a philosophical standpoint, his emphasis on the holistic development of individuals aligns with current trends in education, which prioritize the nurturing of cognitive, emotional, social, and ethical aspects of learners. Tagore's recognition of the interconnectedness between humans and nature echoes modern calls for environmental consciousness and sustainability in education.



In conclusion, a comprehensive examination of Rabindranath Tagore's educational ideas reveals their relevance and resonance with contemporary educational discourse and the needs of our time. His holistic approach, personalized learning strategies, experimental pedagogy, and socio-cultural perspective offer valuable insights and lessons for educators, policymakers, and practitioners striving to create meaningful and impactful learning experiences in the 21st century. By critically examining Tagore's educational philosophy, we can draw valuable lessons and inspiration to inform and enrich our current educational practices and aspirations for the future for the socio-economic and sustainable developmental goals commonly known as the 2030 agenda. We hope this study can raise further awareness of the ongoing conflicts and offer possible solutions through a critical approach.

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