

MODERN EDUCATIONAL THINKER RABINDRA NATH: A RELEVANT DISCUSSION IN PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE.

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Abstract: If we review the history of the entire human society, we will see that one important thing is education which develops the progress of the human nation. Through education we attain the fulfillment of the power that exists within us. If we look at the progress of every developed nation, we will see that nation is far ahead in terms of the growth of education. Rabindra Nath Tagore was a prominent literary figure as well as a modern Indian philosopher. The Prophet adopted a philosophical approach in thinking about education. He meant education in the true sense of spiritual purity, self-realization and full expression of the individual. The powers that are in the human heart can be achieved only through education. Education helps to fulfill the social and personal life.

Rabindranath's philosophy of education:

An important influence of Rabindranath's educational thought can be seen in the modern education system. He has opened the outlet to the universal development of the students without keeping the education bound by the pedagogy. Education develops the moral and intellectual power of a child. In the education system of that time, he combined the practice of literature, fine arts, dance were included in the education of students and naturally helped them to be responsive. He emphasized the practical importance of education rather than the theoretical aspects of education. This teaching can untaint our narrow mindedness. He replaced the foundation of ideal education. Only this education can advance human civilization. He enjoined every student to develop their latent tendencies through this ideal education and attain the perfection of the spiritual being. Education humanizes and inculcates a sense of humanity towards all.

Rabindranath Tagore said in his book 'Religion of Man' that 'man should have one religion and that is Manavdharma'¹. This human religion removes the narrow mindedness of people and establishes a sense of universal humanity. He has hidden the principle of creation and exalted the greatness of human life. Spiritual consciousness is at the root of every personal and social progress. Through this power, we can descend into the world consciousness by carrying the creative personality, human unity and order. He said, "We want the education of the present age to be compatible with the pursuits of the present age"². The sole aim of education is to awaken the spiritual consciousness by expanding the values of humanity. Through knowledge, science, philosophy, the social ethics in the human mind are awakened, and it blossoms the most valuable spiritual inhabitant.

Spiritual Consciousness in Education:

Realizing the true nature of the 'spiritual self' (soul) that lies within our spiritual consciousness. The word 'I' has two meanings in the narrow sense 'finite I' and in the broad

¹ Rabindra Nath Tagore, The Religion of Man, p.144

² Rabindra Nath Tagore, Rabindracharanabali, P.315

sense 'infinite I'³. Man as a social being spends his life constantly with the society and lives in the natural environment. Human existence is constantly helping people to do their own activities and is rooted in worldly wants, as a result of which people become limited. These infinite aspects can only be expanded through spiritual attainment. He said, 'A part of spiritual pursuit is to liberate the soul from the tyranny of the material world'⁴. Man's infinite being is the greater being through which his inner spiritual power develops. The infinite aspect of man can be perfected through ideal education.

One of the aims or objectives of Rabindranath's education system is to inculcate universal consciousness through the connection or union of the two fundamental aspects of man. To reveal to the whole world the inherent divinity of every human being and to achieve perfection by channeling the blissful consciousness of man's infinite being. Just as the sun illuminates the living world, the light energy form that is inherent in us awakens the infinite or worldview by universally illuminating the finite being of man. Therefore, opening up the world view in the human mind through education is the basic principle of real education.

Method of Education philosophy:

If we review Rabindra Nath's philosophy of education, it will be seen that the basis of the educational policy he mentioned as the medium of education is naturalism. This educational policy has bridged the gap between ideology and pragmatism. The main aim of this education is that children will learn in natural environment. His philosophy of education is called naturalist philosophy of education and through this we get the basic principles of education. Mother tongue is an important medium of education. Because through that language, children can express their thinking ability fluently. In this way, through the development of their thinking, their individuality can be expressed and students can develop independent thinking skills. They can participate in various social activities of our society. He highlighted the practical aspect of idealistic theoretical education. Theoretical learning will be effective only when that learning is applied in real life. Mechanized moral education does not help to liberate the creative power of man but confines man. Rabindra Nath Tagore in a story called "Parrot Tale" mentions a bird in a cage, the bird was force-fed dry leaves of a book every day and finally one day the bird died. So, he was against our mechanical rote learning. He enumerates several principles of education by which the perfection of personality is revealed.

- 1) Students should be given full freedom to learn.
- 2) So that the students can develop their creativity and awaken their self-proficiency.
- 3) Students can develop their learning scope by connecting with the natural environment.
- 4) They can gain knowledge by observing the nature of the world.
- 5) It awakens the Self-power (spiritual) within the individual to free himself from bonds.
- 6) By freedom he refers to liberation (Mukti), the freedom that awakens the individual to infinite power or leads to infinity.
- 7) Independence means liberation, which gives rise to the principle of creation of the entire universe.

Curriculum:

Rabindranath Tagore took the term Curriculum in a comprehensive sense and presented the full form of Indian culture. The purpose of education is to establish a close relationship between the individual and the world. As long as there is no sense of the world within the individual, the education of the inner soul is not possible. He referred to the curriculum as the container and carrier of Indian culture. Through this curriculum, the sense of universal

³ B.K.Lal, Contemporary Indian Philosophy, p.74

⁴ Rabindra Nath Tagore, Rabindrachanabali, P.313

brotherhood will be inculcated in the whole person, thereby inculcating the social, moral, religious consciousness of the individual. He has included such activities within the curriculum, they are - mother tongue, literature, art, music, dance, social development. Project by which the cultural resources of the society are fulfilled. He gave more importance to mother tongue (Bangla) than English in education. He specifically refers to religious texts (Ramayana, Mahabharata, Upanishads) to gain knowledge of ancient Indian culture. For the only thing that can influence our philosophy of life is all this religious knowledge by which religion and ethics are transmitted to the individual. He refers to the natural sciences as lessons, which provide us with logical and evidential correct knowledge. And he mentions science and philosophy, which help to gain a holistic knowledge of the universe. The best of knowledge is scientific and philosophical knowledge through which spiritual consciousness, moral values emerge. As a result, an important branch called "Philosophy of Science" is included in the curriculum of various universities. So he said that education is of no value if we do not connect with the nature of the world. Because at the root of human origin is society and nature. He has liberalized education across the board, thereby spreading education beyond the four walls. Rabindra Nath Tagore founded Visva Bharati University in 1921. The educational system there is a noteworthy sign of it. The main aim of his establishment of Shantiniketan is that the students will adopt the taste of liberation in the natural environment. So, he said, 'The school that is true, attracts such education; With the help of education there is guessing creation, this creation is the root of all truths'⁵.

Aims of Education:

Rabindranath was not really an educationist and he did not define what should be the aims or objectives of education. In the education system of that time, he definitely mentioned the provision of natural education. To bring out the latent creative being in the student's mind and open the door to basic learning from nature. He determined that children could be educated through hands-on experiences rather than focusing their curriculum on rote learning, and introduced mastery of various arts and crafts.

From Rabindranath's philosophy of education, we derive some important aims and objectives of education - these are discussed below.

Development of inner potency:

Rabindranath has specially focused on how to develop the inner (spiritual) strength of students. The completion of the spiritual power that lies within every human child can only be achieved through ideal education. Here he specifically means the spiritual power of the imagination of the child's heart, the creative power will express itself through free thought. Children will independently develop their own learning and thinking power to achieve full development of their lives. He himself believed that spiritual education is of immense importance in life which develops the personality to the fullest. Every student should act selflessly and show their love and support to improve their educational system.

Natural learning in the natural environment:

We as intelligent beings created from nature, we first learn from nature. He also called this education from this natural environment as the best education that nature is the true teacher of us i.e., children. The education acquired by the student determines the mandatory position. Independently, children will naturally develop a learning spirit and express their thinking power and imagination. Their behavior and character will be developed through the natural environment.

⁵ Rabindra Nath Tagore, Rabindrachanabali, P.324

Giving freedom to students:

The concept of freedom is very important in Rabindranath's philosophy. Students should be freed from the shackles of inhibitions that stem from the roots of reading. Nature is our true teacher and we get its message from Santiniketan.

Social Improvement:

He believes in Vedanta and Brahman as the only supreme and supreme being from which all living beings have originated. This existent world is Brahman. So, all are equal as social beings in this universe, it is this social bond that strengthens the relationship. Education carries out programs in harmony with nature and human needs.

Education as a means of social reform:

There is a correspondence between education and social life. Education is an important part of our daily life practice. Education that is not relevant to society is worthless. The progress of individual life in society can be improved only through education.

Harmonize of East and West:

Rabindranath Tagore accepted education as the only tool to awaken the sense of national and international fraternity. The unity of his philosophy of education with the international life and humanity is the only notable example of Brahmacharyasram at Santiniketan, rural development, Sriniketan Shikshasatra. It is only through education that we can impart the sense of humanity to the world. It is through spiritual development that the western form of education is controlling the Indian education system at that time.

Practical and Ideal Education:

Rabindranath Tagore mentioned the practical and ideal education system by refining the artificial and theoretical aspects of education as much as possible and emphasized on this education. It is in the student's essence that the ideas formed through the activation of the latent being will result in the fulfillment of the personality.

Rabindranath Tagore himself believed that the intellectual, moral, spiritual positive endowments inherent in the human mind are given by nature (ultimate reality or Brahman). The Upanishads say, "Man becomes if in this life he can apprehend God; if not, it is the greatest calamity for him"⁶. Education means enabling the mind to find out that ultimate truth which emancipates us from the bondage. It helps in realization of truth. He emphasized experiential and psychological theory in education. Children will be exposed to various creative activities in a natural environment. The objective of real education is to develop a self-reliant, self-confident personality through the full development of inner strength. Through Eastern and Western education, the great union of unity in diversity is achieved through ideal education. The sense of humanity that exists in us must be expressed through human love, unity and the right to equality. This educational system is rooted in the human mind that ethics and religion will form the basis of global citizenship beyond the borders of the nation through the development of spirituality through education.

Notes and references:

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⁶ Rabindra Nath Tagore, *Sadhana*, p.81

4. Rabindra Nath Thakur. Sadhana. The Macmillan Company, New York, 1915.

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