

RABINDRANATH TAGORE AND SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION AND ITS RELEVANCE IN THE PRESENT SCENAREO

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Abstract: Rabindranath Tagore and Swami Vivekananda are counted amongst the greatest educationist of the world. The philosophies of education propounded by them bear great importance to the whole humanity. They were well aware of the importance of education in modern India. They not only enlightened India but also the whole world by their outstanding personality.

Rabindranath Tagore was an icon of Indian Culture. He was a poet, philosopher, musician, writer and educationist. From his own experience at school, he was convinced that the four walls of the classroom restricted the freedom of young children. The traditional school to him was like a prison house. According to him, "the highest education is that which does not merely give us information but make our life in harmony with all existence".

The present system of education does not allow us to cultivate the power of imagination. Our education system is joyless. Small children are burdened with tons of books. Tagore wrote, "From childhood to adolescence and again from adolescence to manhood, we are coolies of the goddess of leaning, carrying loads of words in our folded backs." It has no relation to our life, the book we read have no vivid pictures of our homes and society.

Swami Vivekananda was realized that tremendous emphasis on the scientific and mechanical way of life is fast reducing man to the status of machine. Moral and religious values are undermined and the fundamental principles of civilization are being ignored. Swami Vivekananda seeks the solution of all these social and global evils through education. Swami Vivekananda in his scheme of education meticulously includes all those studied which are necessary for all round development of the body, mind and soul of the individual. According to him the cultural values of the country should form an integral part of the curriculum of education.

Keywords: Philosophy, education, mechanical, curriculum, civilization, Brahmacharya , Tapasya and Sadhana

Introduction:

Both Rabindranath Tagore (7th May 1861- 7th August 1941) and Swami Vivekananda (12th January 1863- 4th July 1902) are counted amongst the greatest educationist of the world. The philosophies of education propounded by them bear great importance to the whole humanity. They were well aware of the importance of education in modern India. They not only enlightened India but also the whole world by their outstanding personality.

They were nationalists in the core of their being while being open to all the beneficial influence emanating from the progressive Western Countries. They wanted India to learn Western Science and Technology adopt political and economic systems, but never forgot our Eastern mooring and traditional wisdom. We have huge storehouse of spiritual knowledge. Rabindranath and

Vivekananda wanted a harmonious synthesis of what is best in the West and East. We should not travel to the West with a begging bowl but with an offering of what is best in our own culture. Both Rabindranath and Vivekananda were profound students of the Upanisads and these eternally pregnant spiritual works teach us that Brahman which is what is ultimately real is pure consciousness; pure existence and pure bliss and whatever we do should be directed to the realization of Brahman, *i.e.* the realization of truth, enhanced and expanded consciousness and joy. Education is preparation of life and this preparation is successful only if life becomes a never-ending search for truth, beauty and goodness. Education is a conscious and deliberate activity of a society to modify the behaviour of youths in light of its life, philosophy and culture. The ancient India education was based on virtues, ideals, values, norms and standards of behaviour which were inherent in the concept of education itself. Education was not for living but for a meaningful life. It was secular and spiritual in nature.

Rabindranath Tagore's concept of Education:

According to R.N.Tagore, "Education emancipates us from the bondage of dust and gives us wealth not of things but of inner light, not of power but of love, making the truth its own and giving expression to it." Tagore rightly says, the highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence. Tagore always gives emphasis upon the freedom of the child. He wanted to make children free from schools and boring teachers. For this he wanted to provide fresh air to breathe through the provision of freedom and open environment of education. He says, the child should be as free as a bird who flies in the vast sky without any hindrance. From his own experience at school, he was convinced that the four walls of the classroom restricted the freedom of young children. The traditional school to him was like a prison house. According to him, "education is a permanent part of the venture of life. It is not like a painful, treatment of curing student of the malady of their ignorance, but it is a function of the health, the natural expression of their minds." Tagore was critical of the way in which education design to be job oriented, referred to its end of earning bread and butter. Tagore observed, "From the very beginning such education should be imparted to village folks so that they may know well what mass welfare means and may become practically efficient in all respects for earning their livelihood." Tagore's educational philosophy was learning from nature and life. Like Vivekananda, Tagore also attached great importance to Tapasya and Sadhana. In education it is an indirect exposition of Brahmacharya as a means of real education in life.

Aim of Education:

Like Vivekananda, Tagore also emphasized that the aim of education should be for the man par excellence. The aim of education should be for the all-round harmonious development of personality. This state of harmonious development is the state of complete manhood. Tagore's originality in the field of education lies not in his aim but in the selection of activities. He prescribed a set of activities so that children going through consideration the organic wholeness of human individuality, economic self-sufficiency through self-employment and development of human faculties. Some of the prominent activities and conditions are instruction through mother tongue, scope of free reading other than text books - not for examination but for pleasure and joy, freedom of work, practice of simplicity, austerity but not poverty, self-help, self-discipline, corporate living, respect of guest, elders and women, a close contact with nature, teacher and society. Except the normal subjects, gardening craft, music, dance, drama participation in games, daily prayer, campus cleaning and participation of elected students. Self governance is the steps towards complete manhood. For Tagore, the aim of education should be instrument fashioned by men to achieve life's goals, unlike the economic benefit. Tagore emphasized different aims of education on different occasions.

According to Rabindranath Tagore, the present system of education is instrumental in the advancement in science and technology and has brought physical comfort to a few but it has failed to bring the peace and joy which all of us are striving. That is because of the defects in our education system.

The Visvabharati is the best example of Tagore's model of education. To him, only harmonious development ensures proper development and leads to internal joy, which helps to generate self-employment opportunities, and helps to develop proper value system that can kill social evils like dishonesty, corruption and terrorism.

Rabindranath Tagore's influence can also be seen in the report of the Kothari Commission on education in India. In Tagore's view, the higher aim of education was the same as that of a person's life that is to achieve fulfillment and completeness.

Swami Vivekananda's concept of Education:

Vivekananda defined education as "The manifestation of perfection already in man." He believed in the self-learning. Teacher only motivates or encourages the student and helps him in finding out the hidden treasure of knowledge already present within him. Swami Vivekananda realized that the tremendous emphasis on the scientific and mechanical way of life is fast reducing man to the status of machine. Moral and religious values are undermined and fundamental principles of civilization are being ignored. Swami Vivekananda seeks the solutions of all this social and global evils through education. According to Vivekananda, "Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man." Like fire is a piece of flint, knowledge exists in the mind. He believed in the self-learning. Teacher only motivates or encourages the student and helps him in finding out the hidden treasure of knowledge already present within him. The good quality education is only that which unfolds all the hidden powers in man. Real education requires the cultivation of a sense of humanity, which is the basis of a man's character, the true mark of balanced personality. Through education the individual should develop adaptability and be able to meet the challenge of a changing society. Education should develop the child physically, mentally and spiritually. Swami Vivekananda was the champion of Universal Education. Education should lead to a feeling of brotherhood and the unity of mankind. To serve the masses is to serve God; education should lead us to recognize this and to fulfill this end.

Aim of Education:

Education should not be book learning, rote learning or filling the mind of the students with lot of information. We must have this kind of education which is life-building, man-making, character making assimilation of ideas and bringing about all round development of an individual. Education for him means that process by which character is formed, strength of mind is increase and intellect is sharpened, as a result of which one can stand on one's own feet. Education according to Vivekananda remains incomplete without the teaching of aesthetics or fine arts.

One of the important aims of education in India is to aim at self sufficiency. The individual should be given practical and vocabulary training along with the traditional, religious and cultural subjects. Vivekananda wanted to make education a self supporting in all respects. Western technology and engineering should be included in the curriculum of schools and colleges for economic development of the country. The vocational subjects should be included in the curriculum for every child. The curriculum for girls should include cookery, needle-craft, child – rearing, economics and psychology.

It is true that the student has to be fit for struggle in life. At the same time he must be aware of the necessity of bearing high character, developing the spirit of benevolence, exercising the quality of honesty, sincerity, dutifulness, responsibility and so on. A student may occupy a high rank in profession but can he be elevated to a responsible citizen who must have loved for his/her country and her people. Only information giving educational system which our country nourishes and nurture can never be victorious in improving noble qualities in man. To make a student ethical, faultless, honest, honorable, just, upright, virtuous, the role of a teacher is most note-worthy. Vivekananda thinks that teacher must act as the guide, philosopher and friend of the students, the skilled builder of their character, the experienced trainer of their minds, sincere developer of their intellect and pure promoter of their wisdom. A student may learn western science but he also learn by heart the essence and philosophy of Vedanta, practice absolute Brahmacharya and cultivate the habit of paying respect to others and also to ourselves with confidence.

Relevance of Tagore and Vivekananda vision of education in the present scenario:

At the present time, it is true that the modern educational system all over the world shows that it has lost its goal, its direction and its moral character. Instead of making man-complete by harmonious development of mind-body and spirit, it produces only money making machines. Modern youth though are technically sound but are spiritually bankrupt. Though our country is developing in scientific, economic and political spheres, still a large number of people are suffering from poverty and living like animals. A major group of people are exploiting the poor mass. Corruption has become rampant.

Most of the students today are less interested to the highest goal of education than their personal profit *i.e.* money- making, power grabbing and non-moral enjoyment. As their advisors guardians and teachers often inspire their children and students towards selfish thought, self-interest and mere own success through restless hard competition. In this way they made their children and students gradually mere some machines for earning lot of money with individualistic gain. For this reason we have failed to realize our duties, to acquire the spirit of service; as a result, we have no sympathy for others, no responsibility to other duties or our improvement, even we have no awareness about the quality in works in our service sectors. Regrettably speaking that it is a mere mechanical life, there is no humanity with higher values of education.

Rabindranath Tagore and Swami Vivekananda were severely criticized the pattern of education introduced by the British in India. They revolted against the imposition British system of education in India. They realized that such as education can not conform to India's culture. Against the contemporary educational system the chief objection raised by Vivekananda was that it turns men into slaves, capable of slavery and nothing else. Tagore was also against any auspicious emphasis on materials, building, furniture or books that imitated Western educational institutions in India. He thought that this would make education too expensive for the common people. Both Tagore and Vivekananda were against bookish knowledge.

The following reasons may be ascribed as the causes of failure of true education:

- i) Lack of holistic and long term vision *i.e.* lack of spirituality.
- ii) Lack of value based education.
- iii) Lack of development of power of concentration of mind.
- iv) Due to practice of left-brain oriented education.
- v) Lack of personal contact between the teacher and student.

India has meditated profoundly on world problems and striven to resolve them using her own intelligence. The kind of education which enables the mind of the country to attain truth and express it using its own power is the true education for our country. Learning by rote does not appeal to the mind or heart; it can be done by machine too.

Conclusion:

In all countries education is connected to the mainstream of life. In our country our modern education is directly connected only to a few professions and services pursued by the educated middle class such as clerks, lawyers, doctors, deputy magistrates, sub-inspectors or assistant sub inspectors of the police, *munsifs* and so on. It is far removed from farmers, potters or oil-men. Such a disaster has never been seen in any other educated country. The reason for this is that our new universities are not rooted in the soil of the land, like parasites they are dangling from the boughs of big alien trees. If a true university is ever established in India, it will take pride of place in the life of the country by applying the fruits of its economics, agriculture science, medicine and healthcare and all its other applied sciences in the villages adjacent to its campus. Such a university will

emulate the best practices in agriculture, cattle-breeding and weaving. And in order to generate sufficient funds it will adopt cooperative methods and closely associate itself with its teachers, students and the people living in the neighborhood in the field of generating livelihood.

The Visvabharati is the best example of Tagore's model of education. To him, only harmonious development ensures proper development and leads to integral joy. Tagore's influence can also be seen in the report of Kothari Commission on education in India. In his view, the higher aim of education is the same as that of a person's life that is to achieve fulfillment and completeness.

Although the vision of education of Tagore and Vivekananda is more than a century ago it is still relevant. There are so many good aspects are there in New Education Policy (NEP 2020) which is yet to introduce. Hope, the new education policy will be covered all the awkward of our traditional system of education in the real sense.

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