

RABINDRANATH TAGORE – HIS INTERNATIONALISM AND GLOBAL PEDAGOGY

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I. INTRODUCTION

Present education is under the process of radical change in response to various factors like development in information and communication technology, changes in living style in demographic pattern, etc. Development of communication and information technology has made the world a global village with improved interaction among people of the world. This has also contributed to widening of disparities among people. Excessive commodisation of education has also led to collapse seminal and quintessential values like, tolerance, truth, self-respect, fearlessness, human dignity, rejection of cruelty, practice of non-violence, internationalism and culture of peace, which have become more important because of the problems facing by the human race. There are so many questions which we ask to ourselves and always in the quest to find suitable answers:-

* How to make the education viable towards the quest for the essence of life?

* What should be the roadmap of Inward Excellence to bring peace, poignance, serenity in human life?

* How to promote education & stimulate the learners to have natural, spontaneous & vigorous entry into the joy, freedom, fearlessness, international understanding & global peace so that education can become living, pulsating & humane instead of mechanical, valueless, violent & materialistic as today?

There is great need to apply today the ideology of Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) in the reconstruction of human society on moral, ethical, cultural & spiritual foundations for a Non-Violent society. Definitely there are suitable answers for above asked questions as we all need the message of Tagore, now more than ever. Rabindranath Tagore upheld education as retrospective, prospective and a constructive agency for the growth of the society, therefore there is need to reanalyse, reinterpret, and redesign his ideas into pedagogical practices, which may help all of us in discovering new educational perspectives. The new generation

must foster outlook and get a new direction for a new vision of life so the young souls can be empowered to play their role in building a better world along with excellence in their coming future.

This present research paper has definitely attempted to endorse and explore the contours through Tagorean Vision about the world humanism and the ideas of universalized education and its salience in the contemporary world. Tagore has envisioned a classless, casteless society and perceived a human identity which would transcend race, religion, sect, nationality and gender. To accomplish this present paper has emphasized on the following objectives:-

1. To present the philosophical tenets of Rabindranath Tagore.
2. To elucidate the global outlook of Rabindranath Tagore for the natural manifestation of Internationalism.
3. To explore Tagore as an envoy of International Understanding and universal Values.
4. To formulate a pedagogic framework as a roadmap for Universal Education

II. RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

Tagore was a great philosophic minded person. His philosophic mindedness constituted with the three important dimensions of the thought process i.e. Comprehensiveness; which is reflected in Tagore's thought & outlook and is perhaps the most important characteristic of a philosophically minded person, second is Penetration; Tagore was never satisfied by obvious and superficial questions or answers but rather tend to go the very root of the problem using rational means in order to seek enlightenment, third is Flexibility; Tagore viewed philosophy not as a body of knowledge only but as an activity of analysis & conceptual clarification. Therefore he was flexible & flexibility is also a facet of creativity. There are a number of hindrances to creative thinking. One such hindrance is fear of criticism, i.e. of being ridiculed, but Tagore always continued thinking of alternatives

from different perspectives without caring how strange or uncommon they might look to others. (Das Gupta, 1961)

Tagore was deeply influenced by the ancient Indian Philosophical traditions & therefore he believed the ultimate reality in terms of Truth, Love & Bliss. He believed (Tagore, 1931) “ Indian philosophical traditions talks about the training of Mukti, the liberation of the soul. In this self of ours we are conscious of individuality, and all its activities are engaged in the expression and enjoyment of our finite and individual nature. In our soul we are conscious of the transcendental truth in us, the Universal, the Supreme Man and this soul, the spiritual self, has its enjoyment in the renunciation of the individual self for the sake of the supreme soul”. Tagore’s thought is Metaphysical to the core & its important feature is the recognition of one single principle running through the whole of existence, the unity of all life and being. Tagore was also interested in the study of Human Beings, which is also an important aspect of metaphysical investigation. There is another consideration concerning human beings which has a metaphysical connection, the question of his freedom. By freedom Tagore meant the liberation of all the aspects and powers of the personality, namely the senses, the virtual energies, the various mental capacities including intelligence and imagination; also the functions of the heart- feelings, emotions, sympathy and love. Here we also notice that the idea of Tagore is similar to the ideas of **Rousseau, Froebel, Dewey, Freire**, who emphasized freedom, which lies in the perfect harmony of relationships, which we realize in the world. (Sen, 1993). Tagore also believed the metaphysical queries in philosophy relating to the existence and nature of God. Tagore was the apostle of Truth, Virtue & Beauty (**Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram**). He had strong confidence in the Supreme Being and regarded Him as Omnipotent, Omnipresent and Omniscient. According to Tagore Brahma manifests Himself through nature and men. He believed in close affinity among God, Man and Nature & pleaded for realizing this relationship.

III. RABINDRANATH TAGORE’S INTERNATIONALISM

Tagore was a humanist, a prophet of love, sympathy, fellow feeling and cooperation. His humanism was based on spiritual foundations, the Transcendental; he believed that God lives in man. Tagore (1931) said, “ The supreme truth of life is not merely to live, but also to know our existence and realize the self through love and sympathy with others. Hence it is essential that the growth of a balanced and well-integrated personality of the child is to be promoted and move should be made towards the achievement of the ultimate goal of life. Tagore’s humanism led him to universalism. Tagore wanted to break all the geographical, social, political and cultural barriers. In the International field the first momentous event was the outbreak of the first world war in 1914, when Tagore had already started his Shantiniketan, the ashram school for more than thirteen years & he warned that war was caused by the demons of nationalism, characterized by the imperialistic greed

Dr. Radhakrishnan (1961) commented, “Rabindranath worked for one supreme cause, the union of all sections of humanity in sympathy and understanding, in truth and love. His Visva Bharati is an International University, **where the whole world has become a single nest “Yatra Visvam Bhavati Ek Nidam”**.”

Tagore’s Internationalism was built on the spiritual underpinnings. Spirituality was one of the chief tenets of his philosophy of life. Shantiniketan was established as an experimental Institution for a new aim & mode of education where the beauty and sublimity of nature can serve as a living partner of teaching and learning and where the values of poetry, music and art can vibrate in the rhythms of life of the development of personality and mingling of cultures of Asia and of the world that would promote internationalism and world citizenship, and universal fraternity that transcends all divisions of race and religion in the Religion Of Man. (Chakraborty, 1993)

IV. TAGORE, AN ENVOY OF INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING

Rabindranath Tagore’s **Gitanjali** (song offerings) was awarded the **Nobel Prize** for literature in 1913 and was first published by the India Society, London in November, 1912 & the next edition was published by Macmillan & Company, London in March, 1913. William Rothenstein first read Tagore’s manuscript. The poems delighted him. He introduced Tagore to **William Butler Yeats, Ezra Pound, George Bernard Shaw, H.G. Wells, Galsworthy, Andrew Bradley, John Masefield, the great poets of England**. Edward Thompson read the Gitanjali and called “**An impeccable metrical achievement**”, he commented that Tagore’s poems combined the colour & richness of India with a Universalist conception of God, and embodied the courage & humility which caused the poet to write-“**Give me the strength never to disown the poor or bend my knees before insolent might. Give me the strength to raise my mind high above daily trifles, and give me the strength to surrender my strength to thy will with love.**” (Pierre Fallon, 1961). **W.B. Yeats** wrote the introduction to the English edition of **Gitanjali**. **W.B. Yeats**

puts in the preface, "I read Rabindranath Tagore every day, to read one line of him is to forget all the troubles of the world." ---Prose translations from Rabindranath Tagore have stirred my blood as nothing has for years, all the inspiration of mankind are in his hymn" (Yeats, 1912).

Rabindranath Tagore's The Religion of Man (1931) is a commanding exposition on the meaning and significance of religion in the cultural history of man. It was delivered as the famous **Hibbert Lectures at Manchester College, Oxford University** in May, 1930. This is one of the most important philosophical works, which deals with universal themes of God, Spirituality and the Divine Existence, through these lectures Tagore tried to explore the concept of religion not merely as a philosophical subject, but as a thing of experience and also philosophized '**One World Idea**'. He acknowledged in these lectures (1931) that 'Relationship is the fundamental truth of this world of appearance'. Tagore's ideas underlines the supreme significance of light in the existence and continuous blossoming of human kind in the humenosphere, a sphere of evolutionary ,wisdom, altruism, justice, unity, compassion & creativity. He definitely endorses lumenarchy and cosmocracy, which is a socio-cultural system focusing on the virtues of light which helps to construct a new, happy, vibrant and sustainable world, in which all living beings will exist in perfect equilibrium with harmony and peace and happiness.

V. TAGORE ON FREEDOM OF MIND & CREATIVE SELF EXPRESSION

Tagore's educational ideas centred on freedom of mind and creative self-expression. Tagore always favoured for the autonomy of the child. Tagore believed that freedom should be the guiding principle of education. He gives the example of the famous book, **Robinson Crusoe**, authored by Daniel Defoe, which deals about an adventurous boy who is stranded on a desert island for 28 years encountering and struggling for survival. Rabindranath Tagore (1931) describes that "In Robinson Crusoe, the delight of the union with Nature finds its expression in the story of adventure in which the solitary Man is face to face with solitary nature, coaxing her, cooperating with her, exploring her secrets, using all his faculties to win her help". He was in favour of education which must provide the means and opportunities to enhance the child's creative expression and the capacity for aesthetic appreciation. Education for aesthetic appreciation and creativity is even more important today when aesthetic gullibility allows for opinion and taste to be manufactured and manipulated by market forces. Child- Centred Pedagogy was Tagore's primary focus, as childhood is a period of growth and change , involving developing one's physical and mental capacities to the fullest .According to Tagore it gives primacy to children's experiences, their voices & their active participation. This kind of pedagogy requires us to plan learning in keeping with children's psychological development and interests.(Sen,1993)Today there is need to nurture and build on their

VI. A PEDAGOGICAL FRAMEWORK: PLAN OF ACTION:

Our Global existence depends on learning to live together without the threat of violence and conflict. Educators have the unique opportunity to promote peaceful co-existence by bringing the processes of peace making and peace keeping to the attention of their students in the classroom. To use classroom as a microcosm of a just world order in which the global values of positive inter-dependence, social justice, and participation in decision making processes are learned & practiced.

Theme: International Understanding and Global Peace

Poetry from 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 narrow walls; Where words come out from the depth of truth; Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;..... 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".

Tagore's ideas refracted through his intense poetic expressions reveal his rainbow like philosophy of life characterized by Spirituality, Universalism & Humanism. Let us move in to his Universal Abode.

Subject Area: Literature, Language, Social Science, Political Science, Education, Philosophy or any other subject

Approach: Thematic model, Integrated Approach, Multi-disciplinary, Inter-disciplinary, Meta-disciplinary, Cross- disciplinary, and Trans-disciplinary etc.

Strategies: Role models, organizational behaviour, short film, I.C.T. Support, Audio Visual aids, Storytelling, Debate and Autobiography of Thinkers.

Identification of Values: Universal Values; Love, compassion, respect, co-operation, Team Spirit, Charity, Sacrifice, Nationalism, purity of thought fearlessness, commitment, aestheticsm, Leadership etc.

VII. OBJECTIVES

1) To develop interest to serve humanity. 2) To introduce and to develop peaceful co-existence among human beings in this world. 3) To Cherish and follow the universal values to promote harmony and spirit of common brotherhood amongst all human beings. 4) To strive towards Excellence in all spheres of individual and Nation, so that it can rise to higher level of endeavour and achievement. 5) To enhance language

skills with power of imagination and power of creative & critical thinking with 21st cent skills. 6) To explain the concept of universal brotherhood international relations global peace & understanding.

VIII. PROCESS

1) Model presentation by the teacher/ students through reciting the poem. 2) To explain the substance of the text (poem) and the message of the author/ poet. 3) To clarify the value clarifications/ conflict about Narrow domestic walls, head is held high where the world has not been broken (From the Text). 4) To help the students to develop an aesthetic beauty and literary skills of the poetry with human touch and finer sensibilities of life & activities for Peace awareness. 5) To imbibe the students and convey the message of the poet, who wants that Nation should awake into 'Heaven of Freedom' which is possible only to attain the virtues like, brotherhood, fearlessness, friendship, patriotism, love, respect & belongingness, overcome injustice with justice etc.

IX. CONTEXTUALIZATION

Students relate the characters, situations depicted in the lesson with the examples, illustrations with their past experiences and with native then background.

Interpretation with: -

- **Multiple voices coming from the classroom:**
Students analyse and generate their own interpretation of the poem/story/passage like nationalism, love for people of the country, fellow feeling, human dignity etc.
- **Multiple Manifestations:** Using the text, background, illustration and their own reflections and participating in an exercise of problem solving, reasoning with logistics, and conflict resolution with critical and creative thinking etc.

Innovation & Creation: Composing short poem & creative writings.

CRUX: Tagore believed that every child in the process of natural development, seeks its self-expression & thinks critically, hence teacher has a pivotal role in any program of education, integrated approach or thematic model whichever is applicable to all teaching-learning situations, either in

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