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REFLECTION OF TAGORE'S EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT ON HIS DREAM SCHOOL PATHA BHAVANA, SANTINIKETAN

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Abstract: Rabindranath Tagore's childhood experience on his education made his educational thought more child centric. Therefore his educational philosophy is based on three main pillars, 'freedom', 'creative self expression' and 'active communication with man & nature'. Tagore's philosophical aspect on education is a splendid combination of both Traditionalism and Modernism although Orientalism and Westernism. Holistic view in education is seen in Tagore's dream school Patha Bhavana, which make the students more social, emotional and the ability to grow aesthetic sense in them. The Holistic approaches in education make the students to face challenges in life, overcome hindrances and achieve success. Teachers of Patha Bhavana create learning environment for self directed learning. After completing school the students are more independent in their personality. Tagore's blending approach of Holistic Education and Transformative Education make the students of Patha Bhavana a complete human being. To face the challenges of today's world Tagore's educational thought is very much relevant.

Index Terms - Tagore's educational thought, Holistic Education, Patha Bhavana, Self directed learning.

I. INTRODUCTION

Tagore's educational philosophy is based on Humanism, Naturalism, Internationalism and Spiritualism. He was very much influenced by Gita and Upanishads. He believed that education given in natural surrounding helps to develop intimacy with the world. The dedication to spiritualism and sacredness will lead to the harmonious relationship with man, nature and God. Education can teach people to realize oneness of the globe. This feeling can be developed through the concept of international understanding and universal brotherhood. Rabindranath Tagore established his dream school in 1901 in Santiniketan with 5 students. At first he named his open air school as 'Brahmacharya Ashram', he experimented his educational thought and make the students ideal to lead their life. From 1925, the school was familiar with the name 'Patha Bhavana'. From 1922 girl's section was started. It is a co educational institution. In childhood days Tagore didn't like the school because of the bounded classroom. His mind used to go beyond the window. So he thought about open air school. He envisioned a Holistic Education that was deeply rooted in one's culture and surroundings but also connected to the wider world. Tagore thought that children's freedom should allow them to determine what they want to do for a large part of their time. According to him, "True education is to realize at every step how our training and knowledge have organic connection with our surroundings". Joy, freedom, mutual trust and co operation are the basic principles of his school. Tagore believed that with a lifeless mind anybody can secure first position in an examination, they can get medal but they can't get the position in the world. Tagore said, "Education of Ashram was the education of life". Students have interest in finding, examining, collecting information, analyzing facts of surroundings. He put the responsibility of educating the students in a joyful manner upon the teachers. He said, "A teacher can never truly teach unless he is still learning himself. A lamp can never light another lamp unless it continues to burn its own flame."

Through Holistic Education we prepare the young generation to face any challenges in their life. They must develop healthy relationships and positive social behaviors, emotional development, value inculcation, ability to view aesthetic side and balanced behavior. Transformative learning is an act that individuals conduct in order to be more self motivated, self governing, rational, collaborative and empathetic.

In the process of learning in Patha Bhavana, student-teacher relationship, self directed learning makes the students unique in every spheres of life. From the beginning of the Ashram school Tagore experimented his educational thought there. After decades now also it is practiced in Patha Bhavana though few changes are there due to the contemporary demands. In the view of Tagore, "The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence."

II. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In contemporary time lifestyles are going tough day by day. Tagore's educational thought is relevant to overcome a competitive or tough situation. Holistic Education can make the new generation a better citizen. Through Transformative learning young generation can think critically, empathetically, rationally which make them a democratic person. It has a powerful potential for enhancing and accelerating a person's 'Self actualization'. Rabindranath Tagore was experimented his educational thought in Patha Bhavana, long ago. His introspection is seen fruitful in today's tough world.

III. OBJECTIVES

1. To identify Tagore's educational thoughts according to his Philosophical aspect of education.
2. To analyze different activities of Patha Bhavana according to the educational thought of Tagore.
3. To evaluate Holistic perspective in educational process of Patha Bhavana.
4. To identify the relevance of education of Patha Bhavana in today's world.

IV. DELIMITATIONS

- The study has been delimited only in Patha Bhavana School students and teachers.
- The study has been delimited only on the educational thought of Tagore.

V. METHODOLOGY

The investigator broadly stated questions about experiences of students and teachers and studied through contact with them in their natural environment generate rich, descriptive data that helps to understand student's and teacher's view points, experiences and attitudes. Information used in this paper is generally qualitative in nature based on field observation and informal discussion. This investigation also based on secondary sources like various writings of Rabindranath Tagore, books and writings of others and books, journals, articles, discussions by the eminent thinkers of modern time.

- **Population:**
The population of the present study was the students and teachers of Patha Bhavana School.
- **Sample:**
300 Students of Patha Bhavana are interviewed. 40 teachers are also interviewed according to interview schedule.
- **Sampling technique:**
Through random sampling technique samples are selected.
- **Tools:**
Interview schedule and observation schedule was made to take the responses.
- **Data collection technique:**

The present study was conducted on the basis of survey method. Self reporting technique and observational technique are used to gather information. Secondary sources also helped to gather information.

VI. FINDINGS

Findings according to objective 1:

- Education Imparted in natural environment: Tagore realized that children learn anything easily in natural environment. According to him an ideal educational environment can only be established in the open air, midst of trees, free from noise like 'Tapovan' in ancient time.
- Freedom & joy in Education: Tagore explained about freedom of heart, freedom of intellect and freedom of will. The genesis of ideal freedom lies in own experience as a child and experience of the prevailing educational system. Children must learn everything with joy which results transfer of learning. In that way learning will be strong.
- Education in moral, spiritual & social development: According to Tagore moral, spiritual and social education can enrich human personality. That teaches selfless activities, co operation, social responsibility, and feeling of love.
- Education as growth: Education creates the fullest development of an individual's body, mind and soul. Tagore said that the development of the personality of a child takes place through education which can enfold all the innate potentialities of an individual.

- Education through activity: Tagore has emphasized the principle of activity for spontaneous development of a child. So, the activity must be self activity with purposeful and creative nature.

Findings according to objective 2:

- All the activities in Patha Bhavana start with 'Baitalik'(Morning assembly). A Sanskrit mantra is chanted, that represents the 'Tapovan' culture during Vedic period. This provides a positive mental energy for whole day. Open air classes give a good vibration to the students, they are in the nature and learning is joyful to them.
- Up to class VIII the pupil have the subjects like dance, music, painting, modeling, nature study, wood work, weaving etc in their curriculum with regular subjects. From class IX, students are free to choose any vocational area of their own choice. Engagement in such activities refreshes the students from the webs of curriculum. They not only develop academically but also can grow the ability to face the modern world. In the nature study class teacher acquainted students with different things of nature. The classes used to go on under the tree, open area which is close to nature. The evening time is scheduled for playing in 'Ashram Ground'. In Wednesday morning 'Upasana'(prayer) give the chance to meditate.
- Senior students have their election to choose members of different sections like 'Sahitya Bibhag'(Literature Section), 'Kira Bibhag'(Sports Section), 'Aharjo Bibhag'(Food Section), 'Seba Bibhag'(Caring Section), 'Bichar Bibhag'(Justice Section) etc. Later those members manage those sections's duty. That teaches responsibility. Those activities expose them to the real social world, they aware about the world outside the school. Each Bibhag has a concerned teacher. Those practices help in developing self governance, self dependence, leadership and management qualities among the students. Visiting surrounding villages, arranging 'Anonda Bazar'(learn buying, selling and managing money) make the students more social.
- Cultural activities, Sahitya sabha (Literature meet) are used to arrange. One day tour, outing, village visit are useful for experiencing nature. Debate, discussions open up diversified idea. Love for birds, animals makes the children kind and empathetic. Creativity flourishes diversified thinking. All round development occur.
- Teachers are friendlier here. Few teachers take open book exam. Emphasis is given upon understanding level. Tagore was against rote learning. Teachers are not rigid to the students. They encourage them in self directed learning. Field studies make the student more critical thinker. Though individual differences are there but the students have multiple intelligence in them.

Findings according to objective 3:

- Holistic approach encourages children to make connection in a subject using their creative skills and make learning a fun and meaningful experience. Transformative Learning encourages students to use critical thinking which engage them with new ideas. It is the expansion of consciousness through which an individual can question themselves about their own feelings, beliefs, assumptions and perspective on their purpose.
- From lower to higher class students get Holistic Education and can develop their personality by using real life experiences, current events and other lively sources of knowledge in place of textbook information.
- After survey it was seen that in Patha Bhavana the students are psychologically, socially and emotionally mature. They have curiosity to know the cause behind the colours of butterfly, about the eggs of ants, shape of the leaves of different trees. They climb to the trees, give foods to dogs in Tiffin time, drenching in the rain, playing in soil.
- The education of Patha Bhavana develops different sides among the students. Effectiveness of Holistic Education and Transformative Learning is seen in the behavior of students. They can cope up with odd situations. Senior students are more rational to choose their field. Sometimes shuffling of students in different sections happen in commencement of new class. Transformative learning helps to overcome the situation.

Findings according to objective 4:

- The education process of Patha Bhavana invites the participation of all people regardless of race, gender, cultural background or any other differences. That shows Tagore's humanistic and internationalist views. India is a country of different religions, castes, cultures, languages etc. Everybody should respect others. The environment of Patha Bhavana teaches this which is very important in today's disturbed world.
- In 1908 Tagore started the girl's section in his Brahmacharya Ashram. But that couldn't continue long period of time. From 1922 girl's section was commenced permanently. He said that woman education is very important for any race. From then girls learnt painting, sculpturing, singing, dancing, exercising with normal education. The environment of the school teaches them mutual respect to each others.
- The environment of Patha Bhavana teaches to lead life in least facility just like 'Tapovan' education. Tagore believes in 'simple living and high thinking' philosophy. That makes the students to cope up with odd situations.
- Overall Holistic Education makes the students independent, social and psychologically mature.

VII. CONCLUSION

Tagore's dream school Patha Bhavana makes the students holistically rich and prepare them to survive in the world. They can be identified among a group of people with their approach, behavior which is inculcated in Patha Bhavana. Patha Bhavana believes in 'simple living and high thinking' and prepares the students for participating in a democratic society. Tagore's educational thought make the students eligible to lead life in today's tough world. Till now, after 80 years of Rabindranath Tagore's death his introspection about education is very much relevant.

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