




RABINDRA SANGEET AND EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF TAGORE: A STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE FREEDOM IN EDUCATION



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Abstract:

Rabindranath Tagore was born on 7th May, 1861 in Calcutta. Tagore can be considered as the strongest personality which was the hub of art and culture. He was a famous poet, writer, painter, composer, painter, dramatist, singer and so on. He received Nobel Prize in literature in 1913 for 'Gitanjali'. It was a collecting of different poetic songs which were mostly spiritual and mercurial by nature. His another book 'Gitabitan' is a collection of all 2,232 songs (Rabindra Sangeet). If we consider the songs written by Tagore very closely we can observe that these songs reflect his philosophies towards life. This philosophy of Tagore also created a very different base of education too.

Introduction:

Tagore's educational philosophy is quite different from the other rigid and restricted educational approaches. He experimented his own thoughts and ideas in the form of Shantiniketan (Bolpur, West Bengal). Tagore provided a complete free environment for receiving education. He believed education is not about getting degrees, but it is something to nourish the soul. Education is a means to promote self development and harmonious development of the personality. Tagore's entire life was enriched in experience of many which compounded his distaste towards the existing system of education. He considered schools as book-learning factories where some people get hammered into shape and again those are considered in the market to be goods of a superior stamp. He always considered himself fortunate for not receiving any rigid and formal education. He never supported imposing education on children. For him education was something to feel

great from within; an ultimate goal of life; an ability to understand and realize the self. In this paper we will try to focus on different songs written by Rabindranath Tagore and its connection with freedom. Here, freedom means the freedom of mind; a way of controlling self to achieving the ultimate goals of life.

Rabindra Sangeet and Freedom:

Tagore believed that the aim of education is nothing but self-realization. He believed that realizing the essence or soul of the universe is the goal of education. According to him, man's aim in life is to reach that universal soul of which all human beings are parts. He considered everyone must live his life by realizing its essence, in this connection we can mention his famous song '*Akash bhora, surjo tara*' which states life covers the whole universe. There is no division. The self can be satisfied only as a part of it. We should free ourselves from all bindings and enjoy the life in each and every part of the universal essence.

Rabindranath Tagore's educational philosophy is an adjunct of his own philosophy of life. His model of education has a unique sensitivity and aptness for education within multi-racial, multi-lingual and multi-cultural situations irrespective of economic discrepancy and political imbalances. In his song '*Amra sobai raja*' his thoughts reflected that every individual has the right to rule his life according to his choice. Again, it also mentions about mutual respect, which is very important to live in a society harmoniously. This song is entirely based on self-realization of the inner power, individuality and unity which is a very important educational aim according to Tagore.

His short span of school life made him realise that school was a place which enticed to stymie and stifle the natural growth of the child and affect badly the overall development of personality. This realisation helped him to formulate his own philosophy of life and education which encourages complete freedom and allows the child to grow independently. Here, we can mention one of his beautiful creation '*Hare re re re re, amay chhere de re de re*'. He wanted to fly like a free bird. He never believed in education in a restricted classroom.

In 1901, he established his own institution Shantiniketan with ten boys only to materialize his own ideas and ideals of education. Later this institution turned into a world famous international university 'Vishva Bharati' and a melting point of cultural confluence of humanity. This centre provided free education to all without imposing any barrier. Here, education means a way to learn to be happy and one should forget worries and troubles with the help of education. The song '*Momo chitte niti nritye*' also reflects the same idea. It states in life there is happiness everywhere. One can attain salvation on the basis of the rhythms of life only. In order to taste the essence of life one has to go through its different phases like smiles, tears, birth, death etc. We must develop the capacity to welcome each and every phase of life freely and happily.

If we consider the educational philosophy of Tagore, it can be noticed that he has given very much stress on freedom. He believed without freedom child cannot develop a creative and progressive mind. He believed in complete freedom of the intellect, decision, knowledge, action and worship. He believed children should be given freedom to ask questions, to make choices and to develop their own ideas. It brings novelty. It allows the child to learn something new. If we consider the song '*Aji dokhino duar khola*', we will be able to notice that he believed in accepting whatever is new. He always opened his door for everything by restricting his fear. This openness helps in broadening the outlook towards life and also allows a person to face and accept the change. But to attain this freedom, it is important for the educand to practice equality, harmony and balance. According to him independence is the fact of being natural. In other words we can say when intelligence, emotion and determination are found in a balanced form, it is a state of freedom. In a song '*Amar mukti aloy aloy*', he mentioned there is no fixed structure of freedom. It is present in every particle. It is nothing but the human mind which allows a person to free his soul from every attachment and restriction.

Again, this independence does not mean the absence of control rather it is nothing but self-control. It involves one's own rational impulse. When a man achieves this level of freedom, there is no fear of the individual straying from his own track as his senses, intelligence, feelings etc. are directed by his ego. Tagore's philosophy of education always aimed at self development. He always believed a man has no value without a strong and harmoniously developed personality. In this regard we can mention another beautiful creation of Tagore '*Bipade more rokkha koro*'. The entire song depicts how a person should be self-sufficient to deal all the challenges of life. In this song he mentioned even we face hurdles and rough days we should feel strong from inside. Development of self or inner power is the ultimate goal of life and with this every failure can be turned into success. We must free our mind from the fear of failure.

According to Tagore, freedom is an integral factor of human development. He considered education as a man-making process which explores the innate powers and qualities of man. It is a liberal process which provides utmost freedom to the individual for his all round development. He believed education can only promote learning when it is imparted through the path of freedom. This freedom allows a man to overcome his fear and brings all round development. In the song '*Tomar khola haowa*' he has mentioned about moving forward by ignoring all ups and downs of life. There is struggle in almost achieving everything. So, we should be free enough to accept the challenge, to face it and to overcome it.

He believed freedom is not mere independence of control and right to self-will. It means the liberation of all aspects and powers of the personality of an individual, viz. the senses, the vital energies, the various mental capacities including intelligence and imagination, as also the functions of the heart like feelings, emotions, sympathy, love etc. Education has its only meaning in the context of freedom which essentially means child's own experiences and activities. For him, freedom is the guiding principle in the entire system of educational activities. Education must provide scope to the children for self-expression. For self-expression Tagore suggested the activities like art, craft, music, drawing, painting, dramatics etc. He believed education

must be provided through activity-based methods. In the process of receiving education children must get opportunities to express their thoughts and ideas. Freedom should be given to utilize their potentialities. But, it does not mean this freedom will be given without any guidance. Teachers will be there to help the students and to provide continuous feedback. Tagore always believed that children must enjoy whatever they learn. Education should provide ample scope where they can express themselves in a free environment.

Conclusion:

Tagore always believed that one of the major goals of education is to prepare the individual to serve for the nation, to promote human regeneration, to represent its culture and also promote harmony and intellectualism. Education must be able to develop the power of thinking and imagination of an individual, who can again contribute to the formation of a healthy society. The primary concern of the educational philosophy is to cultivate the natural qualities within a man, to impart knowledge, to provide freedom of mind, heart and will and to enrich the Indian culture. He always tried to reflect these thoughts through his various songs and poems. Songs written by Rabindranath Tagore, popularly known as Rabindra Sangeet, also reflect the freedom of a man in his thoughts, words and actions. He always preached the power of free will. The songs glorify the freedom of mind and a positive attitude. Education is nothing but the base of a healthy mindset without which it is impossible to taste the freedom.

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