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# Educational Philosophy Of Rabindranath Tagore

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## Abstract

The renowned poet, litterateur and philosopher Rabindranath Tagore saw education as a 'permanent part of the unique experience of life'. He said, "Education is not like a hospital treating the pain of students' cognitive ignorance, but it is a function of their health, a spontaneous expression of the consciousness of their brain." He found that most adults consider children to be puppets dancing on strings. By such process they have deprived the children of their childhood. Children do not just need a school for their lessons, but they need a world whose guiding spirit is personal love.

He believed that knowledge could be attained through 'Prem Aarai Karma'.

1. Freedom
2. Creative self-expression
3. Active participation with nature and humans He said that education gets its meaning and justification only in the presence of freedom.

## Introduction

He called the then schools 'education factories, artificial, colourless, cut off from the context of the world and like the pupils of a dead person's eyes peeping through the white walls'. He believed that our education had distanced us from both nature and social context. It has become lifeless and valueless. He found that 'the first step to make education more meaningful for children would be to bring the child in contact with nature. This can be achieved by making education natural in quantity and quality. Through contact with nature the child will become aware of the reality, continuity and openness of the vast world. Although Tagore is not a literalist in the strict sense because he did not write about education, his attitude towards education is reflected in his poems, prose and essays.

## 'Objective of education'

He wrote that 'Sache's power of expression and imagination are undoubtedly two important capacities for adult life.' Therefore, he felt that their development should start from childhood. According to him, 'an important objective of education was to introduce and adjust the students to the realities, conditions and surroundings of real life. He further said

that 'unreal' education is responsible for the intellectual, dishonesty, moral hypocrisy and ignorance towards the motherland among our people. Therefore, he argued that there should be an effort to establish harmony between education and our life. In this way Tagore put forward his idea about the utility of education, he believed that educational institutions should have a deep connection with economic life. Tagore believed in self-discipline and living a simple life free from unnecessary things. He said, "We should give concrete shape to this idea. He put forth the idea of reducing unnecessary things in the context of our schools. He found that spontaneity and naturalness are included in real civilization. Therefore our children should be prepared for this from the very beginning. He believed that by being free from the luxuries of things, the child would be able to make better use of his hands and feet as well as become familiar with the land and the earth.

### **The principles of Tagore's educational philosophy are as follows-**

1. The child's education should be through his mother tongue.
2. The child should get freedom while getting education.
3. The child should be given the opportunity for self-expression to develop his creative tendencies.
4. The child's education should be in the lap of nature, away from cities.
5. Through education there should be harmonious development of all the powers of the child.

### **Tagore's aim of education**

Objective of physical development

Objective of mental development

Establishing harmony between education and life

Developing spiritual culture

Develop into pre-human form

To maintain truth and unity.

### **Syllabus according to Tagore**

According to Tagore, the main objective of education is the complete development of man to achieve a complete life. Keeping this objective in mind, they have included many different types of subjects in the curriculum.

**Subjects** – History, Nature Study, Geography, Literature etc.

**Activities** – Drama, travelling, gardening, field study, laboratory work, drawing, original composition etc.

Tagore has advised to broaden the curriculum. According to him, the curriculum should be so broad that all aspects of the child's life can be developed. Tagore did not plan any fixed curriculum. He has presented general views regarding the curriculum here and there and on the basis of them it can be said that he gave very important place to cultural subjects. In Visva-Bharati, education in history, geography, science, literature, nature study etc. is given. Besides, there are special arrangements for education in acting, regional studies, travelling, drawing, original composition, music, dance etc. If we look at the curriculum of Shantiniketan and Visva Bharati created by Rabindra Nath Tagore, it is not subject-centric but child-centric. Various types of activities can be seen there like morning prayers, Saraswati Yatras, singing, dancing, drawing, tours, laboratory experiments etc. Work, students' self-governance, sports, social service etc. have been included in the curriculum, hence it can be said that the curriculum of Visva Bharati is an experience-oriented curriculum and the credit for this goes to Rabindranath Tagore.

### **Tagore's teaching method**

Tagore has given the following principles in his teaching method:

- The teaching method should be based on the child's nature, interests and impulses. Debate and question-answer should be used in the teaching method.
- Dance, acting and handicraft should get a place in the teaching method.
- In the method of teaching, the child's experiences and solar senses should be used.

Describing the teaching method as the best method, Tagore has written, "Teaching while traveling is the best method."

Another important principle of teaching method is action principle. Tagore considered action necessary for the education of body and mind. According to him, the child must be trained in some handicraft. They are seen accepting climbing trees, jumping, running after a cat or dog, plucking fruits, laughing, shouting, clapping, acting as essential techniques or devices of teaching. They want to teach various subjects like biology, science, astronomy, geology etc. in the natural environment, in which the child can learn through experience, interest and doing. Thus he supported psychological methods of teaching.

### **Place of teacher according to Tagore**

Tagore believed that only man can teach man. He gave an important place to the teacher in his education plan and he considered the teacher to be the main pillar.

- 'The teacher should believe in the purity of the child and behave with him with love and sympathy.
- Teachers should pay less attention to bookish knowledge and create such an environment in which children keep learning on their own through their own experiences while being active.
- Teachers should keep encouraging the child to do creative work.

## **Tagore's educational views on teacher**

Tagore gave important place to teachers and asked them to perform the following activities

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- The teacher should trust the children with great love and affection, sympathy and empathy.
- Instead of emphasizing on bookish education, the teacher should provide a conducive environment to the child so that he can engage himself in useful and creative activities and learn from his experiences.
- The teacher should always be busy in stimulating the creative abilities of the children so that they remain engaged in creative activities and experiences.
- A teacher should be celibate, solitary, knowledgeable, thoughtful, have a unique personality and a great person.
- A teacher should have qualities like service, sacrifice, cooperation, joy, dutifulness etc.
- Tagore had called harsh teachers as jail wardens.

## **Tagore's views on school**

The school should be similar to the ashram prevalent in ancient India.

- Should be located away from the city.
- In the sweet and peaceful lap of nature.
- In a secluded place, under the open sky, in forests and fields with trees.
- School should be concerned with the whole of life and all its aspects.
- There should be a large building in which teachers and students live together (residential school).

## **Role of students according to Tagore**

Children were described as divine light. Expecting some essential qualities from students -

- Humility in behavior
- Orderliness and purity in conduct
- Adherence to rules and regulations
- Cleanliness of body and environment
- Discipline in personal and social life
- Isolation from faulty things
- independent thinking
- high ambition
- Experience of inner strength
- unmarried life
- internal control
- attention
- self experience

- Scientific approach

Today Rabindranath Tagore's institutions hold a special place in the world education system. His contribution in the field of education is as unique as his poetry. At the time of his death, the Senate of Calcutta University had said - "Through him, India has given a message to mankind through the study of his literature, philosophy, education and art. Through him he has achieved immortal fame and has raised the status of India in the world.

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