

Question → Discuss the educational philosophy of Ravindra Nath Tagore.

BRIEF LIFE SKETCH

Answer → On 6th May 1861, India was fortunate to have a man of multiplendid personality, Ravindra Nath Tagore. He was a poet and patriot, an educationist and artist, a social reformer, philosopher and a nationalist. He belonged to educated, rich and respected family of Bengal. The responsibility of his education remained mainly on the shoulders of his father Mahirishi Dandendra Nath Tagore. His father provided R.N. Tagore with education of Sanskrit language, Indian philosophy and astronomy. After a private education in India, he was sent to England in 1877 for becoming a barrister but he soon returned to India, as he got fed up with the dull education system. He got his education mostly at home by his self study.

He was a great philosopher of the 20th century. He had done profound study of Veda and Upanishada. He wrote a large number of poems, dramas, novels and short stories. Sometimes afterwards, he translated 'Gitanjali' into English which brought him Noble Prize in 1913 and world wide recognition. Calcutta university adared him the degree of Doctor of Literature. In 1915, India government ad ednowed him with knight-hood, which he returned after the notorious Jalyanwala Bagh 'massacre' to express his

anger. Mahatama Gandhi called him 'Gurua' and every one started calling him 'Gurudev'.

He was a 'great educationist too. And that is why established 'Shantiniketan' grew into a World University, called 'Vishwa-Bharati' on 22nd Oct 1921. It is a place of learning in philosophy, Art and Literature for the whole world's culture and civilization. He also established 'Shriniketan', 3 km away from Shantiniketan in 1922 for the educational ~~at~~ development of the village people. But on 7th August 1941, India lost another great multisplendid personality, ^{R. N. Tagore} and his death was mourned the world over.

PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHTS OF TAGORE

Tagore did profound study of Veda and Upanishada in his early life. He was very much influenced with the philosophical thoughts of Veda and ~~Upanish~~ Upanishada. He read it from the human point of view and ^{later} made it the basis of his life and education. His philosophical thought was ^{that} God is omnipresent. He is present in every living things. On the basis of his philosophical thoughts, he wanted to bring the feeling of unity and integrity among people. That is why, Tagore's philosophical thoughts are called 'Vishwa Bodh Darshan' by some intellectual and learned people.

METAPHYSICS OF TAGORE'S VISHWA BODH DARSHAN

Metaphysics is the branch of philosophy that deals with nature of existence, truth and knowledge. It is a study of beyond physic.

Tagore believed in the absolute and immortal existence of God and accepted this world as his best creation. He believed that God is omnipresent and to achieve God is the ultimate goal of human life. According to Tagore, human being is a soulful being and so he emphasized the realization of spiritual feelings is the ultimate goal of human being. He regarded this world and man as the reflection of God. To achieve the path of God, one should have love and affection for human beings which can create the feelings of unity and integrity.

EPISTEMOLOGY OF TAGORE'S VISHWA BODH DARSHAN

Tagore has emphasized that among human beings, nature and international relations, there exists a basic unity and love and realisation of this fact is the goal of human life.

He gave emphasis on the physical as well as spiritual knowledge. He believed that physical knowledge is important that we can gain through

our senses. And spiritual knowledge is sacred knowledge, which we can gain through love and affection. It is love and affection that unites human beings. ~~It is not~~ By keeping the feeling of love affection and respect we can achieve God. In other words, he wanted to say that we should serve our society, human beings because it is the message of God. Thus by fulfilling the message of God we can achieve Him.

ETHICS

BEHAVIOURISM OF TAGORE'S VISWA BODH

DARSHAN

Tagore emphasized on the good behaviour of human beings. Tagore believed that ~~man~~ human's behaviour is based on love and affection. ~~Man~~ Humankind should be kind, benevolent and must possess love in his heart towards every object on the earth. Men should be healthy, pure from his heart and sensitive. Without love, there is possibility of neither the service of God nor the service of human beings. Service of human beings humankind is the service of God. Thus Tagore wanted to inculcate respect, love and affection among human beings and elevate his soul. He disapproved any discrimination between man and man and advocated unity and love among ~~all~~ people of the world.

TAGORE'S PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION →

MEANING OF EDUCATION → Tagore was deadly against the then prevalent system of education which snatched the child from the lap of Nature very early in life, confined him within the boundaries of school and then put him into an office or factory.

According to Tagore, God reveals Himself through nature more effectively than through man-made institutions. Hence the education of the child should be under natural surroundings so that he develops love for all things around him.

Definition of education according to Tagore

“That education is highest which not only imparts information and knowledge to us, but also promotes love, and fellow-feeling between us and the living beings of the world.”

This was the reason why he selected a natural and secluded area near an open jungle place for the location and establishment of his 'Shanti Niketan'.

Tagore believed that, education is very important and necessary in human life. His educational philosophy is that, education is that social process through which men do materialistic development and achieve spiritual fulfillment.

Definition of Education according to Tagore's Materialistic point of view

" True education consists in knowing the use of any useful material that has been collected, to know its real nature and to build along with life a real shelter for life."

Definition of Education according to Tagore's spiritual point of view

" The highest education is that which makes our life in harmony with all existence."

AIMS OF EDUCATION

1) Physical Development → Tagore believed that the healthy mind lives in a healthy body. Hence, he insisted that the first aim of education should be develop the child physically. For this, he prescribed various physical activities as swimming, diving in ponds, climbing on trees, plucking fruits and flowers and various types of games and sports in the company of natural phenomena. He also prescribed healthy and wholesome diet for children.

2) Mental Development → According to Tagore, the second aim of education should be

To promote mental development of children. For him, mental development includes the development of thinking power, imagination power and intellectual power. He advocated that men should be intellectual as their intellect help to compare between things, to bring out the difference between good and bad, to innovate and create new things, to obtain spiritual fulfillment and make his materialistic life happy. But he believed that their intellect can be developed in the natural surroundings.

3) Social Development → Tagore was of view that education should be such to bring about social development. He advocated that education should be according to interest and capacity of the individual. But such development is possible only in the world society. He himself wrote "Next to the Nature, the child should be brought into touch with the stream of social behaviour." Only social contacts can develop the sense of social service in people which can result in social development.

4) Cultural Development AND Awakening of the feelings of Nationalism and Internationalism → He advocated that through education, children should be acquainted with the ideals and values of national

culture and it helps in the cultural development as well as awakening of the feeling of nationalism. But he feared that the narrow nationalism can be the cause of impediment in the way of development. So, he also advocated the awakening of the feelings of internationalism. That is why, ~~and~~ not only national but international culture and civilization got an important place in the curriculum of 'Vishwa Bharti'.

5) Moral Development → Tagore believed that education should teach children self-discipline, tolerance, courtesy and inner freedom that helps in the moral development of children.

6) Financial Development → But Tagore also advocated that the education should bring financial gain to the people. So that they may enjoy the materialistic pleasure.

7) Spiritual Development → Tagore was of firm view that the highest education promotes love and fellow feeling among the people of the world. And where there is love, fellow feeling and brotherhood, there is national and international welfare. And once there is the feeling of national and ~~international~~ international welfare after that there ~~is~~ ^{also} spiritual develops spiritual feelings

CURRICULUM → According to Tagore, curriculum, should be such as to develop and individual physically, mentally, morally, socially and spiritually to the utmost limits. For this, a curriculum based on activities and broad experiences in real life situation is necessary. He emphasized that together with various subjects, different types of co-curricular activities should be made an essential part of curriculum.

Curriculum of Tagore's Vishwa Bharati are as follows:

Subject → History, Geography, Mother-tongue, English, Science, Arts, Nature Study, Sanskrit, vocation, professional and technical subjects

co-curricular activities → Horticulture, Gardening, Field study, Laboratory work, Original creations, Arts, sculpture, Dancing, singing, painting, designing, sewing, cutting, knitting, cooking and etc.

There is facility from early primary education to higher education. From class 1 to 12, apart from their education based curriculum, social work and co-curricular activities are also compulsory. ^{Education of} National as well as International language, culture, knowledge, science and

technology are also the part of Vishwa
Bhart's curriculum.

METHODS OF TEACHING

Tagore condemned the artificial and mechanical methods of education prevalent during his times. He emphasized that, methods should be full of life and vitality. They should be based on the real problems of life. Tagore considered the following methods of teaching as proper and effective -

1) Teaching while walking → Tagore believed that, education imparted in the class room doesn't influence the mind and the body of the child. He remains passive, inert and inactive. Tagore was of opinion that during walking, the mind keeps awake and the child easily grasps knowledge of things and by ~~becoming~~ becoming directly in contact with them. In his words "Teaching while walking is the best method of education."

2) Self study method → self study method is the ancient method of teaching and learning. Tagore himself did self study of Veda and Upanishada. But regarding this method, Tagore has give three suggestions:

(a) Children should be made to know the language properly and to develop their mental ability to understand what they do self study.

(b) Children should be instructed properly regarding the method of self study.

(c) After self study, there must be discussion to sort out their problems.

(3) Discussion and Question-Answer Method →

According to Tagore, this method will make children think logically and argue out. Thus, they will be able to develop and gain essential knowledge.

(4) Activity Method → Tagore believed that the activity method activates all the faculties of the body and mind. But he gave some suggestions :-

(a) Activity should be full of life and vitality and according to the interest of children.

(b) It should be based on the real problems of life.

(c) Children should be free to use those activities and there should be no problem in using it.

(e) Tagore included some handicraft, excursion, physical activity, investigation and research of nature under activity method in Vishwa Bharti.

(5) Explanation and Synthesis Method →

Explanation method is very important in explaining any matter separately. Synthesis method helps in combining separate ideas regarding any matter. Both these methods are important in teaching. But Tagore believed that during these methods, examples should be related to the real life and children should be actively involve in taking decision.

(6) Practical Method → Tagore believed that for science and other skillful works, practical method is important. Children should be free to ask questions regarding their problems. There are three steps of practical method →

- (a) Teacher show the practical method in the presence of children
- (b) Children follow that practical method.
- (c) After that children practice it.

TEACHER → Tagore believed that only man can teach another. Thus he gave a very important place to teacher in his scheme of education. According to Tagore -

- (a) Believing in the purity and innocence of child, he should behave with him with great love, affection, sympathy and consideration.

- (b) Instead of emphasizing book learning, the teacher should provide conducive environment to the child so that he engages himself in useful and constructive activities and learn by his own experience.
- (c) After the study of individual differences of children, teacher should provide them proper education.
- (d) As children follow and learn the behaviour of the teacher very quickly. Therefore, the teacher should be learned, well-versed in his subject and must possess ideal character.
- (e) Teacher must possess the feelings of nationalism and internationalism and thus they can contribute in awakening the feelings of nationalism and internationalism among children.

STUDENT → (a) Tagore accepted the individual differences of students and advocated their education according to their interest and understanding level.

- (b) Tagore wanted that students should get up early in the morning.
- (c) They should be careful about their physical cleanliness.

- (d) They should follow rules and instructions.
- (e) They should be kind, humble, benevolent and helpful.
- (f) They should admire beauty and Nature and keep positive feelings towards it.
- (g) They should obtain both worldly and spiritual knowledge.
- (h) They should have respect for their teachers and should inspire themselves, only then they can go ahead in their life.
- (i) They should keep themselves away from uncivilized, faulty and bad behaviours.

DISCIPLINE → Tagore believed in internal discipline rather than the rule of conduct. He also believed in the social environment of discipline in which teacher should ~~stand~~ ^{stand} proof before pupil, it leads to spontaneous character and discipline among students. Punishment for students to develop their character was fully criticized by him. He believed that in this natural world, nothing could develop by external force, it is fully a matter of internal spiritual inspiration. As it can say that teachers and students are reciprocal. Whatever the teacher reflects through their deeds, students

will reflect in return.

For strong development of self discipline, it is also needful to attach with cultural and social activities as well as sports. In such a colourful atmosphere, students are well discipline even by any mistake they rectify by introspection.

SCHOOL → Tagore also defined the concept of the school in his own way. School should provide peace, attention and beauty beauty of nature like our ancient Gurukul Ashram. He believed that education is also yoga, it needs peace environment for proper education. He also emphasized on school as a representative of nation which assimilate culture and civilization of nation. As well as school should also provide the ^{education of} important international culture, civilization and education thereby it feeds the students universahood. Thus the bottom ~~tip~~ line is that the above said ideology of school fulfill the Vishwa Bharti of Tagore.

There are different department for different education in ~~Field~~ ~~are some~~ Vishwa Bharti - Institute of Humanities and Social Science, Institute of Science, Institute of fine Arts, Institute of Music, Dance and Drama, Institute of Education, Institute of

Tagore studies, Museum, Department of Adult and Continuing Education and Extension, Centre of Rural Industries, Centre for Rural studies, Department of Social work, Institute of Agriculture, etc.

DISCIPLINE → Tagore believed the internal discipline rather than the rule of

OTHER VARIOUS FORMS OF EDUCATION -

Gurudev also expressed his view on ^{the} various forms of education described as given below:-

- (A) ~~General~~ ^{Mass} Education → Tagore had bitter experience of British period. 70% of village population was illiterate. He knew the imbalance between western luxurious life and immediate poverty-line Indian life. So, he emphasized on the general education, mass education, free and essential ^{educa-}tion for children in town and village both. He also emphasized on adult education. He believed that 70% population of India lives in village. Therefore common problem of the village should always consider in general education.

(B) Women Education → Gurudev more clearly defined the women education. According to him the primary education should be same for boys and girls. On intermediate level home science should be essential for girls because in future she has to lead a role of mother and wife and higher education should be again equal for both. He always emphasized on impartial education among boys and girls as well as equal privilege of any type of education for them. He believed that the male and female are both the parallel wheel of the same cart. So women education is equally important and contributory as men for nation's growth.

(C) Religious Education → On religious education Tagore's view was very descriptive. According to him religion is such a spiritual feeling surrounding with vibrant wishes to infinites. He didn't believe in hypocrisy. He criticized the ~~conservative~~ conservative ideology of Hindu Mythology. He ~~connected~~ connected religion to humanity, brotherhood and universal remedy. He clearly told that religion can't be defined either speech or epics. Religion can be only understood by leading natural and disciplined life. Especially for that, he emphasized morning prayer in school. He believed to celebrate birthday of religious messenger of God and insisted to follow ~~the~~

their preachings. He emphasized to feel religion in nature, art and beauty of music. He also emphasized to help poor and to support the needy people is directly religious activity. He believed that only mankind co ordination, unanimous feeling serve religious duty.

(D) Commercial education → Tagore made more clear that the commercial education is very important for economic development of ^{the} country. Although our ^{nation} is agriculture ^{use}-based country as well as small scale industry. Therefore, here it could be special education for agriculture and small scale industry. He also did not think to deprive the nation ~~for~~ from modern and technical education. Therefore he also ~~emphasized~~ emphasized on such education which improve the large scale industry in future.

(E) National and International Education → Even Tagore didn't have proper educational planning for national and international education but from his overall thoughts, it was quite clear that he wanted to make the people ~~familiar~~ ~~and~~ aware of his own language, literature, religion and philosophy. In spite of that he put emphasis on the international language, literature, religion and philosophy.

Basic principles of Tagore's Educational Philosophy are as under:-

- 1) The medium of instruction should be mother-tongue.
- 2) Children should be provided full freedom to live in natural surrounding and learn by doing their own experiences.
- 3) For developing creative faculties, the child should be provided opportunities for self expression.
- 4) Children should not be forced to receive knowledge through books. Instead they should be encouraged to learn from original sources.
- 5) Indian children should not be given education in English.
- 6) Methods of teaching should be according to the interest of students.
- 7) Students should be treated with love and affection.