

**EDUCATION AND SOCIETY: PHILOSOPHICAL EXPLORATIONS OF
RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S EDUCATIONAL SOCIOLOGY.**

Fousiya. A.M

Research scholar, Department of Philosophy, Maharajas College, Ernakulam, Kerala. email:
fousiya018@gmail.com.

Dr. Neena. T.S

Associate Professor & Research Guide, Department of Philosophy, Maharajas, College,
Ernakulam. Kerala.

Abstract:

Tagore's contribution to educational sociology can be found in the latter half of the 19th century. Problems affecting the common people's lives were his philosophy's core concern. The fundamental doctrine of Tagore's social philosophy developed through his various writings and practices regarding rural reconstruction. He constructed this in light of his life experience and analysis of social situations and forces in India and worldwide. His educational sociology is mainly associated with individuals or groups and the entire class that makes the nation alive and active. The aims and ideals of social reconstruction were identical to those of social education. Tagore advocates that Actual social regeneration is possible by educating all without any conditions. He argues that "the primary objective of the educational institution is not merely to educate one's limbs and mind to be inefficient readiness for all emergencies but to be in perfect tune in the symphony of response between life and world to find the balance of their harmony which is wisdom" (Tagore72). This article deeply analyzes Tagore's ideas related to educational sociology.

Keywords: educational sociology, social reconstruction. Rural reconstruction, social education, social regeneration.

Introduction:

Tagore, the literary genius, is greatly concerned for humans and society. He used education as a key to entering all sociological problems and eradicating all the social evils. So, he always pleaded for the right education for all. Apart from genuine knowledge none can leave properly. So, educating the masses is considered to be a big mission for Tagore. And he continued till his death. Tagore categorically declared that all the problems faced by India are due to the lack of proper education. "The widest road leading to the solution of all our problems is education" (Tagore, letter from Russia,p.58)

In countries like India and China agricultural sectors, play a crucial role in the development of the country. Unfortunately, there is less consideration for the upliftment of the rural section. So, Tagore did his best part in the upliftment by rural reconstruction in a practical way. The considerations of the villages are never done with sympathy and self-centered way. It should be

the first priority in national integration. There should not be any distinction between towns and villages. The miserable condition of the poor, ignorant, and downtrodden section of society led him to the cause of social reconstruction and village upliftment and made him decide to devote all his time and energy.

For this, he advocated full-fledged education that can build an individual with all-round development. Quality education and scientific studies done through the mother tongue can make miracles in the field of education. Additions to Western life and imposing Western education bring a dividing gap in society. We can find a departure from the traditions and cultures that we had. A child without knowing society cannot feel affection towards nations and the world. So, it is very important to ensure social values in education. Tagore pleaded for equalizing education in all fields. “Tagore considered society to be an essential medium for the individual freedom and development of the child.” (Ravi157)

Analysis of Tagore’s social philosophy

Tagore, the spiritual humanist always gives priority to the betterment of each human. He was heavily compassionate toward society building. So, he critically evaluated all the components that, were essential for developing Indian society. He studied the history of India to follow the trend of its evolution. Due to the long years of colonization, India unknowingly adopted westernization in all fields. He shows his disappointment in social transformations and adaptation of external social components that affect people. He argued that it heavily destroyed the soul of real India. Marginalization and division in society are the effects of colonization. That gap cannot be filled till now. All developments and progress are built upon these separations. If the foundation is not strong, no matter how big a building is built. Likewise, when society is divided, we cannot achieve national progress.

Tagore’s social philosophy is associated with social reconstruction and national reclamation. It is only possible through education. Education is necessary for changing the mentality of the people. So, the development of the nation is deeply associated with the education of the people, which is mandatory for social integration. Cultural unity is the essential component of national-political unity, which is transferred only through education. Proper education can have the power to merge the different groups and communities of the country. India is the hub of cultural diversity and people living with different rituals and living conditions are also different. So, it is not surprising that, the cultural and social dilemmas among people. So apart from a good education, it is difficult to handle this situation. Samuel S. Ravi wrote about Tagore's social education in his book; “he gave maximum importance to community activities and social service in his educational plans” (Ravi 157-158) The ability to accept the other is also a great thing. Freedom of the mind is essential for this. This freedom only can be accessed through the help of education.

For social regeneration, the effort from society is essential. It is much more difficult for education to regenerate a society that doesn't hold good conduct and social values. He observed that "no sort or amount of formal education can save the child from their destructive effect.... good education of children is not possible unless good govern the society. ("message to the new education fellowship conference at Calcutta," viswabharati news, January 1938. transformations cannot be done by the educational institutions alone but should be done with the help of home, religious, and cultural institutions. so, with the help of society, education has the power to bring a new face to the society.

Analysis of Tagore's educational sociology.

Tagore, the educational reformer had a very iconic view of education and he successfully imparted it in his educational institutions. He had a distinct view of society and education. He tried to eradicate separation and marginalization in the society. He was aware of the fact that all distinction in society is due to misunderstandings and misconceptions. so, he established his idea of education in the amalgamation of naturalism, humanism, and educational sociology.

He pointed out that, education should be universal in nature. everyone has the equal right to get an education. Tagore was aware of the existing educational barriers to attaining higher education for common people. He strongly opposed this situation and he pointed out that, this would affect the entire nation. The so-called separation here also acted as a wall. "Every living society he pointed out, first attends to feeding and educating the people for the primary purpose of self-preservation". (MUKHERJEE 336). according to him, Russia is the most impressive example of mass education and found good results in it. But in India, the situation is the same as before due to so many reasons. The indifference of the states, cold-hearted approaches to fellow beings, and hoarding funds by the authorities are some of them.

He argued that all educational institutions are real in nature and have a close association with the people and nation. All institutions must be truly national in character and ensure goodwill, support, and respect for the nation. Ancient educational institutions like Nalanda, Taxila, and Vikramsila have always been associated with the soul of Indian tradition, apparently, modern educational institutions keep a distance from traditional educational practice and show attraction to Western model education. Tagore categorically asserts that all educational spheres must ensure effectiveness for the entire people.

He asserts that every educational institution is rooted in native land and shows reflection in curriculum, and contents. Tagore repeatedly criticized the British model of education imposed on children without any hesitation. British educated Indians for their needs. India is the only country where both the medium of instruction and learning is through a foreign language and the mother tongue is entirely different. "But in our current education, that way is blocked. For a long time, we have to be engaged in purely language learning". (Tagore,shikser herpher) Curriculums,

methods of teaching, aims, and ideals are implemented by the over-addiction of the Western culture. unwanted subjects were also included in the learning process. our education should ensure the development of full-fledged humans, not machines. “When we think well, we see that our education is not proportional to the way we will live” (Sikser Herpher”)

Tagore categorically asserts that education should ensure and maintain quality and fullness. He advocated that literacy is necessary for every individual without any distinction. it would help humans to think over others. He claims that mass education is not limited to literacy but more for the development of the rural ones. In India, we can find evidently that the distinction and discrimination in the field of education such no initiatives have been taken by any authorities for it. For villages and rural people getting literary or basic education is a favour. Tagore asserts that “it is not enough for a farmer boy only to grow into a good farmer, but he should also grow into a good citizen of the country”. (Rabindra racanavali, vol.XII, p.516). he was critical about the Wardha scheme during the initial period because it presented in the form of different kinds of education for the rich and the poor and excluded play from its curriculum. (Mukherjee page338)

As a poet, he pleaded that giving aesthetic training and aesthetic molding for the villagers can help cultivate interest in fine arts and crafts. It will help them to create interest in these areas and they can have inner peace and pleasure from this. he was greatly impressed by giving proper and quality education to all the people of Russia without any divergence. No reservation for any class or creed and compromise in the quality of education. they provide better education on a large scale and they provide suitable training in arts and literature and scientific-technological education. “What is noteworthy is that they do not want to bring up the common people who refuse the higher classes. They have a hundred percent facilities in respect of education, comfort, and amenities of life.it is so mainly because there are no people here except the common people. In the Book of Life, they do not form mere appendices; they constitute all its chapters”. (Tagore, letter from Russia .84)

He also emphasizes the importance of the mother tongue in education. He shows his aggression towards the over-dominance of foreign languages in all fields of society, especially, In the field of education. A Foreign language cannot enter into the level of thought and does not encourage creative thinking capability. it only promotes memorization. That is the reason why education becomes a difficult procedure from childhood. “if education does not enter into the deeper strata, of the society and does not attain permanence through mingling with the living stream of the mother tongue, then, however much it may bubble up and dance like foam on the surface, it can only become an object of temporary beauty of temporary beauty but can never become a lasting fountain of life” (“prasanga-katha,” Rabindra-racanavali, vol.XII, p.516).all the important activities and cultural events are accompanied by the assistance of English and it will trouble the common class in the society. He recommended that all stages of education be done through the mother tongue which will help to build good communication among people without any

distinction and help to accumulate knowledge from effective sources. Even science and technology are also imparted through the mother tongue and it will help the masses to learn effectively. To highlight this concept Tagore pointed to the example of Japan having intellectual and material success by assimilating Western knowledge through her own language “I feel the contrast very strongly in Japan. In that country, the old world presents itself with some ideal of perfection, in which man has varied opportunities for self-revelation in art, ceremonial, religious faith, and customs expressing the poetry of social relationships. There one feels that deep delight of hospitality which life offers to life”. (Tagore, creative unity [EBook #23136])

Tagore also highlights the importance of small education sectors like ‘pathsalas’ everywhere in the villages. That will help to make people more concerned about the importance of education. The wide spreading of educational institutions makes education cheap and it can be accessed by everyone in the nation. It will be a critique of the prevailing system of education; that consumed from the common man for education.

He deeply criticizes the bookish educational strategy by the Britishers and now also Indians blindly following. Bookish knowledge cannot provide knowledge of life and the concrete social context “Our modern education is producing a habit of mind which is ever weakening in us the spiritual apprehension of truth—the truth of a person as the ultimate reality of existence” (creative unity eBook #23136.). He advocated that all educational institutions must ensure to teach the importance of society, its structure, history, culture, and tradition; through direct experience. He also claims that all educational institutions must ensure the development of feelings for others and acts of hospitality and social service for fellow beings. And education must provide economic independence and self-sufficiency. Through education, an individual can attain social fitness and efficiency in all respects. The educated being should be capable of taking place in the economic setup of society and ability to face numerous problems of everyday life.

Conclusion:

Tagore’s educational sociology is mainly focused on the upliftment of society through education. As a nationalist educator, Tagore always pleaded for the empowerment of the nation by empowering the villagers or rural sections. “Human regeneration is his sole aim and only ideal. His educational system is a means to achieve this aim. He, therefore, bases his educational system on essential human virtues such as freedom, purity, sympathy, perfection, and world brotherhood”. (S.S Chandra & Rajendra K. Sharma, page no.276) His empowerment is only through proper education which is suitable for society without any marginalization. He always advocated for educating the masses which would help to wash off the social divide. A good education can promise good social behaviors such as acceptance, consideration, friendliness, good manners, cooperativeness, tolerance, and large-heartedness in an individual. He also points out that education should be universal in nature and it should ensure the all-around development of the child. Education must be given full-fledged information about the society culture and history of

the nation. He also points out that the mother tongue is much efficient for touching the deep sense of the individual and it is important for making the realization of society. He advocated that society not lie only in towns or cities but in villages and also in rural areas. His concept of rural reconstruction has deep significance; because nobody else would do it. "Tagore's political and social writings during 1905-10 mark the beginning of social thinking in modern India". (Tagore's approach to social problems, Dr. S. Sinhap. 61). Tagore's concept of social reconstruction was greatly supported by Gandhi's Sarvodaya movement.

Most significant recent developments in our country in socio-political thinking and the actual measures adopted for social and rural reconstruction as also those in the field of mass education have followed the ideologies followed by Tagore. So undoubtedly, we can say that Tagore's socio-educational philosophy is mainly concerned with social regeneration and rural reconstruction through ideal education.

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