

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S PATRIOTISM, HUMANISM AND
EDUCATION**

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Abstract

Tagore lived and worked during a period of crucial social and political transformation in India. He reacted the deep and passionate moments with the help of in memorable words. He was profoundly influenced by its liberal humanistic thought and its hope and optimism. He contributed to a large extent in the making of a modern India. His views and ideals are still significant and a thing of necessary for modern India. This paper intends to bring into light the views and ideals which seems to become dormant in modern India. Infact, the age is in vital need of it. Like all the leading intellectuals of his time like, Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi in particular was an idealist to change India.

Key Words: Patriotism, Humanist, Illiteracy, Environment

Introduction

Rabindranath Tagore was not only a poet and a philosopher, but was also a dramatist, actor, producer, musician, painter, patriot, social reformer, educationalist, idealist and humanist. Gandhi therefore had bestowed the title of 'Gurudev'. The relevance of his thought and views was not only for his age but it is equally important and practicable for modern age. His thoughts and visions have deep meaning which is significant for all times. Tagore belonged to a revolutionary family. He was deeply influenced by Upanishads and Buddhism. He himself said that the verses of Upanishads and the teaching of Buddha had been the the matter of spirit, that endowed with boundless vital growth. He had used them both in his own life and preaching. By his own admission his formative influences were from a confluence of three movements which were active in the India of his time: the protestant religious movement of Rammohan Roy (1772-1833), the literary movement of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838-94), and the National movement.

Tagore has given his views on various fields and the essence of his thoughts was always of humanist and Universalist. They deal with rural and agricultural development, political reforms and cultural aspects. Tagore turned his dreams into reality at Shantiniketan Viswa Bharti University. The best of Tagore's personality was that he was the critic of life.

Literature and Tagore

Rabindranath Tagore began his literary career under the influence of vaishnava poems. Later on he was influenced by Kalidas. He read English literature and was deeply influenced by English writers like; Dante, Heine, Shakespeare, Browne, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Browning and Tennyson. He started his literary by writing a Bengali poem 'Banphul'. He created new form of arts which influenced many. Tagore writes about literature that our modern mind, a hasty tourist in its rush over the miscellaneous, ransacks cheap markets of curious which mostly are delusions. So long the words remain in prose form they do not give lasting feeling but the moment they are put into rhythm they vibrate into radiance.

Tagore believed that the purpose of poetry is to withdraw man from materialism and to bring him close to his surroundings and realities. Poet and poetry should create a communion with man and universe. Tagore came further to say that poetry is an expression of emotional energy of the creative. He said that man had the fund of emotional energy not completely occupied with self preservation.

Literature without emotions, touch of life and sensitiveness start losing its true perspectives. As modern literature he said that our modern mind, a hasty tourist in its rush over the miscellaneous, ransacks cheap markets of curious which mostly are delusions. As poet Tagore his works of art and poetry have many characteristics: originality and variety of themes, mysticism and romanticism, love for nature, humanism, lyricism, universality etc. Tagore is also known for his love poetry. The love poems are filled with intensity and charm. His love poems are said to be as by one of the critic; love flows from heart mind and soul in continuous stream assuming all different forms in its windings from the gross to the spiritual, from known to the unknown, from finite to the infinite.

Rabindranath Tagore has rightly been acknowledged as a great poet , not only of India or of orient but of the entire world.

Patriotism and Politics

Tagore's patriotism was based on his love for motherhood, but beside that important thing that he looked for was higher level of humanity. Patriotism for Tagore should follow with ideal of humanity. One should fight to protect the motherland and preserve the right, but as a human being. He talked about universal freedom. He believed that nationalism can be attained if every individual is made free; to explore his potential genius, to contribute what is best in one to general mankind. His patriotism was based on the concept of Abraham Lincoln, with malice towards none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as god gives us to see the right- let us strive on finish the work we are in. In the words of R. Venkataraman "Tagore was in many ways the prophet of New India, in national poet and Bard. Tagore came into the world when a new age was beginning to take shape. For, one thing, a sense of nationhood was being felt, for the first time. In one memorable line of the great song that has now become our national anthem. Tagore linked all our lands together in one shrinkala."¹ Tagore preached the 'politics of subservience'. In reality, Tagore was one of the most uncompromising critics of British rule in India. His views expressed were extreme and hard than many of the reputed leader and freedom fighter. The thought of Tagore is relevant for modern or the present age. As, we find Tagore never wanted India to be free in the state to offer the best gift. She has to the world and should be in a state to accept from others. Rabindranath Tagore was said to be 'docile' who would not

criticize British rule. But in reality it was the liberty of Britishers he admired not the brutality. And even today India is in deep need of liberalism. He was disillusioned by the exploitation of mankind i.e. India by Britishers. In the present time, we still find the downtrodden weak being exploited by the strong. Therefore he advocated for mankind humanity not freedom for nation or country. Freedom of humanity, practices like; caste system prevails, the people of lower caste are restricted to enter temples etc are still. Changes have been brought up, social reformation has come, but still there is lot to change. He never liked the in secularism, indifferences to others and exclusiveness in human beings. As Tagore believed that the union of hearts between to build the notion to get rid of obstacles in the attainment of goal and that must be removed first. That is very true in the present time where every individual is a hindrance for others, development looking only for ones progress. One does not the ruler and the ruled cannot be brought out by suppression, administration and dictation. So, the Indian government in present situation should come up with practice not in mere words about people's welfare. Every Indian should be given their right and should devote their attention in discharging their duty. It is time to come with a thought 'we must earn our right and we get what we deserve'. No one should be paralyzed, and not made to develop a sense of importance under anyone. Another important thing needed is even hesitate to block the ways for others, to stop them from rising above. If this is the situation how are Indians going to progress. We need to think about universality and humanity. Until and unless, we don't rise to the level above these thinking, the progress of India is impossible. This proves Tagore's farsightedness as emphasized on universality and humanity in the attainment of freedom.

Politics has now become a degraded state of affair. It does not work for the goal of welfare and peace in the society. The moral values are gone in political leaders, reformers and everyone associated with it. Tagore always talked about the reform of the society. Politics need to come with social self-help and sacrifice. He advocated for constructive work. He looked for moral values within mankind with rising heights and progress. Tagore laid importance to samaj (society) not the word state. Samaj is a living organism who can look after the material, cultural and spiritual need of an individual. But in past few decades the concept of samaj has changed, almost it has vanished so the co-operation. There is only a political union of people for mechanical purpose. Instead of looking for mechanical comfort and need we should look for brotherhood. Tagore emphasized on the fact that if India has to come triumphantly in the field of progress at the world level internal contradictions of her society has to be put an end. This is still to be looked on and brought forward into practice. Tagore's vision towards society led to the establishment of 'Viswa Bhati', called Sriniketan. It was meant for the welfare for all. "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards each other in a spirit of brotherhood."²

Education

Tagore observed illiteracy and neglect of education as the main source of India's social backwardness, but also as a great constraint that restricts the economic development in India. Education for Tagore was a complete development of life, based on truth. He avoided avidya which meant sat yourself free from avidya and know your true soul and be saved from the hold of self which traps and impressions mankind. Education helps in the development of the country

by developing the life of the people. He wanted education based on socialism. A human being should live for freedom, for peace and for justice. He believed that Child develops more with freedom and through faith in approach that brings social order. Book knowledge does not interest the child, as a child finds it difficult to hold complete attention for a long period. Brain gets the feeling of monotony with words. Tagore criticized the curriculum in the schools of India. Tagore considered it impractical, non- harmonious and with no imaginations. Too many books bring too little creativity. In his school, he tried to get rid of these problems. He was in favour of wide curriculum with variety of subjects and activities from which students could select what they wanted. He tried to cultivate both thinking and imaginative abilities of students. He considered the faculty of thinking and the faculty of imagination are the two most essential faculties for the purpose of living. Tagore said; “To accept the truth of our own age it will be necessary to establish a new education on the basis, not of nationalism, but of a wider relationship of humanity”.³

Limitation of education with classroom and curriculum does justice neither to the child's nature nor to the manifold needs of society. Tagore gave a new orientation to academic work but at the same time he also looked for the education of man's emotions. This sort of education only provides degree and does not built a personality and life. He always revolted against the unrealistic, alien, missionary and mechanical education of the Britishers. This sort of education does not enlighten people but keeps ignorant. True education is the base of right construction. Free mind developed on free criticism result in proper foundation of society with valuable reason above human behavior. He wanted that an individual should know an individual. But this concept is not known in the society. People collect degree for self satisfaction and enrichment of mechanical knowledge to gain economy. Socialization of society has no place. Education should be the basis of all constructive work, which should aim at the growth of the society. This does not mean that he only in favour of cultural moral and spiritual development, but by the growth of society he meant socio-economic development. Education should not be based on instruction rather it should be based on experience and absorption. He favoured music, painting and other fine arts and crafts their due place as a means of self-expression and fulfilment. Tagore viewed History as a man's cultural legacy and should be the significant part of the curriculum. He considered history as a process of racial and social synthesis. He believed in one history, history of man and that should be taught to the students. He was anxious to find room for as many languages as possible so as to open the doors to many cultures of the world.

Tagore stated open-air classroom surrounded with nature. This view of Tagore was ideal for Indian education system till date. We often come to hear about lack of infrastructure like building and classroom for classroom teaching. If we adopt the idea laid down by Tagore it would solve large part of problem regarding classroom. Tagore had an ideal thought about school which is practicable and implacable for 21st century India. He believed that school must be an ashram, where man should gather to attain the highest end of life, in peace with nature. Where, life is not meditative, but fully awakens in activities. The child must be made to realize man's world as god's kingdom. The folk education is very indigenous to India. It seems all in need in present century. Education should not be based on the cost of others. There more emphasis should be paid to the development of intellect, emotion and entire personality. Education system should not be a distribution centre of knowledge. It should make a mankind

but not a man of isolation. In this scientific world the relation between the teacher and taught has changed. It has become a professional relation.

Tagore, views regarding education was brought into practices at 'Shantiniketan'. In the words of Satyajit Ray about Shantiniketan; "I consider three years I spent in Shantiniketan as the most fruitful of my life..... Shantiniketan opened my eyes for the first time to the splendorous of Indian and Far eastern art. Untill then I was completely under the sway of western art, music and literature. Shantiniketan made me the combined product of East and West that I am."⁴

If Tagore were to see the India of today, more than half a century after independence, nothing perhaps would shock him so much as the continued illiteracy of the masses. He would see this as a total betrayal of what the nationalist leaders had promised during the struggle for independence—a promise that had figured even in Nehru's rousing speech on the eve of independence in August 1947. In view of his interest in childhood education, Tagore would not be consoled by the extraordinary expansion of university education.

Tagore had deep sense of the beauty of nature and the trees and clouds as their companionship. To him god man and nature are one. Man is complete only when identified with nature. Nature is a moral teacher and guide to man. Nature consoles and impels for goodness and virtue. A proper harmony can be established by bringing man and nature together. Tagore felt that there is no need of temples or any rites or ceremony whereas there is need of ashram where nature and man can unite. He believed in union and accord with man and nature. Nature is abode of god. The various aspects of nature are the symbols of eternity.

"The light of thy music.....(gitanjali 11).

Unlike Gandhi, Rabindranath would not resent the development of modern industries in India, or the acceleration of technical progress. Tagore was concerned that machines should not dominate on people, but he did not opposed in use of modern technology for welfare purpose. In *CRISIS IN CIVILIZATION* Tagore has talked about "The mastery over the machine," as he said that British have consolidated their sovereignty over their vast empire, has been kept a sealed book, to which due access has been denied to this helpless country. Rabindranath Tagore had a deep interest in the environment - he was particularly concerned about deforestation and initiated a "festival of tree-planting" (vriksha-ropana) in 1928. He wanted increased private and government commitments to environmentalism; but he was not completely against modern industry and technology.

According to Radhakrishnan, Rabindranath Tagore's voice has been a comfort and stimulus to many a young Indian in changing times. When everyone is weighed down by the burden of defeated hopes and stand dazed at the conquest of science and when mind lose their moorings and sense of direction, Rabindranath Tagore is an instilling hopes into our hearts and coverage into our minds.

Tagore was a writer who first gained for modern India a place on the world literary scene. He was a great poet, a great man and a noble prize winner. Tagore's ideals of life are very well expressed in 'heaven of freedom'. 'Gitanjali' deals with the poet's great ideals and philosophy of life. It spells the powerful reflection of his intuitive and meditative mind. It is a meditation on god, man and nature. Tagore was a prophet of love, harmony and fellowship. We need to reject the narrow dividing walls rather look for humanity as an organic. His thought

depict a profound Universalist and humanist vision that make them significant for all times and all places

Tagore's song '*jana gana mana adhinayaka*' (1911) appeals for larger humanity was chosen as our national anthem by Gandhi and Nehru, and remains a symbol of modern India's birthright of universal humanity. The Constitution of India sustains that birthright.

Rabindranath Tagore being a most researched figured, but very few people know about his death. According to Economic Times, August 8, 2016, he died due to prostate cancer, which kept him immobilising from 1940 onwards till his death in 1941.

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