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**THE EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE AND DR.  
RADHAKRISHNAN**

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**ABSTRACT:** *This paper deals with the multifaceted personalities of Gurudeo Rabindranath Tagore and Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, the great President of India. The writer tried to throw light on the vision, mission and contributions of both of these great men. Tagore's contribution as poet and as a philosopher and thinker is described. Similarly, Dr. Radhakrishnan's role as a great thinker, a philosopher and as an educationist is dealt with. It is an effort to compare the views of both these men and to analyze what is common in the thoughts underlying their philosophy. Though both hailed from different streams their thought on education had benefitted mankind immensely.*

**KEYWORDS:** Peculiar, Wizard, Doyen, Philosophical Analysis, Educational Scenario, Visionary, Genius.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

A Journey in to the realms of the history and civilization of India, brings forth the pictures of many brilliant gems dazzling bright on account of their great and unforgettable contribution to the peculiar fields they belonged to. This paper is an attempt to depict two such shining gems and their vision, mission and contribution to the field of education in particular and to society in general.

They can be described as great poets, writers, thinkers, philosophers, ideologists etc. One is Rabindranath Tagore, the poet par excellence and the other is Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, the ex-president of India. Though they had performed their roles as a poet and as a president very efficiently, a deeper look in to their lives reveals that they had been blessed with manifold hues of talents to their versatile personalities. Not only were they considered as great and successful during their lifetime, but the greatest part is that their ideas, ideals and exemplary service they have rendered to humanity had inspired numerous persons and still inspire and motivate many and the same will go on for many more years to come. The name fame and the fragrance of their inimitable personalities had spread not only to the nearby areas or countries but throughout the Universe. Hence they can be rightly described as truly ignited souls. Tagore can undoubtedly be called the wizard of poetic excellence and Dr. Radhakrishnan as the doyen of philosophic excellence. The former had delineated the beauty and depth of Indian art and literature to the entire world and the latter could popularize the Indian means, methods and approaches of life through the entire universe. These two great men are brought on the same platform here an account of their unique potential to inspire and motivate millions of people irrespective of their age, nationality, caste, creed or colour.

The contributions of these two persons fall in two different fields though the outcome can be categorized as one and the same. Their thought on education, philosophical analysis of the same put forth by both of them, showcase quite modern and innovative approaches to transform the entire educational scenario of India. The philosophy and perspectives they held on education are quite relevant and applicable now, even in the modern Indian context also, on

account of its being pertinent even now, irrespective of all the sea changes and advancements that science and technology had under gone, it is very essential to comprehend the importance and great value of the educational ideas and philosophy put forward by these two. Hence the educational philosophy of both of the great men is analyzed in detail. First of all let it be that of the great poetic philosopher Rabindranath Tagore. To gain insight in to this great man's vision and philosophy on education, a look at his background and personality is necessary.

### **Rabindranath Tagore**

The great poet Tagore is well known as Gurudev. From his childhood itself he had manifested all the signs of a great personality in the making. W.B. Yeats and all the poets and writers had very high esteem for Tagore. To quote W.B. Yeats, "no poet seems to me as famous in Europe as he is among us. He is as great in music as in poetry, and his songs are sung from the west of India in to Burma wherever Bengali is spoken." Really, Yeats has narrated the reality regarding Tagore. In his youth Tagore wrote much of natural objects. His writing is both religious and philosophical. Even the most simple objects of nature become so beautiful and melodious in the hands of this master craftsman. He had spoken of life itself, used to contemplate on life, its beauty and then to give expression to his thoughts. Not only Rabindranath, but his family has the legacy of producing great men out of its cradle since generations. When Rabidranath was a boy, he had all around him in his home literature and music. Tagore writes music for his words, and at every moment he is full of spontaneity, daring and surprise because he was writing quite naturally and from his heart. In almost all his poems there are images turning to God. Not only his poems but all his writings and even his life itself seemed very lucid and simple, that strove to glorify the mystery of God.

### **Tagore's Philosophy of Education**

While going deeper and deeper in to the life and works of Tagore, the fact that comes vividly to the fore is that the educational philosophy of Tagore was mainly the philosophy of his life itself. In this philosophy there is the sum total of the four fundamental philosophies of naturalism, humanism, internationalism and idealism. His philosophy is a depiction of fulfillment through a harmony with all things. There was no special treatise of his on education save a few. Hence his ideas of education are manifested through his literary creation-be it poetry, drama, novels, short stories, essays or letters. As Tagore found the education of his times inadequate, he wished that education should facilitate an individual's all around development and result in the perfection of the individual and society at large. His poem "where the mind is without fear" portrays this. He advocated an education where the learners are free from all fear, feelings of guilt, jealousy etc. And he prefers on education that nurtures the spirit of open mindedness, self-reliance and a spirit of inquiry in the learner's mind. Education must be closely associated with nature, social life, the culture and traditions of the learner. He desired that education should help one to achieve perfection in life.

It is with the intention of materializing his philosophy and ideas of education that he established Shantiniketan, the Gurukul of his dreams, in West Bengal in the year 1901. Latter it had become the well known Vishva Bharati University. The curriculum of this university was designed entirely on fulfilling the dreams and vision of Tagore on education. Like the contribution of Mahatma Jyotirao Fule in Maharashtra towards education of women and empowering them, Tagore too had his share on women education. He paved the way for establishing equal rights of education for both men and women. Tagore was bent on nurturing the cultural and aesthetic sides of a student, thus he promoted the role of extracurricular activities in education from then

onwards. Thus he insisted on realizing the all around development of the individual from his school days itself. He wanted to mould a student in to a universal man.

Quite rightly, Rabindranath Tagore can be considered as the prophet of educational renaissance in modern India. He advocated through his work and envisioned through his own life, a living example of universal brotherhood. He had upheld and supported the philosophy of satisfaction in one's life arising out of the harmonious existence of everything in nature. R.V. Jalan in his book, Tagore- His Educational Theory and Practice and Its Impact on Indian Education opines that Tagore's educational ideas expressed through his various writing and his institution of Shantiniketan "Present the best educational thoughts of the world, past and present." These words of Jalan give witness to and testify the great work of Tagore rendered to uplift society from the bondage of illiteracy and ignorance to the freedom of knowledge and enlightenment thereafter. As he was well aware of the fact that the useful and beautiful are interconnected he expected that the students should undergo the creative thrill of transforming the useful in to the beautiful. As all the major aspects of Tagore's thoughts and philosophy on education are dealt with now let us have a look at Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan.

### **Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan**

Born at Chithoor, Tiruthoni, Dr. Radhakrishnan was a great genius who was well-versed in many languages like Telugu, English, French, Tamil, Sanskrit, Bengali and Hindi. After studying philosophy from Presidency College, Madras, he worked as a professor in the University of Mysore as well as in the University of Calcutta. He was the professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics in Oxford University, London. Along with his entire academic achievements, he served as the vice-President and also as the President of India. A close look in to his life and great contributions he made as a man, as a national leader and as an educationist reveals that he was a real genius, a multifaceted personality in the true sense of the term. At present Dr. Radhakrishnan is popularly known for his services as an outstanding teacher, a well-known philosopher and an admirable statesman in the chair of Presidency and Vice-Presidency. Because of his expertise in classical Indian philosophy and thought, he could explore how modern Indian education be shaped most effectively.

### **Dr. Radhakrishnan's Educational Philosophy**

While looking at the contribution of Dr. Radhakrishnan as an educationist, it is seen that undoubtedly, he had contributed immensely in this realm. In his opinion education has to be imparted with the intention of promoting the spiritual resources of humanity. He believed that by providing the right type of education, all the bad habits and vices can be removed from human mind. It can be rightly seen that the educational philosophy of this great philosopher was rooted in the ancient Indian traditions and it had its base on the philosophy of idealism. Just like the vision and ideals of Rabindranath Tagore regarding education, Dr. Radhakrishnan too trussed on the need for awakening that inner light.....Both of them believed that education should dispel the darkness that dwells in the mind of an individual and to replace it with the light of divine wisdom. The best proof of this is Tagore's works advocating the need for possessing a fearless mind through education. Thus the essence of education was almost the same as far as these two thinkers are concerned.

Dr. Radhakrishnan held the view that education is a lifelong process. He visualized that education should ensure a society free from caste, creed, colour, and establish equality among all sections of society. As he wanted that it must be associated with the realities of life he

advocated the training of democracy, providing vocational and professional education to the students. He had envisioned a step by step process of education. At the primary level, he proposed basic education, that also both humanities and science subjects along with languages. He recommended physical education for the young learners to ensure training of their senses. According to him, secondary education is the next step to primary education and it should comprise a curriculum of science, humanities and languages to cater to the diverse needs of the pupils. He upheld the view that the curriculum has to be modified from time to time as per the needs of the society. In his opinion the main purpose of education is to cater to the needs of the nation and to ensure national unity through the spread of education.

Dr. Radhakrishnan was a traditional Indian and he had little Western education, he was wholly modern in his educational thoughts. He was against imitating the Western system of education and insisted on imparting practical training to students to prepare them as skilled professionals in their selected domain. He was of the opinion that agriculture must be studied in a rural setting to promote national economic planning. To facilitate the professional development of learners, he proposed the study of branches of modern education such as commerce, law, medicine, engineering, and technology. He had supported the cause of equal rights and chances for both men and women to gain education. He was very modern and held liberal views regarding the education of women. He was aware of the power of women to mould her children as the best teacher and thereby ensuring the progress of the entire society. Radhakrishnan, himself a great teacher had upheld the view that teachers should maintain high standard for themselves. Other than being an expert in his respective subject a teacher has to inspire his students too. Hence he visualized that high standard of teaching and examination would result in great academic outcomes and produce quality research. Dr. Radhakrishnan had regarded education as a tool that would free the world from ignorance and racial conflicts. For him each and every individual is holy and is born to love one another. He insisted on students' acquiring the ability of discernment, independent analysis and judgment through education. In his opinion education should bring about mental detachment and objectivity in the learner to help him achieve a balanced personality.

### **Similarities of Thoughts in Rabindranath Tagore and Dr. Radhakrishnan**

While going through the educational thoughts of Rabindranath Tagore and Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, many similarities in their opinions had come to fore. The major reason for this can be seen in the fact that Dr. Radhakrishnan had immensely been influenced by the philosophy of Tagore. It is not at all surprising to see that both of these great thinkers had followed the ancient Indian tradition of *Vedanta* and *Upanishad*. On account of this great influence, both of them were able to execute this in their respective fields in the form of flesh and blood. This enabled Tagore to bring his Shantiniketan in to full bloom and Dr. Radhakrishnan had utilized this for his recommendations of the University Education Commission. For both Tagore and Radhakrishnan, education is a lifelong process which nourishes all the physical, mental, social, moral and spiritual faculties of the individual. Similarly both of them were in favour of imparting vocational and professional training to students to turn them in to useful members of the society. More than everything else, both these great men aspired to gain international co-operation and mental tolerance on account of education to ensure a feeling of harmony and universal brotherhood. Both of them strove hard to broaden the scope of education and provided students with more choices of subjects at their disposal. Other than this, they also encouraged the study of agriculture, commerce, arts, craft, engineering and technology to cater to the practical needs of the learners.

When Tagore concentrated on developing student as a complete human being Radhakrishnan tried his best to sow and harvest the universal and enduring values in the human heart. Hence it is clear that both of them stressed on the need to provide the right sort of education for the all around development of the learner. They promoted the development of a spirit of enquiry and a scientific bend of mind in the learner to nurture their originality and individual abilities to the full extent. For this purpose they encouraged and included methods like debates, discussions, question-answer in education. Both of them were well aware of the great importance of women's education and had advocated equal rights and opportunities for women also. They did their best to see the women of India educated along with men. Definitely their efforts had blossomed today, when Indian women are at par with men in all fields due to education.

### **Relevance of the Educational Philosophy of Tagore and Radhakrishnan in The Present Scenario**

While looking at the existing scenario of Indian education, the picture that comes to the fore is a dismal one. It is not that every where it is corrupted or full of scams. Education has become commercialized in the hands of a few profit making entrepreneurs and the wealthy people are hankering after that. Ancient times also had witnessed this in another fashion. Then the rich and influential were educated in the foreign country and the poor and ordinary had to be satisfied with whatever was available in India. Now also the poor has no option other than the government run institutions. Here comes the relevance for the educational thoughts of Tagore and Radhakrishnan who stressed on compulsory free education for all Indian children disregarding their caste, creed and socio-economic status. It is sure that the educational ideals of these great thinkers have paved the way for the general education policies and practices in the country. The models of education they have put forward were quite apt for the multi-cultural background of India. Their insistence on developing the problem-solving skills of students will help the modern learners to meet the challengers of the present. In the materialistic world of today, their desire for acquiring aesthetic and intuitive knowledge is very relevant. In this era of globalization and cut throat competition, the educational philosophies of these luminaries are a real blessing which will enable the new generation to proceed in the proper path.

### **CONCLUSION**

After an in depth study and analysis of the educational philosophies of both Rabindranath Tagore and Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan it is observed that, both these great educationists had regarded education as the best and most effective weapon for the modernization of our society. Though they hailed from different spheres of life, they envisioned the uplift-ment of the human civilization through education and supported the incorporation of different ideals of democracy in to education. Their educational thoughts and philosophy still belong to the 21<sup>st</sup> century and can be considered as quite relevant because whatever they advocated still found a place in the hearts and minds of countless modern minds. Quite aptly these two giants of education can be considered as the exponents of modern Indian education. Their contribution to make our education system, what it is today, is unparallel and unforgettable.

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