

## Similarities and Dissimilarities between Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Rabindranath Tagore's Philosophy of Education

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### **Abstract:**

*Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Rabindranath Tagore belonged to Indian enlightened community. Their ideas of education and enthusiasm were really fruitful and influential to the Indian people. Their contribution, for the salvation of their countrymen is really praiseworthy. They have inspired their countrymen in many ways adopting several strategic measures. They were the pioneers of Bengal Renaissance. Their theoretical and practical efforts helped to break the long-standing superstitions and bad practices that were devastating the society. It is expected that the proposed research clearly identify the impact of their efforts on the 19th and early 20th century Indian society. With the help of this study we have understood that how European science and technology influenced them and how Bengal Renaissance occurred, which later on enlightened and developed the then backward society. Those selected persons were not only the great men of India, but also famous internationally. So a lot of research might be completed about their philosophy of education. The present research has tried to find out similarities and dissimilarities between Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Rabindranath Tagore's Philosophy of Education.*

### I. INTRODUCTION

A new era was instigated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Bengal. This time the western liberal ideas and thoughts entered into Bengal. The influx of western knowledge, art and culture as well as advanced moral values enriched the mental horizon of Bengal liberal intelligence. It influenced them to initiate social, religious and literary reformation to purge the evils from the then society, which arose from the ignorance and superstitious beliefs. It also influenced them to improve the condition of common people in the light of western liberal knowledge and ideals. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Rabindranath Tagore remained the key figures amongst the then humanitarian intellectuals. These two great scholars dedicated themselves towards setting up the education system of the country. They tried to reform the traditional mode of education and attempted to remove the veil of darkness from the mind of their countrymen.

Both Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Rabindranath Tagore played a pioneering role in expanding modern education and social mobilisation during the nineteenth century Bengal. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar not merely confined himself to the role of a preacher towards spreading education within the superstition engrossed Hindu community through their native language, but also engaged himself in the practical field of social changes like the initiation of widow-marriage.

On the other hand, Rabindranath Tagore's experiences at Jorasanko provided him with a lifelong conviction concerning the importance of freedom in education. He also realized in a profound manner the importance of the arts for developing empathy and sensitivity, and the necessity for an intimate relationship with one's cultural and natural environment. In participating in the cosmopolitan activities

of the family, he came to reject narrowness in general, and in particular, any form of narrowness that separated human being from human being. He saw education as a vehicle for appreciating the richest aspects of other cultures, while maintaining one's own cultural specificity (<http://www.infed.org/thinkers/tagore.htm>).

The nineteenth century is very much important for the people of Indian subcontinent. From the beginning of the nineteenth century India experienced a socio cultural and intellectual awakening, which laid the foundation for the movement that transformed India to a modern nation. The liberal tradition of Europe filtered through the prism of Bengal; this time deeply influenced this process of modernization. This flowering manifest itself in various spheres which questioned and shook the foundation of tradition in the spheres of social reformation, in religion, education, women's role and status, social practices, philosophy, art etc. (Amin, 1989). This European scientific knowledge and ideas began to influence the people of India. A number of intellectuals displayed a significant enthusiasm to absorb this knowledge. Remarkable intellectuals are Raja Rammohan Roy, Akhay Kumar Dutta, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Bankeem Chandra Chattergy, Keshab Chandra Sen, Rabindranath Tagore and many other intellectuals of the Nineteenth century Bengal. Among them we would like to discuss the philosophical thought of education of two great thinkers namely Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Rabindranath Tagore. Both of them acquired western knowledge and tried their best to implement it to their own society. Both the thinkers were pragmatic and were deeply affected by the western knowledge and culture.

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## II. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Rabindranath Tagore were the two great Bengali intellectuals, who were committed in their whole life for developing the Bengali Society. Education is the first element to build up a nation. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar & Rabindranath Tagore both realized this truth. Our nation has been created many years ago and we have become independent before 43 years. But till now we are not sure that what type of education is necessary for the nation. Researches are going on everyday about our state policy of education. If this researcher find out the basic theme of their philosophy of education, it can be helpful to our society.

## III. OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

1. To reveal the philosophy of education of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar.
2. To discover the educational thoughts of Rabindranath Tagore, and
3. To reveal Similarities and Dissimilarities between Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Rabindranath Tagore's Philosophy of Education.

## IV. METHODOLOGY

The research methodology of the study was exploratory and explanatory in nature and was based on documentary analysis. To conduct this research both primary (Books, Essays and articles written by Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Rabindranath Tagore) and secondary data (authentic writings, books, thesis, articles, documents etc. of eminent authors on Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Rabindranath Tagore and on present issue) were used.

Standard methods of historical investigation have been used in the research. First the information has been collected from primary and secondary sources. Secondly the relevant literatures have been studied deeply. Then in order to remove contradictions among some information of those had been made carefully and in this regard objectivity had been maintained strictly. Then these have been analyzed in the light of our purpose, in order to find out the similarity and dissimilarity of their thinking and by their thinking what kind of philosophy developed and influenced the succeeding generation. The analysis was followed by logical inferences, i.e., both inductive and deductive method have been used in this research and later led to generalizations that sound valid unless overthrown by further investigation and evidence.

## V. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Rabindranath Tagore are the two genuine scholars of Bengal. Both are the bright stars in the sky of Bengal Renaissance. Vidyasagar is in the middle of 19th century and Tagore is in the early 20th century. We are proud of our literature, music, art and culture to these outstanding geniuses. They were both highly talented in their own positions. Not only talented but also they were fully activated to reform education system, to make the society free from superstition and to make a new nation through village reconstruction.

Vidyasagar was a teacher, reformer, educator and philanthropist. Several times he argued against the then government's decision about education. He was in the middle of the British government and his natives. Government wanted to lead the education system in their style. They did not care the Indian sentiment, culture or heritage. On the other hand the Indian natives were superstitious and highly rituals. They were not aware of their education. In this condition Vidyasagar wanted to reform both the society and education. He tried to break the unusual rituals and wanted to construct the society on reality, honesty and cooperation. To establish a fruitful syllabus he sent several reports to the government officials and argued. He established many schools, recruited many teachers and helped the poor from his own funding. He also wrote books for the children when he felt the lacking of schoolbooks.

Rabindranath Tagore was also a teacher, reformer, educator, poet songwriter, essayist, novelist, playwright, and philanthropist. He was called Gurudev. We are proud enough that Tagore was awarded Nobel Prize as the first Bangalee. He was famous for his educational idea in the world. He wanted such type of education for the child, where the children would be free from fear and learn everything with joy. There would be natural circumstances in his school, where the children would play, climb on the tree, listen to the sound of birds, wet in the monsoon rain etc. Actually education would be perfect in the way of 'sadhana' (meditation). The aim of his education was to make a complete man. For this he added music, dance, art, reciting, painting and drama including general subjects to the syllabus of his education system. Though he was a landlord, once he realized that the ploughmen are the owners of lands. He had different opinions about nationalism with Gandhi. He did not want detachment. He loved the countrymen very much and for this he refused his knighthood in protest of the barbarism of the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre in Amritsar in 1919, where an unarmed gathering was brutally shot by the British Brigadier-General, Reginald Dyer, nearly 1000 people were killed and more than 1500 were injured (Banerjee, 2010). He wrote many books for the child like Vidyasagar, donated money and logistics to the poor and tried to reconstruct the village like 'Surul', near Santiniketan. He was a romantic poet and a wonderful traveller.

### Similarities and dissimilarities between Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Rabindranath Tagore

Though Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Rabindranath Tagore both were super genius but they were natural human beings also. Their period was different, so their activities happened in different perspectives. Therefore, there may be some similarities or dissimilarities between them. First of all we will discuss the similarities.

### Similarities between Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Rabindranath Tagore

1. Both of them gave importance first of all to the mother tongue in the field of education.
2. Both of them are Bangalees. They lived at West Bengal, India.
3. Both of them are compassionate.

4. Both of them studied a lot of foreign books, so its' direct or indirect impact might be influenced them.
5. Both of them wrote first lesson book for the children and also wrote many books for the students. For example, Vidyasagar wrote 'Bornoporichay' and Tagore wrote 'Sahaj Path'.
6. Both of them desired to add vernacular stories to the syllabus, which were better known to the children than foreign stories.
7. Tagore was Nobel laureate, but Vidyasagar was awarded the title "Vidyasagar" (Ocean of Knowledge).

#### **Dissimilarities between Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Rabindranath Tagore**

1. Vidyasagar was hard working educator. He worked for the development of education for his whole life. He had only desire that how the education of his native Indian could be developed. Most of the times, he spent his earnings for the help of poor students. He worked to increase the number of institutions, inspected the schools on foot, taught the students, wrote and translated books, donated money to establish new educational institutions, worked keenly to establish the syllabus, wrote many letters to government officials to make study plan but did not expose the new idea in education sector, so he was one of the best educators but not a philosopher of education.

On the other hand, Rabindranath Tagore was like him in education sector. He was also one of the best educators and philosophers in the sense that he introduced a new idea in education, but he was not like a proper philosopher of education. Because he did not establish his idea after showing any criticism of other philosophers' educational thought.

2. Vidyasagar was a realist and a pragmatist in thinking, but Tagore was an Idealist and a pragmatist.
3. Vidyasagar was poor but Tagore was a rich man. Though both were benevolent; where Vidyasagar donated money for the institutions, helped the poor from his own source that he was paid from service, Tagore could be able to do so from his zamindery.
4. Most of the people did not know Vidyasagar's father and his family. On the other hand, Tagore's family was well known to all. His grandfather Prince Dwarkanath Tagore was a benevolent landlord who helped to establish a number of public projects, such as Kolkata Medical College and his father Maharishi Debendranath Tagore was a religious reformer and scholar.
5. Vidyasagar was an attentive student, a learned teacher and a good administrator. On the other hand Tagore was a student who never completed the course. He did not like the teaching methods and was very much irregular in the school. He changed many schools but did not get certificate. He was sent to London for Law study but came back to his own country without completion of the course. He was a teacher at Santiniketan but never had an administrative job.
6. Tagore travelled almost 24 countries of the world. He visited some countries several times. He got chance to

observe the diversities of the world. He deeply observed multifarious education systems, cultures, religions and its' effect on the society, different types of life style, languages, faces, politics etc. He came to close contact with famous poets, writers, painters, politicians, students and many other different types of public. He became astonished looking the natural beauty such as, river, forest, mountain, ocean and many other public places. The researcher thinks Tagore's educational idea might be influenced by those above-mentioned factors.

On the other hand, researcher never heard that Vidyasagar travelled abroad. Whatever he experienced, it was within India and especially in the West Bengal. He did everything using his practical experience of life and wisdom.

7. Tagore became famous especially composing poem. He wrote different types of literary works, such as novels, short stories, songs, travelogue etc. That means he traveled every side of feeling of human mind.

But Vidyasagar was famous for prose. He is well known as the father of Bengali Prose.

8. At best we know that the creation of Tagore was fundamental, but Vidyasagar created some fundamental writings and some were translated from English, Persi and Sanskrit. Though it was not only transfer from one language to another; but also it was thematic and interesting to the readers. Because he harmonized those in his own style, so it was not boring to the reader as like other translated works.
9. Vidyasagar did not give importance spirituality to education. It could be said that he neglected spirituality.

On the other hand Tagore emphasized spirituality in education. He desired 'Tapoban' (Forest Hermitage) for proper education, where a harmony would remain between guru and disciple and education would be completed through spiritual activities in the forest.

Though there are some differences between Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Rabindranath Tagore, There are also some similarities between them. They loved their country from the deepest of their heart. Vidyasagar was the son of a poor family. Yet, he spent more money for the development of education of Bengal. He did not think only for Bengal, but felt also for whole of the India. We observed its reflection in his several reports written to the education council. "Notes on the Sanskrit College" was a milestone of Vidyasagar in the reformation of education. He was much conscious of himself that never compromised with the authority. Once he resigned from the service, when he understood that his plan was neglected.

On the other hand Tagore was a landlord, but did not behave with the farmers rough like other usual landlords. Rather he organized them (farmers) for their development. He arranged for them Education, Sanitation, Agricultural Bank for small loan, and many other activities. Tagore could not like the English education system, so he tried to establish the school in his own style at Santiniketan. He wrote books for children, when he felt insufficiency of Bengali schoolbooks. He collected donations from different states of India and abroad.

He traveled many countries and observed their education system and tried to implement the best in his school. After visiting Russia his idea of education and village reconstruction was increased and he was satisfied very much. He did not create any barrier of nation, religion or caste to study at his created Visva-Bharati at Santiniketan. He wanted the world in a nest, so he invited the teachers and students from any discipline of the world. For this a good interaction happened in the institute and the students experienced much about the universalism.

## VI. SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Rabindranath Tagore, both were educators but did not write their philosophical thought of education in a single book or essay. Education has two sides. One is the academic or institutional and the other is social. Tagore and Vidyasagar traveled both sides of education frequently. Their academic activities of education are well known to us. We can learn some social attitudes from them such as humanity, patience, liberality, greatness, intentness, adoration, patriotism etc. Till today their images are not dimmed. They are such great persons and their work is very much needed for present days. We have passed about 150 years from those glorious days but still we remember with full honor as earlier. Though they struggled against the then conservative society to establish humanities along with all castes and religions, it is undoubtedly true that they started to do so.

Vidyasagar's education related reports and letters are the carrier of his educational ideas. Despite being a Sanskrit pundit (Teacher), he realized that Toll, Chatuspathi, Patshala or only Sanskrit education is not enough for modern education, such as science, philosophy etc. He felt that either Eastern or Western education is not enough to make modern nation. Vidyasagar felt that realistic education could make modern society. He did not desire theoretical excellence or commercial purpose of education; rather he wanted mundane happiness and progress for the society. Our nation would have to practise modern science as well as logic. He found new meaning of life through learning western moral values and culture. The development of Bangla (mother tongue), it was another attempt of his educational thought. Vidyasagar's education related works; several types of letters, reports and opinions about education reform showed his contemporary, creative and pragmatic sense. We have observed that Vidyasagar's philosophy of education has been shown in a plan in 1846. Moral of that plan was, science and civilization of the western world would be received cordially, everything would be done in mother tongue and to enrich mother tongue, proficiency of both English and Sanskrit language would have to be required.

In the same way Tagore did not write his educational ideas in a single book. He was a romantic poet, imaginative writer and a devoted educator. He wrote many poems, stories, novels, essays and songs. He wrote many important letters till his last breath on the earth. Everywhere we see something educational that he worked for mankind for his whole life. He did not establish his educational idea all over India, but he

thought and started from a place. It was so unique that every type of demand of human being might be fulfilled through his educational thought. Literature, language, music, dance, science, art, painting, technical education etc. everything was included in Tagore's syllabus. Tagore's view was to make a complete man through the system of his education. He showed the path to make our nation properly.

## VII. FINDINGS

### Vidyasagar's thought of education

- Student should be attentive, of good character, moral, responsible, kind hearted and prejudice free.
- Science and civilization of the western world would be received cordially.
- Everything would be completed in mother tongue. Mother tongue would have to be enriched and for this it requires proficiency of both English and Sanskrit language.
- Vidyasagar wrote 'Bornoporichay' as the first book of children, where he articulated many advisable attributes. Those advices are very much important to develop the base characteristics of any child. Such as: "*Never say bawdy to others. To say bawdy is a great offense. Nobody likes him, who does so*", "*Always be truthful. Everybody likes him, who is truthful; nobody likes him, who is a liar. Never tell a lie*", "*Always be polite to your parents. You should follow your parents as they wished*" and many more.
- Vidyasagar also stated many advisable stories from fourth to tenth lesson in the name of 'Jadab', 'Nabin', 'Madhab', and 'Ram' 'Pita Mata (Parents)' and 'Surendra' (Datta, 1987). He created the situation in Bornoporichay that a child might be able to adopt himself with the society gradually.
- Vidyasagar suggested some plans regarding reformation of education system where he wanted to change the curriculum. The plans were, "*The study of grammar would be easy and short*", "*In that sense curriculum and textbook of grammar would be changed and the development of Sanskrit education using comparatively simple and scientific methodology*", "*The Nyaya class (philosophy including Logic and Metaphysics) would be held after Smrity or Law class*", "*There would be written method in Science, creative literature and Sanskrit in senior scholarship examination as well as Sanskrit to Bengali translation would be banned*" "*Radical change would be in the curriculum of English department*" and others.
- Vidyasagar's idea of education revealed in a recommendation called "Notes on the Sanskrit College". He recommended 26 Para. Among them, discussion about curriculum is shown within 6<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> Para. Methodology is shown within 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> Para. Last 5 Para is about the college administration (Datta, 1987).
- Vidyasagar wished, a group of teachers with full of control in native language. They would be enriched in different types of knowledge and save the country from prejudices.

- Vidyasagar urged modern philosophy of Europe for the student and suggested to study in English. Thus they will have an ampler opportunity of comparing the systems of philosophy of their own, with the new philosophy of western world.” (Ghosh, 1391 B.S.). Here he wanted to let the students have a chance of comparative judgment, not under compulsion.
- He took initiative to allow people other than Brahmins to study in Sanskrit College. Before him, none was other than the Brahmins were allowed to study in that college.
- Vidyasagar realized that women are the fifty percent of total population. So they should not be neglected. He established 35 girls’ schools in four districts of West Bengal. He enthusiastically worked to emancipate the women through education.
- He believed that European science and knowledge was not abandoned at all. Rather we should receive the best from European science and knowledge or from abroad to make ourselves better.
- As an administrator, he was perfect, strict and responsible. He showed his performance during the principal of Sanskrit College. He was the model of all kind of virtues.
- Vidyasagar wanted to remove the dark from the society by his social and educational activities. We know, he worked hard and tried to motivate the people. He thought that only education could eradicate the prejudice and darkness from the society. He did not like ritual activities but he had liberal views for a real Hindu. He was not biased by any nation, country, or religion. He appreciated merits, wherever he found them (Mitra, 2008).

#### Tagore's thought of education

In the essay *Shikshasamashya*, according to Tagore the ideal school should be established away from crowd under an open sky and surrounded by open fields, trees and plants (Tagore, Bengali 1412).

- Learning system should be joyful and mother tongue would be the medium of learning (Ibid. Page:8, 15).
- According to Tagore education is not a matter of passing or failing, or income generating and result oriented something. Rather it’s a continuous process and a matter of ‘becoming’ a full, widened and perfect human being through uninterrupted adoration (Tagore, 2019).
- He did not like memory-based learning. It was just like 'stealing' to him, nothing creative (Tagore, Bengali 1412).
- Students would learn their lesson practically. The student would know lesson through natural environment.
- Traveling is essential for learning. Students learn Geography, cultural diversity, different type of languages, variation of dresses and many other practical matters (Tagore, 1960).
- Students should not be punished. Tagore was against any form of physical punishment to impose discipline. He wanted discipline to come from within, from the pursuit of noble and high ambitions in life. Discipline would follow naturally when minor impulses and desires were

willingly forgone to pursue grand creative desires (Tagore, 1933).

- Teachers would be skilled in respective subject and they would have control over the inherent theme of the subject. Because skilled teachers are able to create proper pleasure in learning. Tagore also expressed his opinion that “He should be the teacher, who has patience” (Tagore, Bengali 1412).
- He blamed the teacher by whom the student is strictly punished and added, where teacher’s quality is low, they become strict to control.
- Teacher and student relation would be pleasant. In the essay *Ashramer Shiksha* (1937), he asserted the relation between teacher and student where the student stayed close with guru (teacher) and was inspired. It was the most valuable thing to both Guru and disciple, because Guru taught his disciple with his own interest and the disciples learned with joy. This association was the best for becoming a full, enlightened modern man (Ibid. page:245).
- Meditation should be a part of education. He introduced meditation at Shantiniketan.

#### VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

- ❖ Every type of education may be provided in mother tongue. If needed, foreign languages can be used.
- ❖ We should try to develop morality in the attitude of our students.
- ❖ Teacher - student relation should be friendly.
- ❖ There must not be any physical torture in the educational institutions.
- ❖ Importance of science and technical education should be increased.
- ❖ Along with theoretical education, practical education must be emphasized.
- ❖ We have to give more importance in women education. Because women are fifty percent of our total population.
- ❖ Learning must be joyful.
- ❖ We should emphasize on innovational activities in education in spite of memorizing.
- ❖ Our institutional teaching-learning system is not enjoyable enough. Tagore tried to establish enjoyable learning and was successful. This idea may be thought as prerequisite in education through proper training of teachers. Good and skilled teacher is essential for good student. So teachers should be trained up frequently where required.
- ❖ According to Tagore, nature is the best teacher. Students can learn enough with the close proximity of nature. So our teachers may use natural instances along with theory, which can be more fruitful than bookish education.

Researcher has found that the **Education Policy of Bangladesh-2010** contains those recommendations mentioned above. In the First Chapter (The Aims and objectives of Education) point 6 recommends creative and pragmatic education, point 10 recommends imaginative or

innovative learning instead of memorizing. Point 12, 15, 16, 18 and 28 recommend science and technical education, creative and joyful learning, moral education, awareness of nature and physical exercise accordingly. The Second chapter (Pre Primary and Primary Education) recommends different types of model, picture, color, rhyme, song and playing to inspire the students to go to school. Fourth chapter (Secondary Education) emphasized mother tongue in the education but for the necessity, according to the ability of school English medium can be encouraged. Those are some related links which Tagore and Vidyasagar recommended earlier for better education. Almost the important attributes of Tagore and Vidyasagar have been received but now need to implement properly.

### IX. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The findings of the present research can provide the basis for many researches which will be able to explore more on their (Tagore and Vidyasagar) educational work and which can provide new guidelines for a significant educational plan for the country. Some good extensive research on them will help us understand their work more critically. Some of the suggestions for the future research can be as follows:

1. Vidyasagar's 'Bornoporichay' and many advisable stories in moderate form can be included in our primary syllabus.
2. Different experiments on both of their educational theories in Bangladesh could be done.
3. Morality in education may be the major part of future education plan. Though practical ethics has been introduced in the syllabus of Philosophy department in different public Universities and National University of Bangladesh, but it is not only the matter of the students of Philosophy department but also the issue of our students from primary level up to Higher education.
4. Comparative studies of Tagore or Vidyasagar and other renowned personalities may be done more for further researches, from which our nation will be benefited.

### X. CONCLUSION

At present we deeply feel the lacking of morality, honesty, respect and freethinking among the students. We know that only advice and bookish education are not enough to build up a good nation. Extra curricular and co-curricular activities can give the students joy and pleasure, which may be the directing force for education. Tagore's theme of education was 'learning with joy'; where Vidyasagar did not think so. Rather he wanted to spread mass education. Actually, he observed superstitions in the layers of the then society. He thought that illiteracy is the root of all types of superstitions, prejudices, ignorance etc. For this, it was his endeavor to drive away illiteracy first, and then to make the nation educated. He worked hard to establish education in the standard way and for this he implemented new and necessary subjects in the syllabus. He knew that everything of western knowledge is not applicable for the Indian students; on the other hand western knowledge is not fully harmful. That is why, he wanted to import the subject or knowledge up to that extent what is good for his countrymen. He argued against

superstitions and castes, and ate freely with the so-called untouchables. He opened the doors of the college for all men when he was the principal of the Sanskrit College. This had never been done before him. Vidyasagar dedicated himself to innovations in education. He pleaded for English literature but did not ignore his own beautiful Bangla.

Vidyasagar was indeed a devoted educator, teacher and social reformer. He wanted to reform the society through proper education. He did not introduce any new theory to education but he wanted to innovate something depending on the base of traditional education system. He wanted to make a modern and superstition free nation where unnecessary rituals would not remain and it is only possible through proper education. In that sense he may be called a social educator. He tried to change the society from several dangerous and harmful activities and was successful.

Vidyasagar was a legendary figure that played a significant role in all aspects of Indian life - be it education, culture, religion, ethics or literature.

He struggled relentlessly against all forms of corruption, blind superstition, prejudices and malpractices of religious activities. He tried his best to emancipate the Indian women from the shackles of the biased, patriarchal society and didn't want them live like second-class citizens of the country. He wanted them to be strong individuals with dignity and self-esteem. He was literally a 'modern' man with refined ideas. He fought with the conservative society in the 19th century and influenced the Government to enact the Widow Remarriage Act. He also fought relentlessly to abolish the practice of polygamy in the Indian Society.

Vidyasagar was very fond of his mother and was very obedient of her. Vidyasagar's mother had a very deep-impacted spiritual influence on him all his life. He always remembered his mother's words and deeds, who had made many sacrifice for her son.

His acts of supreme kindness and generosity, his fierce determination and courage, his education and social reform publications and activities have made Vidyasagar Immortal. The poet, Rabindranath Tagore was hard pressed to find a comparable personality in the West and according to him, the closest that he found who could come to resemble Vidyasagar in his words and deeds, was the English writer, Dr. Samuel Johnson. Shortly after Vidyasagar's death, Tagore reverently wrote about him:

One wonders how God, in the process of producing forty million Bengalis, produced a man! (**Tagore, Bengali 1400**).

Vidyasagar lived all his life as a very modest man, a simpleton, but with a liberal heart, as he contributed so much to society by dedicating his whole life to raise the poor and downtrodden.

On the other hand Tagore is a versatile genius. He was a teacher, philanthropist and a poet but also was a father of new idea in education in the world. 'Joy', 'Tapoban', 'Sadhana', 'Guru and Shishya', 'World education in a single nest' and 'Complete Man' are the most common words in Tagore's idea of education. His aim of education was to create joy in education. Learning should be spontaneous. Obligation to study might be harmful, what happened in Tagore's early life. He bitterly experienced the academic activities in his schooldays,

but he became spontaneous when his father acquainted him with the nature. His creativity flourished, when he became free from academic bindings. He expressed:

What tortured me in my school days was the fact that the school had not the completeness of the world. It was a special arrangement for giving lessons. It could only be suitable for grown-up people who were conscious of the special need of such places and therefore ready to accept their teaching at the cost of dissociation from life. But children are in love with life, and it is their first love. All its colour and movement attract their eager attention. And are we quite sure of our wisdom in stifling this love? Children are not born ascetics, fit to enter at once into the monastic discipline of acquiring knowledge. At first they must gather knowledge through their life, and then they will renounce their lives to gain knowledge, and then again they will come back to their fuller lives with ripened wisdom (**Tagore, 1933**).

Tagore wanted his students to acquire a scientific temper; in other words, he desired that teachers should stimulate constructive doubt, the love of mental adventure, the courage and desire to conquer the world by activity and boldness in thought and in action.

Tagore was against any form of physical punishment to impose discipline. He wanted discipline to come from within, from the pursuit of noble and high ambitions in life. Discipline would follow naturally when minor impulses and desires were willingly forgone to pursue grand creative desires. He wrote:

I for my part believe in the principle of life, in the soul of man, more than in methods. I believe that the object of education is the freedom of mind, which can only be achieved through the path of freedom--though freedom has its risk, and responsibility as life itself has. I know it for certain, though most people seem to have forgotten it, that children are living beings -- more living than grown-up people, who have built their shells of habit around them. Therefore it is absolutely necessary for their mental health and development that they should not have mere schools for their lessons, but a world whose guiding spirit is personal love. It must be an ashram where men have gathered for the highest end of life, in the peace of nature; where life is not merely meditative, but fully awake in its activities; where boys' minds are not being perpetually drilled into believing that the ideal of the self-idolatry of the nation is the truest ideal for them to accept; where they are bidden to realize man's world as God's Kingdom, to whose citizenship they have to aspire; where the sunrise and sunset and the silent glory of stars are not daily ignored; where nature's festivities of flowers and fruit have their joyous recognition from man; and where the young and the old, the teacher and the student, sit at the same table to partake of their daily food and the food of their eternal life (**Tagore, 1933**).

Rabindranath Tagore, by his efforts and achievements, is part of a global network of pioneering educators, such as Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, Montessori and Dewey and in the contemporary context, Malcolm Knowles, who have tried

to create compassionate learning systems appropriate to their respective surroundings. In a poem that expresses Tagore's goals for intercontinental education, he wrote

Where the mind is without fear  
and the head is held high,  
Where knowledge is free;  
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments  
by narrow domestic walls;  
Where words come out from the  
depth of truth;  
Where tireless striving  
stretches its arms towards perfection;  
Where the clear stream of reason  
has not lost its way into the  
dreary desert sand of dead habit;  
Where the mind is led forward  
by thee into ever-widening thought and action--  
into that heaven of freedom,  
my Father, Let my country awake (**O'Connell, 2003**).

The world is changing and in this age of globalization new branches of studies are coming up for keeping pace with the changing world. But Tagore's thinking on education cannot be wholly dismissed. Tagore was a versatile and a devoted personality, and a compassionate educationist, what we mentioned earlier. He wanted to change the education system and also wanted to raise his nation high. He traveled many countries and collected huge experience that he tried to implement in his country. His thought was endless to make a complete man through education.

Tagore was a great philosopher. His attitude, style of writings, feelings, and love to nature, humanity, nationalism and overall universalism is really an instance for the nation and a matter of pride to Bengali people. Bangla vasa (Bengali language) has got a place in the world by its beloved poet Rabindranath Tagore. Tagore's song (Rabindra Sangeet) is like soul of Bengali songs. We cannot think of a day at all without Rabindra Sangeet, where every types of feeling of love and sorrows have been expressed. At present he is being evaluated as a poet of science. He tried to express his imagination and sense of wonder in the universe through a poetry called, 'Visva Parichay' and a song 'Akash bhara soorjo tara visva vara pran' (**Ghose, 2010**). The poet selected for its motto an ancient Sanskrit verse, 'Yatra visvam bhavati nidaam', which means, where the whole world meets in a single nest.

This thesis projected Vidyasagar and Tagore, the two major personalities of India and tried to demonstrate their contributions and dedications to the nation. There are many things to learn in their educational ideas and we should try to establish their unfinished dreams in the society, from what of course our nation will be benefited very much.

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