CHAPTER II

IMPETUSES OF TAGORE’S EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT
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In the preceding chapter we considered various minutes and reports on various stages of educational enterprise with a view to finding out whether any of them clearly formulates goals and thrust of our educational system — the sort of educational system that we should have come to adopt, being conducive not only to independent India but also to non-effacement of or non-erosion into our cultural, intellectual, educational and even religious parasiticality. We discovered, to our surprise, that by far none of the extant report of any commission seems to figure better on this count. It remains to be seen what sort of insights Rabindranath Tagore had in his educational thought and to what extent could they profitably be said to be forming the basis of an educational effort in our country. It is this which is going to engage our attention in the remainder of the present study.

With a view to discovering Tagore's significant insights and evaluating their worth and implications, especially in the context of primary education in particular and educational undertaking in general, it is necessary to inquire into the sort of aims and goals he envisaged educational enterprise to enable us to accomplish. But an inquiry of this sort cannot be embarked upon straight a way without investigating into and comprehending the crucial implications of the thrust of his
educational efforts and grasping the nature and status of the impetus that impelled him to deviate from the British system of education that was effective during his entire life-time in our country. As is understandable, it is the crucially differential thrust and impetus that must have made him embark upon the pioneering of an alternative educational system and outline its framework that marked it off from the then current system of education. Rabindranath Tagore did not become world-famous merely as a poet but equally as an educationist this country should be proud of. The educational enterprise of Tagore stands apart from the British system of education, as we hope to point out in the sequel, not merely in its eccentricity of its deviance from it as may be construed, but rather on account of the profundity and richness of its very conception and foundation. To be able to outline some of its decisively significant aspects with special reference to primary education we begin considering its impetus and thrust in this chapter that seem to have impelled him to make the sort of experiment he said he was engaged in making. It is, therefore, to the task of studying impetus of Tagore's novel and profound educational thought, which formed the foundation of his educational experiment, that we proceed in this chapter.

**Two sides of Tagore's Impetus**

Rabindranath Tagore tells us that had he been less sensitive and were he to accommodate himself to the
pressure exercised by the then extant educational system with determination and docility he could have earned his university degrees. But sensitive as he was and so antithetical being his ideas of education to the then existing educational system that it was not just a temperamental matter for him not to have earned his degree.¹ This means that the then existing educational system and the sort of education that was being imparted affected him very much and compelled him to think afresh about education and educational enterprise. The sort of carefully chosen educational institutions he had gone through in his childhood were of different types - oriental and occidental, privately managed or missionary,² and yet they united, as it were, in a single respect, viz. the sort of education they imparted and the manner in which they imparted it not being conducive to the health of body, mind or soul, they made him recoil from and revolt against them. A fairly detailed narration of his bitter experiences in his school days in Reminiscences is enough to understand and comprehend how much dissatisfied he must have been³ with the then educational system, teachers they employed, the educational system itself and the educators who might have conceived it. He considered

¹. Personality, 'My School', p. 112.
³. Ibid, pp. 41-42.
them to be thriving unnaturally and artificially and in consequence generative not of love towards education and being educated but rather of a positive hatred towards them. The disillusionment and disappointment that he derived from the then existing educational institutions could be said to have provided, as we shall see below, the negative impetus to his educational enterprise.

It could be said that he could have patronised any existing institute he liked instead of founding a new one. But as he remarked in an appropriate context, the question of founding an educational institution is not merely a matter of re-christianing or re-naming an already existing one. Nor is it merely a matter of specification of changed goals. He could not think of adopting any existing educational institution and call it his own for, according to him, they were unfit for being considered to be educational institutions in the true sense of the term. Even an educational institution founded by Raja Rammohun Roy too could not satisfy him fully on this count, even though he had very high regards for him and although he

4. 'The Teacher', Talked delivered in China - A Tagore Reader; A.Chacravarty (Editor), p. 213.
5. 'Sikṣa-Samasya' in Sikṣaño Ādarsa, (tra.) D.B.Raval, p.50.
did not mind to oppose no less a person than Mahatma Gandhi on that count on one occasion.\(^7\) Being in this way dissatisfied with the then existing educational institutions of various hues and colours made him take what he called the 'courageous step'.\(^8\)

There was positive side also to his thinking afresh about education and educational enterprise. He started a school when he was forty. He was aware of the fact that he had to fight against the existing current and that is why he described his establishment of the new institution was a 'crusade'.\(^9\) His own ideas about education and educational system, their objectives and aspirations as also their conceptual framework must have acted as a positive impetus to his educational enterprise that led to his founding and running new educational institution although his modesty made him consider them to be 'an experiment of inexperienced person'.\(^10\) It is the objective of this chapter to consider in a little greater detail these two sides of the impetus to his educational enterprise.

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10. Personality, p. 111.
The Negative Impetus:
The Aims and Goals of the British Education

Although initially and apparently it seemed that the education that was being imparted and the educational enterprise that had especially been introduced by British in this country was for the benefit of Indian people, yet on closer scrutiny and inquisitive inquiry it turned out to be otherwise. Every step taken on that count, it soon turned out, was calculated to mechanise and dehumanise education,\(^{11}\) make the education that was being imparted so dead, dry and dull, that it would discourage doubt, opposition and difference of opinion and implant stereotype views.\(^{12}\) The sort of education that was being imparted was designed to sever educated people from the context of life, foster immaturity of mind, stunted growth of intellect and thoughtlessness.\(^{13}\) Its implicit political, administrative, and beaurocratic aim and design was directed at deprivation of educational liberty, preparing lifeless yesmen capable of being fitted into administrative and bureaucratic machine of running the imperialistic and colonialistic government and perpetuate ignorance and opposition to enlightenment.\(^{14}\) The conceptual

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12. Ibid, pp. 4-5.
framework within which the British educational institutions were founded and being run, its philosophical foundation and its direction and focus were all singularly designed skilfully and cleverly to serve the interest of the rulers, harden their imperialistic grip and continuously and incessantly continue to supply them men and women so groomed and nurtured, and yet faithful and obedient, that they could be lured to be employed as clerks, technocrats, bureaucrats, petty administrative officers, capable of functioning merely as a part of the huge imperialistic machine for paltry material gains.15

While doing so there were systematic efforts made by the British rulers by creating situation through which we were led to believe inhesitatingly and unquestionably that there was nothing else more dignified and praiseworthy than to accept lucrative jobs in the British administration, even at the cost of our being alienated from our people, mother tongue, civilization and culture, and being thus uncivilised and uncultured made unfit for our own country as well.16 Thus, through being tricked and cheated by the British design we came to consider our being able to earn means of our livelihood

15. Ibid, 'Sikṣasamasya', p. 50.

with the least work and honour to be the sole aim of our life and the British education being the sole instrument of our being able to ascend the higher rungs of the ladder of earning means of material benefit and satisfaction.

But in our hankering after our being well-placed in life and through our coming to consider education to be the only instrument of it we remained utterly unmindful of the extent to which we came to degrade ourselves. Further, we also failed to realise how much poverty stricken the very conception of that education should be, the only aim of which was to make the educated so well-placed in their lives. 17 Such an education was more prone to make us so much selfish and self-centered that we would hardly be in a position to think of anything else except satiation of our own selfish interest. We forgot that in our accepting an attitude of servility, obedience and subjugation we sacrificed our dignity and honour on the altar of material benefits accruing from our being educated. We became unmindful of the fact that even though as parents of our children executive and judiciary powers of their being educated happen to be united in our hands, we have no business to pave a way for a darker future being put in reserve for them, however unmindful of our future we might tend to be. 18

We ignored that we need to flourish not as imitators of the British and the European modes of life, action and fellowship, but rather as preservers and conservers of what is healthy and nourishing in our cultural and civilizational traditions. Instead, through our coming to take imitation seriously we came to alienate ourselves from our own cultural tradition and heritage of our civilization on the one hand, and being sheer imitators we did not come to imbibe the heart and essence of western culture and civilization as well, and in turn remained unacceptable abroad as well.\(^{19}\) In trying to learn British history we unlearned our own, in striving to study English language we came to sever ourselves from our natural nourishment - our mother tongue - and in our coming to study geography of the world or that of the British isles we forgot to take note of contours of our own geographical surroundings.\(^{20}\) The British system of education in making us adopt the view that information is the same thing as knowledge and in consequence power, we began to consider proliferation of tools of acquisition and diffusion of information to be far more important in our educational enterprise than giving thought to appropriate goals and aspirations of it, towards the realization of which we need to strive and struggle.\(^{21}\) Tagore had seen it very clearly that through our coming to

\[^{19}\text{Ibid, p. 40.}\]
\[^{20}\text{Ibid, p. 87.}\]
\[^{21}\text{Ibid, p. 27.}\]
adopt and perpetuate the British system of education we would not only not be in a position to overcome Europeans in competition, or not be in a position to even compete with them, but also that we would come to jeopardise and ruin the very possibility of our dignitorial and honourable survival as also of our being able to stand by what in Prof. K.C. Bhattacharya's words may be called 'Swaraj in Ideas'. The system of education pioneered, founded and proliferated by the British rulers in our country overshadowed and even curbed the prospect of our coming to have an indigenous educational system conducive to our cultural well-being and intellectual, emotional and conative independence. But it thereby also fostered, magnified and deepened the belief that it was meant for our benefit, however it might have increased our helplessness and parasitism. There was nothing in it we could feel proud of. Nor did it have the potentiality of engendering healthy and unadulterated minds. It rather made simple things like company of nature conducive to our health inaccessible to us converting us into book-worms possessed of only single mania, viz. our getting degree or diploma as a stepping stone to our being well-placed.

Through the establishment of foreign rule our weaknesses of political and social disunity was already exposed. But through the establishment of British system of education and through hardening the chains of imperialism the very possibility of anything being predicted about our honourable future both in individual and social life became progressively more and more obliterated. No window was allowed to be open through which a
ray of hope of our ever being self-reliant and self-determinative could have been said to be possible to enter. Even our religion, culture, civilization, customs and traditions were considered to be meant for being condemned and despised. On the basis of false comparisons, misleading contrasts and illfounded arguments it was attempted to be shown that except our biologically being men and women nothing else we had - educational, cultural, historical, civilizational, religious, emotional etc. - was worth having and hence needed to be got rid of at the earliest possible opportunity for the very simple reason that it is nothing else but disdainful and hence no cultured and civilised person should be prepared to consider worth possessing it. Under such conditions and in such a situation it was even invain to think as to what sort of education could be said to be conducive to Indian people, what its conceptual framework could be and what its goals and aspirations could be legitimately said to be.

Sensitive as he was, Rabindranath Tagore must have been quite considerably moved by this kind of situation. The situation was further complicated by the fact that through thoughtless and unmindful, though regrettable, support the British received from the pseudo-Englishised natives, converts to christianity and the so-called intellectuals it was thought proper that our society should adopt that very route the british rulers would expect it to follow. This was further considered to be appropriate without the slightest consideration
of the unhealthy, injurious and even disastrous consequences of it that were in store for us to come to embrace.

Society was divided into two groups: educated and uneducated. Whereas there was already a chasm between uneducated group of people, the British rulers, through alienation of educated people from masses and through unbridgeable gulf between educated and uneducated people sought to create and foster a distance between them. This made educated people super-brahmins. Since the education they received served their selfish interest of getting material benefit they could hardly have been induced and inclined to consider that sort of education which would be beneficial to all Indian people, irrespective of any distinction whatever. As thinking contrarily would have jeopardised their short term prospect of material upliftment they could hardly have been expected to consider that the British system of education was not healthy, that it was deliberately formulated for their benefit and that it was anchored in their cultural and traditional foundation. This means that whatever under the name of education was being imparted was just the appropriate training to function in and help perpetuating the colonialistic and imperialistic design. The group of educated people was just part of the huge imperialistic administrative machinery, and the education and the educational enterprise which was deliberately fashioned and formulated was designed to serve that unitary purpose.
Tagore was convinced beyond doubt that an education and educational system which was so illicitly 'conceived and born in error'\textsuperscript{22} as Gandhiji considered it, was an improper education in so far as it corrupted heads and hearts of people and perverted their minds. This being the case he was further convinced that there was no go except fashioning and formulating such a system of education that in his considered opinion and competent judgement was best suited to Indian people.

Tagore was further of the view that the effects of improper or illconceived education are far more appalling, dangerous and disastrous than those of an utter absence of education. This is because the very concept of the former makes it masquerade as that of genuine education, and the principles determining it, its thrust, perspective, goals and aspirations being misconceived they are bound to give rise to consequences which would do immense harm to the persons who come to be educated within its framework. The British system of education implemented in our country was pernicious, according to Tagore, in three important respects: first, it sought to impart such an education which exhibited perversion and poverty

\textsuperscript{22} Truth Called Them Differently: Tagore-Gandhi Controversy, p. 25.
of education. The taughts, instead of being understood and encouraged, were being misused and exploited.

Secondly, there was a social danger, in the sense that the educated persons would further transmit the illicit notions they would have imbibed and the virus would come to be spread in geometrical proportion. This sort of consequence could only be hoped to be countered through well-conceived, appropriately fashioned and formulated system of education. The British system of education, according to him, would ruin, in this way, not only the present but also future generations.

Thirdly, if such illicitly educated people came to administer the country and participate in the governance of it one could imagine the consequences that would follow which would be detrimental to the good and interest of the country.

Thus, according to Tagore, whereas schools and educational institutions in the western countries were set up in their own social surrounding and the pupils and students had


an opportunity to interact with it, the educational institutions opened by the British rulers in our country were totally removed from the social surrounding in which they were set up. 25 Instead of education being considered to be essential to the proper development of heart and mind, feelings and emotions, it was designed to curb and thwart them. In place of its being considered to be an instrument of bringing about intellectual nourishment it was effectively used as an instrument of punishment, harassment and torture. 26 It was hardly considered to be proper that we alone can know the educational ideals appropriate for our country and the blood that needs to be circulated through educational veins and arteries. 27 Instead of considering the period of education to be the mental gestation period it was considered to be an occasion and opportunity for bringing about mental stultification and intellectual inhibition. It was hardly realised that satisfaction with lowly aims brought in forgetfulness of our country and of our history as its inevitable consequences. We were deprived of our life—nature, history, language, philosophy and knowledge of the kind of life people actually were living. The entire educational exercise was made to revolve around the shaft of examinations

27. Ibid, p. 7.
and educational institutions were planned to be and converted into examination-holding Government departments.

Tagore's opposition to, criticism of and avowed disdain for the British educational system did not spring from merely the fact that it was conceived and implemented by foreigners, but rather out of the fact that it was hopelessly misconceived and illicitly born. Any superficial, haphazard and patchwork kind of alteration, reforms and modifications in it were not going to serve the intended purpose. Nothing worse can happen to us than our being trained to run after the mirage of imitating others and degrade ourselves into sheeps and apes. If in spite of our being educated we do not know the way people around us act and react and if we consider that instead of studying living human beings we would come to be better informed through bringing about our alienation and distance from them then so much would be worse for our being educated. The fundamental complaint that Tagore had about the British education was that it was greatest conceivable fraud and calculated deception played and perpetuated upon us. The artificiality, unnaturality, immorality that it involved made him repulse from it and more he thought about the harm and evil that it wrought upon us more pronounced and penetrating became his criticism of it.

The sort of situation that had come to prevail pedagogically, socially as well as culturally under the stewardship, initiative and directive of the British rulers was, according to Tagore, distressing and disappointing on additional two counts: First, the alienation of the educated from our culture on the one hand and from the uneducated masses on the other would make our own culture and people unintelligible to us and thereby would bring in the loss of our social and cultural identity. Any human being who has lost basis of his socio-cultural identity would have to be considered to be human organism only in so far as he exhibits certain biological features characteristic of man—a vertebrate biped. But it is not this feature that could ever be regarded to be the basis of our cultural or social identity. Through our alienation with our culture and people if we have lost the basis of our social as well as cultural identity—then everything would be lost to us. For we would come to function and operate just as slaves, pegs in an imperialistic and colonialistic machine, and our life would not be worth living at all. Secondly, apart from worthlessness of our life that would thus emerge there would be no way in which our personality in general and its various aspects in particular would come to be harmoniously united and integrated. But in so far as this would be the case it would result in nothing else but split-personality or schizophrenia, a condition of maladjustment and disorder. What kind of future such persons may be said to be aspiring for and what sort of goals could
they be said to be striving to realise! Our present as well as future would hardly be distinguished from that of other organisms, which do not come to suffer from schizophrenia at least! Even this blessing would be denied to us!!

Such chief distressing features of the British educational system must have made Tagore to revolt against it. This could, however, be said to have provided a negative sort of impetus to his own educational enterprise. These features of the British educational system were not for him merely a matter of hear-say. They were matters of his personal experience which must have convinced him and made him aware of the alarmingly serious kind of consequences that were in store for us emanating from the British educational system. Added to and combined with this, however, is the positive impetus that must have led him to found a new educational institution and embark upon pedagogical experiment that was unique in number of respects. It is to the consideration of positive impetus of his educational enterprise that we now turn.

The Positive Impetus:

Although the British educational system was beneficial to and consistent with the imperialistic design and goal of British rulers, yet it was injurious to our health - educational, emotional, religious, cultural and national. However, therefore, favoured it might have been by the British rulers it was required to be given up and opposed.
But those institutions of oriental learning which were being run along the traditional line and some of which had survived the British onslaught, too, could not be considered to be the viable and acceptable alternative. For, as Tagore appropriately observed, they too had, in course of time, come to adopt such modes of education as emphasising rote learning and inspite of simple mode of life that was adopted in śālaś the persons belonging to them had lost living contact with the social and cultural conditions and situations prevalent around them.\textsuperscript{29} They too had, thus, come to isolate themselves from people and the surrounding. But there was fundamental difference. In the case of the British educational system the segregation and isolation was a calculated move and hence a fallacy of commission. In the case of śālaś, on the contrary, the segregation and isolation they gave rise to was more a matter of negligence and carelessness, and hence a fallacy of omission. Apart from segregation, however, the śālaś too had come to equate education with bookish knowledge without clearly formulating goals and aspirations of educational enterprise as such. That is why with regard to both British as well as the oriental institutes of learning Tagore was dissatisfied, and began considering the problem of education in all its aspects afresh.

In addition, Tagore had acquainted himself in fairly great details with life of common man in Bengal in particular and in India in general. Though he did not do this

\textsuperscript{29. Ibid, 'Śīksāsāmasya', p. 11.}
for the sake of it, he came to discover various aspects of common man's life in the country through his Himalayan yatra as also through his coming to discharge a family responsibility of supervising the ancestral estate, yet through them he came to see for himself common man's life, his household, goals and aspirations and his connections with culture and history. The various aspects of common man's life that one finds depicted in his poems, short stories, novels, paintings etc. are those which he discovered through his personal experience and discernment. On the other hand, he also came to discover the widening gulf between educated and uneducated, urban and rural, so-called modernised and westernised, and backward and Indian people. These various factors jointly and severally provided the necessary impetus to Tagore's embarking upon his educational enterprise.

Tagore's Concern for Education:

Tagore did not embark upon his educational enterprise without adequate and compelling impetus. But having adequately compelling impetus - positive as well as negative - could not be considered to be enough. His pedagogical enterprise had the basis of his thinking about various educational problems through a profound and penetrating concern for proper education. It is important to remember in this context that any sort of education cannot be called proper education just because it is sought to be imparted or is in fact being imparted. In Tagore's view the sort of education that used to be imparted then —
though we cannot boast that the situation has come to change radically in independent India, for the only kind of cognisance we have taken of Tagore is not of opposing and discarding him but of ignoring him and holding that nothing that is contemporarily relevant could have been said or done by him, for he was after all an Indian and that too a poet! — no matter whether imparted by British or Indian educational institutions was improper principally because it was backed by an improper concern for education. A concern for proper education that needs to be considered has to be a proper concern on the one hand and it also must be about proper education on the other hand. Proper concern for education as well as proper education need to be properly conceived. If one has a concern for proper education then, other things remaining the same, one can hope that something worthwhile will emerge out of his educational enterprise. But concern for proper education does not emerge automatically. One needs to have at one's disposal a properly conceived conception of education and this in turn is determined by two principal considerations: (a) conception of proper, legitimate goals and aspirations which we hope to realise in our educational enterprise, the proper dreams that we wish to dream and also a conception about their priorities in the light of appropriate direction. And (b) a provision also needs to be made for such an education being properly imparted. Any concern for education without its being for proper education is bazzere and any scheme of education without its being backed by proper concern for
education is blind. According to Tagore, the education that was being imparted then figured poorly on both these counts, viz. its being an outcome of proper concern for education as well as its being education in the proper sense of the term. The profound and the most decisive significance of Rabindranath's educational enterprise is that it springs from the conception of proper education together with genuine concern for education. That is why one meets with an elaborate attempt at his hands of formulating what, according to him, the goals and aspirations of the entire educational enterprise should be. He has also laid down what its direction and orientation are required to be, if it is to be considered to be in the interest of our people. We shall have an occasion to inquire into it in greater detail where we propose to consider goals and aspirations of Tagore's educational enterprise. But he did not remain satisfied merely with formulating goals and aspirations of educational and pedagogical exercise that is required to be undertaken in our country. He has also outlined the way education needs to be imparted, given an outline as to what the contents of education at various levels of educational ladder should be, and formulated certain principles which need to be adopted by way of determining policy of our educational enterprise. His consideration of these points especially in connection with primary education will engage our attention in the latter chapters of the present work.

Even after thirty five years of independence we have still shamelessly continued the same educational system
which bears the stamp and seal of British goals and aspirations. We have continued with the system with the same defects not because indigenous thinking about appropriate goals and aspirations of our educational enterprise is not available, but rather in spite of it. For we have cultivated a habit not of opposing and criticizing indigenous thinking—healthy experience of self-criticism and self-assessment—but by totally ignoring it instead. As a result we continue to commit what Tagore calls 'crime against man and the sin against divine in us'.

30. Educationally our goal still continues to be within the framework of what he calls 'servocracy' in the sense of producing and turning out from educational institutions not men and women but faithful and obedient servants. That is why we are required to have foreigners as advisers and expert members on our educational Commissions. But in this we forget his incisive warning that 'we alone can know the appropriate ideals and goals of our educational enterprise in our country and the sort of healthy blood that needs to circulate through its veins and arteries.'


Conditions of the Emergence of Proper Concern:

Proper concern for proper education is not readily available. It is required to be laboriously fashioned
and formulated to suit and fulfil our legitimate demands. So long as we are not clear about the concept of proper education, we can never be sure about its being properly imparted. Nor can we hope to advance in the desired direction. Such a concept of proper education will obviously have to have implications in our life on individual, social and at national level. As we shall argue later on it will be directed at bringing about proper integration in our life, would help in establishing our identity at three levels i.e. individual, social as well as national.

Such a concern for proper education properly conceived is not a matter of trial and error. Nor can goals and aspirations of our educational enterprise be merely an eclectic and haphazard collection or conglomeration of various conceptually significant goals and aspirations. According to Tagore, as we hope to point out in the next chapter, such a concern for proper education should directly and conclusively bear upon the legitimate goals and aspirations of our educational enterprise. It is from this that the direction and orientation of our educational efforts would emerge. One of the most important goals and aspirations of our educational enterprise must, according to Tagore, be that our education must enable us to live our life in a way that is worthy of human beings to come to and aspire to live and that we should not only be in a position to shape, decide and guide our destiny in so far as we are educated but also that the sort of goals and aspirations
which we seek and hope to realise in our life must not be at variance from our national goals and aspirations.

Tagore’s 'theory of education'\textsuperscript{33} encompasses and stems from concern for proper education that is meant to help us stand on our own feet independently, without substituting any kind of parasiticality and is directed at, as we shall see, primarily making us men and women in the true sense of the term i.e. human beings. Such a concern for proper education, according to him, and the sort of education that he designed and expected to be imparted was expected to be very intimately connected with our culture and civilization. Any civilization worth the name, according to him, has to exhibit three of its important hallmarks: perspicuity (sāralata), simplicity (sugamata) and spontaniety (sahajata).\textsuperscript{34} Given this kind of concern for proper education there is always a possibility of recovery from slip and mishap, for it is shaped by and anchored in an appropriate vision and legitimate goals and aspirations. There is a certain element of dream in it, but not of utopia, and Ābīndranath had clearly understood that 'great human societies' are the 'creation not of profiteers, but of dreamers'.\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{33} Personality, 'My School', p. 139.

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid, 'Sikṣāsamaśayā', p. 28.

Guiding Principles of Tagore's Concern of Proper Education:

Tagore was convinced that a concern for proper education is not a matter of imitation. It has to be backed by certain important guiding principles. His detaste for and opposition to over-emphasis upon tools of education was not a matter of an arbitrary caprice. He was of the firm view that proper education has to be considered to be so in terms of the goals and aspirations it seeks to accomplish. But goals and aspirations of educational enterprise cannot be at variance from those of our life and that the goals and aspirations of our life cannot be inconsistent with our being human in the true sense of the term. Our education must not only be not disconnected with our history, culture and independence but also with our honour, respect and dignity.\(^{36}\) Instead of material gains, high standard of living in a way that is conducive to and worthy of our being human\(^ {37}\) should be made possible for us, he holds, through our being educated and our educational enterprise should direct us in that direction.

Education must legitimately aspire to make us human and has thus to be a human education. If inspite of education we continue to be dehumanised and denaturalised then futile indeed would be the entire energy and money spent in our being educated. Through our being educated we must come to

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entertain such thoughts, adopt such modes of action and
fellowship and live such a kind of life that does not make us
fall below the level of our being human beings. In every
aspect of our life - individual, social, cultural, national -
through our being educated we should come to train and
discipline ourselves in such a way that instead of aspiring
to be human superficially we should strive to become genuine
human beings, through knowledge rather than information, through controlling anger and passion rather than through
thoughtless exhibition of them, through giving up hatred,
opposition to injustice and partiality, and through overcoming
temptations to lamentation, lethargy, frustration and
disappointment. This kind of disciplining of ourselves -
self-disciplining - is necessary according to him not only for
our integration as a human individuality but also for our
conviviality. Education would have to help us and be
instrumental to our this kind of integration being brought about.

At the hands of Tagore, in this way, his concern
for proper education is characteristically determined by the
two-fold impetus: on the one hand, the negative impetus to it
was provided by British and the oriental institutions of
education by furnishing a model to him of an improper education -
improper because the aims and aspirations, direction and
orientation, as also the vision in which they were grounded

38. Ibid, p. 45.
were erroneous, injurious and even disastrous - those institutions contributed not to integration but rather to disintegration of the educated, fostered not conviviality of all - educated and uneducated - but rather vivisection of society into educated and uneducated and strived to deepen and proliferate modes of dependence and parasiticality. On the other hand, was the positive impetus provided to him in the form of his educational theory in which within the framework of the concern for proper education his vision of bringing to bear his concern for proper education and the direction of educational enterprise were so integrated and united with goals and aspirations of educational enterprise that through their forming an organic whole they were directed to make education so uniquely instrumental to our being human beings in various aspects of our life. That we do not cease to be human, disintegrated and that we do not come, even unconsciously, to dehumanise ourselves was the most important regulative parameter of educational enterprise in his educational theory. For, according to him, education at whatever level, that is instrumental to making us anything else but human in the true sense of the term is not education at all, however palacial be the buildings in which it comes to be imparted, however learned be instructors, however diverse and complicated be the tools the services of which comes to be requisitioned in the task of information being imparted and diffused, and whatever be the frightening number of the subjects it seeks to make us enlightened about! For any education that has failed to make
us human has failed in every respect and whatever money, time
and energy that come to be spent both in its being imparted
and received has gone down the gutters. As we shall argue
later on all his insistence upon self-discipline, character,
morality, integration and his despise of our distrust in
nature and disbelief in man are singularly directed not only
at admonition and reprimand but also at chastisement and
unreserved disapproval of various modes in which we come to
dehumanise ourselves and of various avenues of educating us to
come to do so—both individually as well as collectively,
centrally or peripherally, implicitly or explicitly,
contextually or contextfreely. We shall have an occasion to
investigate into some important aspects of the goals and
aspirations of educational enterprise at the hands of Tagore
in the next chapter. We hope to notice there that his
insistence upon our coming to live like a man with honour,
dignity and respect, the subjects we come to study, the
language in which we come to be educated, the curricula that
form the context of our educational exercise, the various
sort of experiences that he wishes us to have while we are
educated, as also his emphasis upon not neglecting our culture,
civilization, history and our national aspirations and national
goals etc. all converge upon our being integrated as human
beings. For, as we shall argue, according to him, in our
coming to close the possibility of our being human we would
also automatically come to close all other possibilities except
our being either things or beasts, to be exploited, manipulated
and driven but never to be respected and honoured. We do not come to live humanly luckily and by freak and stroke of chance. To come live in a way that is characteristic of human beings we have to cultivate the habit and it has to come to go right into our blood and must come to form part of our nature as Aristotle would say. Such a disciplining of ourselves to make us characteristically human should start from the earliest opportunity, that is from pre-primary education itself. For, any delay on this count would cost us very dearly. There are, however, many and varied temptations, allurements and distractions that we have continuously and resolutely to overcome and guard ourselves from so that we do not come to dehumanise ourselves.

The Argument to Follow:

We considered above the sort of impetus and thrust that seems to have shaped, influenced and determined Tagore’s educational enterprise, and the sort of vision that enabled it to emanate. It remains to be seen what according to him should be goals and aspirations of our educational enterprise and determining reasons as to why he considers them to be the legitimate and appropriate goals of our education. For it is in the light of the consideration of the impetus and goals of educational enterprise that we hope to make sense of his deliberation on medium of instruction, the curricula, the modality of imparting instruction etc. ---- the points to be
investigated into with reference to primary education in the succeeding chapters. To be able to discover the connection between impetus of his educational enterprise, his conception and vision of education and the goals and aspirations of education we proceed to consider goals and aspirations of educational enterprise according to Tagore in the next chapter.