

Assessment of Existing Education System in Bangladesh in the lens of Rabindranath Tagore's Educational Philosophy: Crises and Ascension

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ABSTRACT

Educational thought is the primary tool for a nation's social, religious, political, and economic advancement and reform. Writings and acts by Rabindranath Tagore suggest that he turned his attention from reforming education to modernizing the Indian subcontinent. Tagore's philosophical views on education are reflected in several numbers of areas, such as the goal of education, instructional strategies, the nature and environment of educational institutions, curriculum design, teacher-student interaction, and the role of teachers. According to Tagore, education should aid in a person's transformation into a fully grown man. The aim of this study is to examine Bangladesh's educational system's current situation and compare the main issues it faces with those raised by Tagore's educational philosophy. Some data have been collected to understand the situation using IDI and KII, employing a qualitative method. The findings reveal that numerous issues plague Bangladesh's current educational system significantly departing from Rabindranath Tagore's vision on education. Still, the study concludes that Rabindranath Tagore's educational system may foster a person's intellectual, physical, moral, social, and spiritual well-being, which will help him or her become a fully realized man. Students will be able to thrive in extracurricular activities and academics by incorporating Tagore's educational and philosophical ideas into the curriculum. This will assist them in developing their moral, spiritual, and artistic qualities, which will help them become knowledgeable human beings. These principles lay the groundwork for students to create a more progressive country and a nondiscriminatory, nonviolent society.

Keywords: Education, Rabindranath, Philosophy, Crisis in education, Bangladesh

Introduction

Education is critical for individuals and society's development because it provides the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for personal growth and societal progress. It may be seen that education is the process of development from infancy to maturity. The purpose of education is to fully develop the child's inherent potential or enact power as a useful member

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of society. It includes diverse activities and procedures that promote intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development while facilitating learning for humankind (Verma et al., 2023). The aims of education have transformed over time, making it inherently dynamic, similar to the evolving objectives of life (Hays & Reinders, 2020; Sadovnik & Alan, 2001; Wise, 1977). However, education's major significance stems from its integration of formal and informal processes. It is also a conservative process in its narrowest sense, but in its broader sense, it grants children unrestricted freedom, disregarding social, moral, and spiritual values (Fägerlind & Saha, 2016). This synthesis fosters the development of society and develops the individual following their inherent tendencies, which may ensure that the child is fully developed in accordance with his inherent tendencies, with a focus on the concurrent development of society, of which he is a crucial component. This type of education will elevate both the child and society to increasingly elevated levels of cultural eminence and grandeur (Kumar & Ahmad, 2008; Gearon, 2013).

Rabindranath Tagore believed that, “the most important lesson that man can learn from life, is not that there is pain in this world, but that it is possible for him to transmute it into joy” (ed. Ray, 2007). According to him, this important lesson can only be earned through proper education. He believed that education should promote holistic development, emphasizing self-expression, comprehensive creativity and a deep connection with culture and the nature. He mentioned that education must nurture the whole person, not just the mind, and serve as a lifelong process of self-discovery. Tagore's personal life experiences form the foundation of his educational philosophy. Professor H. B. Mukherjee (2017) has rightly said, “Tagore was the greatest prophet of educational renaissance in modern India. He waged a ceaseless battle to uphold the highest educational ideal before the country and conducted educational experiments at his own institution, which made them living symbols of what an ideal should be.”

Tagore was born into the most illustrious and intellectual family in Bengal. His progressive reformer fervor, shaped by Western culture and accompanied by a passion for the liberal patriotic resurgence of the Indian Renaissance, transformed Indian society and the educational framework (Mukherjee, 1962). The situations he faced in his formative years largely influenced his beliefs and philosophies. Tagore acknowledged that the primary obstacle to India's progress was the absence of education. The British government designed the current colonial education system to foster loyalty, resulting in the development of individuals who were Indian in ethnicity but British in ideology, convictions, and perspectives (MHRD, 1968). This system offered education that was not relevant to the Indian context, did not align with the advancements in Western nations, and was not contemporary.

Tagore strictly opposed the idea of so called British education system. Thus, he commented about British education system, “education has divorced from the streams of life and confined within the four walls of the classroom becomes artificial and losses its value” (Bhattacharjee, 2014). To him, British education system is only meant for producing clerk who can work under them. Besides this it will generate a narrow feeling for our own culture. Thus it is not appropriate one for the all-round development of the child. This negative feeling towards British education system resulted in the origin of “Shantiniketan” (Tirath,

2017). Additionally, the use of English as the medium of instruction led to a rift between the privileged English-speaking class, who received education, and the uneducated masses (Jha, 1994). Over the past two decades, the quality of higher education in Bangladesh has deteriorated, as indicated by scholars, education researchers, and other stakeholders (Hossain, 2017). Therefore, it is imperative to implement Tagore's philosophy of education in Bangladesh to improve both the quality of education and the overall educational system. In present circumstances of Bangladesh, the importance of Rabindranath Tagore's educational thinking in educational institutions (both lower and higher) and in making any decision related to education can be understood through this study. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the current education system in Bangladesh and offer recommendations to transform it, paving the way for the realization of a digital or knowledge-based and technologically advanced Bangladesh through the adoption of Tagore's philosophy.

Objectives of the Study

- To identify the problems in the present education system in Bangladesh.
- To identify the obstacles to introduce Rabindranath Tagore's education system in Bangladesh.
- To identify the current issues in the educational institutes in Bangladesh.
- To offer recommendations to overcome the crisis of the education system in Bangladesh.

Literature Review

Concept of Education

Education is the complete development of the individuality of the child so that he can make a contribution to human life according to the best of his capacity. The term 'Education' basically has been derived from the Latin words Educare, Educere and Educatum. "Educare" means 'to train' or 'to bring up' or 'to nourish' where the word educere means 'to lead forth' or 'to draw out'. The term 'Educatum' denotes 'the act of teaching'. It throws light on the principles and practice of teaching. The term Educare or Educatum mainly indicates development of the latent faculties of the child. Though the child does not know the possibilities hidden to them, the teachers or scholars are the person who can know these and take appropriate methods to develop those powers. In Bangali, the term 'Shikkha' has come from the Sanskrit word 'Shash'. 'Shash' means to discipline, to control, to order, to rule, etc. Education, in the traditional sense, means controlling or disciplining the behavior of an individual. There is another term in Sanskrit which throws light on the nature of education that is 'Vidya' which means 'knowledge'. The term 'Vidya' has originated from 'Bid' meaning knowledge.

The concept and meaning of education have transformed over time. If we mention certain definitions of education by the great philosophers of the East and the West, we may have a clear picture of the nature and meaning of the term education. The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle believed that education played a crucial role in the development of an individual's inherent potential and the flourishing of society. Talip Kabadayi (2013) mentioned that "Aristotle believed in a free will and felt that a good educational program could introduce

the desire in men to act for the good and to follow the moderate path in all cases. Aristotle advocated education to be controlled by the state and sensed that the primary aim of education is to make people virtuous and he advocates training of the body as well as training in literature, music and gymnastics. Now the ethical and educational theory developed by Aristotle is called eudaimonism meaning happiness which must be based on complete friendship, an indispensable aid to the most perfect exercise of virtues. (Kabadayi, 2013).

In the modern sense, education is considered a process that is capable of satisfying the multifaceted needs of every developing person in a constantly changing society. The modern western philosopher Bertrand Russell insisted that, "...what I do mean is that the educational system we must aim at producing in the future is one which gives to every boy and girl an opportunity for the best that exists" (Russell, 2009). One of the most prominent Indian thinker "Vivekananda believed that the future of any nation depends upon its human resource and the main aim of education should be to develop this human resource. He says each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this Divinity within by controlling nature, external and internal. ...Vivekananda correlated ethics with control of the mind, seeing truth, purity and unselfishness as qualities which strengthened it. He advocated his followers to be divine, pious and unselfish. He emphasized that success was an outcome of focused thought and action" (Bhat, 2016). Swami Vivekananda emphasized on man-making education. In a letter to Singaravelu Mudaliar, Assistant Professor of Science, Vivekananda wrote "Education is the manifestation of perfection already in man" (Letters, 70). Another prominent Indian Philosopher Dr. Radhakrishnan is an Idealistic philosopher but his educational thoughts are influenced by the Pragmatic philosophy also. Dr. Radhakrishnan defined education as the instrument for social, economic and cultural change. For social and national integration, for increasing productively, education should be properly utilized. He believed that, "The importance of education is not only in knowledge and skill, but it is to help us to live with others." (Bhatia, S & Sarin, A., 2004). In the word of American pragmatic philosopher John Dewey, "education is the process of living through a continuous reconstruction of experience. It is the development of all those capacities in the individual which will enable him to control his environment and fulfill his possibilities." (Dewey, 1916). But the educational thought of Rabindranath Tagore, the famous poet and philosopher of Indian subcontinent, reflects an unprecedented combination of idealism and naturalism. He believes that education should be a means of self-realization and self-awareness.

What is needed for the proper development of a children through education are good institutions, perfect environment and specific structures and policies. Education commences at birth and persists until the conclusion of one's existence. The early stages of existence are of paramount importance, as they significantly influence the subsequent stages (Ven, 1998). Nevertheless, we are unable to exert complete control over the early stage of development due to the fact that children are under the care of their families until they begin attending school (Benatar, 2018). Even though children attend schools, a variety of factors, including their social interactions with peers and outsiders, influence their educational journey. Children are the primary focus of the educational system, which extends from preschool to

graduate school (Ouchi, 2008). The primary transition from public to individual educational gains occurs as students' progress to higher levels of education each year. This is why education is mandatory for children during their first 10 or 12 years of life. If we were unable to educate them to be responsible citizens, we would face more severe and costly social issues (Lee, 1999). Here Lee emphasizes the role of education in challenging existing social inequalities and hierarchies. Durkheim (1956) asserts that "education is the influence that adult generations exert on those who are not yet prepared for social life" that refers education assists people to be socialized into societal structure. In other words, the primary goal of education is to assist children in improving their physical capabilities and developing their intellectual skills. Moreover, schools should motivate students to cultivate the moral values demanded by the political community, because if we don't help them achieve these objectives, society might face social problems and incur extra expenses to resolve them (Kim, 2022). These three scholars together represent education as a complex social process by which people can be part of society, can challenge social inequalities and shape their understanding and identity in a global context.

Rabindranath Tagore's Philosophy of Education

Rabindranath Tagore, a pivotal figure in Indian history, significantly influenced the nation's contemporary educational framework through his educational ideas. The book *Shikkha* contains a complete expression of Rabindranath Tagore's philosophy of education. Tagore's philosophy of education is an unprecedented combination of idealism and naturalism. The essence of idealist philosophy of education is to place high value on the spiritual power and character traits of man to truly unleash his inner potential. To him, education will be the self-realization and self-enlightenment. He believed that our education should be idealized according to what we understand by a real human being. He defined the goal of education as an effort to become fit to be in harmony with the Supreme Being. On the other hand, according to naturalism, nature is the whole of being. The main purpose of nature is to support natural development and this development will be in accordance with nature within nature. To him, true education teaches us to see fire, air and earth with the mind and to develop children's mentality, they should be allowed to play under the sunny, cloud-filled sky of nature.

Numerous instances of his influence are evident in Indian education, despite the system not being wholly founded on his ideas (Chakraborti, 2022). Mukherjee (2017) fortifies this by Tagore's practical educational experiments at his school, embodying the ideal, and he ardently defended the highest educational standards before the nation (Mukherjee, 2017). To him, 'the highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence' (Tagore, 1917). The ideas reveal that, though the current education system of Bangladesh is not fully aligned with Tagore's philosophy, his ideas offer a workable framework for addressing the crises and proposing reforms that prioritize inclusivity in education. *Tagore believed in nurturing the whole person, not just the human mind. He wanted to develop an education system that foster creativity, imagination, and a deep understanding of the world, as well as intellectual prowess.* He focused more on good education system for the children because he believed that "all faculties of human beings,

intellectual, physical, moral, aesthetic should be nurtured, cultivated in a good educational system” (Mondal, 2018 and Mondal & Gayen, 2021). Education was the subject of numerous works by Tagore. He delivered the "Convocation Address" in 1941, the year of his passing, and the comprehensive articles and lectures he provided on educational themes spanned nearly half a century, beginning with the initial production of "Sikshar Herpher" (Education and its Incongruities) in 1892, when he was 31 years old (Mukherjee, 2010). To him, “the ideal education system is one that aims at man’s perfection, meaning the development of all the aspects of a human personality, physical, intellectual and spiritual” (Bose, 2016). He mentioned, “...the ultimate goal of education is to reach people in the Universal Spirit” (Pushpanathan, 2013).

Several key pedagogical ideas that Tagore developed in his early educational articles have now impacted his later writings. He was the first Indian to point out the flaws in the then-current educational system (Bose, 2016). He was endorsed by various well-known Bengali people, including novelist Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and Judge Sir Gurudas Bannerjee, for his thorough and insightful analysis (Jha, 1994). Tagore emphasized the role that mother tongues have in children's education and lives. The idea of teaching children a foreign language horrified him, as it often gets in the way of the creative expression that is so powerful (Mukherjee, 1962). However, Tagore did not completely abandon foreign languages. He opined that mother tongue should be used as the medium of instruction especially at school level. He also recommended studying English in addition to the mother tongue as a separate topic. He also underlined how Bengali children are not given the opportunity to read Bengali literature (Quayum, 2022). The accessible texts did not support the growth and development of the mind. He declared that the public should receive education through the usage of their mother tongue. He supported learning English and acquiring Western ideas, but he insisted that this information should be conveyed through the native vernacular (Salamatullah, 1960). Tagore commented about then British education system, “education has divorced from the streams of life and confined within the four walls of the classroom becomes artificial and losses its value” (Bhattacharjee, 2014). In his essay ‘Shikha Samasya’ (Problem of Education), Tagore considered the conventional education as the sadness of the beginning of human life. He reviewed education is surrounded by walls, locked by gates, guarded by doorman, stung by punishment, hurried by bells; this type of education can never bring happiness in human life. On Education, Tagore has given enough importance to ‘Topoban’ and ‘Gurugriha’. Because he thought the teacher-student relationship was much closer through this.

His educational philosophy was to facilitate the coexistence of students with the rest of the natural world. He believed that the universe was a single entity. His educational philosophy was devoid of mysticism; rather than being emotive, he was a pragmatist, a hard-headed observer of life (Bhattacharya, 2013). He was enraged by inaccurate facts and statistics, and his perception and expression were concise and direct. The critics of his era did not completely comprehend many of his educational theories; however, the current emphasis on the social aspects of education has enabled readers to comprehend them more thoroughly (Mukherjee, 2010). His perspectives on education were not restricted to his prior writings. Despite the fact that they maintained the youthfulness of his earlier poems, the brilliance of his vision expanded his horizons as he matured (Jha, 1994). Tagore endeavored to instill in

his pupils the Ashraman ethos of living amidst trees and other natural beauties, similar to the ancient Indian Rishis or Sages. The consequences of his vision were his realization of nature. The precise meaning of this discovery served as an inspiration to him, and it resulted in his most exceptional writing (Bose, 2016). The most important thing is that he has a true vision of philosophy of education in India in its cultural context.

Tagore was a strong humanist, as his philosophy is about the human beings. He always talked about the betterment and the development of the human beings. In accordance with Thakare et al. (2021), "this philosophy is the sum total of the four fundamental philosophies of naturalism, humanism, internationalism, and idealism". "Tagore was a devoted humanist, as human nature served as the foundation of his philosophy. He frequently discussed the importance of human development and improvement. According to his perspective, "man's perfection, or the development of all facets of a human personality, physical, intellectual, and spiritual, is the goal of the ideal education system" (Bose, 2016). He believed that the optimal environment for learning was in the midst of nature. It is imperative that we observe the natural world and learn from our personal experiences. He also had a profound faith in the all-powerful God. According to Pushpanathan (2013), "He is a proponent of an inner harmony between man and nature and God." He was a naturalist philosopher in addition to his strong humanist convictions. To him, the educational system of every individual is significantly influenced by the natural environment or nature. Das and Bera (2020) assert that "Like Rousseau, he also believed that the children can learn effectively when they are in close contact with nature. Being a naturalist philosopher, he considers 'Nature' as one of the most important and significant agents in the education process of the school children". He proposed that the infant be granted autonomy. They will investigate the natural world and acquire knowledge in accordance with their findings. He was fervently opposed to the regimented curriculum. In his view, the curriculum must be child-centered and adaptable.

The principal aim of education is to get information and utilize it for the advancement of humankind. Tagore believed that the learner's overall growth should come first in the educational process. Learning is facilitated by an energized and fit physique (Pathak, 2007). For this reason, he believed that education process should focus on the all-round development of the learner. Fit and energetic body helps one to learn better. So, the learners must engage themselves in co-curricular activities like playing, exercising, running etc. Intellectual or cognitive development, the quality without which none can progress in life, is also very much essential for the learner that includes cognitive ability, imaginative power, creativity etc. (Das and Bera, 2020). Nobody can advance in life if they lack this quality (Bera & Das, 2020). Along with this, Tagore emphasized on meditation for children in education. In this regard he noted "...it is absolutely necessary for their mental health and development that they must not have more schools for their lesson, but a world whose guiding spirit is personal love" (Tagore, 1917). It's crucial that the children develop an understanding of what is and is not morally right. Thus, it is essential to pursue moral and spiritual development. Education should place a strong emphasis on students' social development in addition to these goals because it is expected of them to interact with one another in a supportive and cooperative way in society. To put it briefly, his main goal is to support the student's overall development (Evans, 2021).

Education System in Bangladesh

Bangladesh's post-independence administration recognizes the significance of education in the comprehensive development of a nation. Nevertheless, the country's educational system is not competitive in comparison to international standards, which presents significant obstacles (Mousumi, & Kusakabe, 2021). The system has encountered a variety of challenges over the past 44 years, including a lack of a consistent curriculum, poor teacher quality, curriculum issues, and a political incapacity to implement recommendations from multiple committees (Khan et al., 2014). In addition, there is environmental underdevelopment in the institutions, and lack of proper action and policies. It is imperative to conduct impartial assessments of the current state of the education sector in order to identify deficiencies and enhance it. While we have implemented this initiative with limited scope, we have proposed numerous recommendations (Monem, & Muhammad, 2010). Hence, a robust education system can foster a competent generation that will guide Bangladesh toward the fulfillment of its objectives established in the 1971 Liberation War (Alam, 2000; Ali & Hossain, 2010).

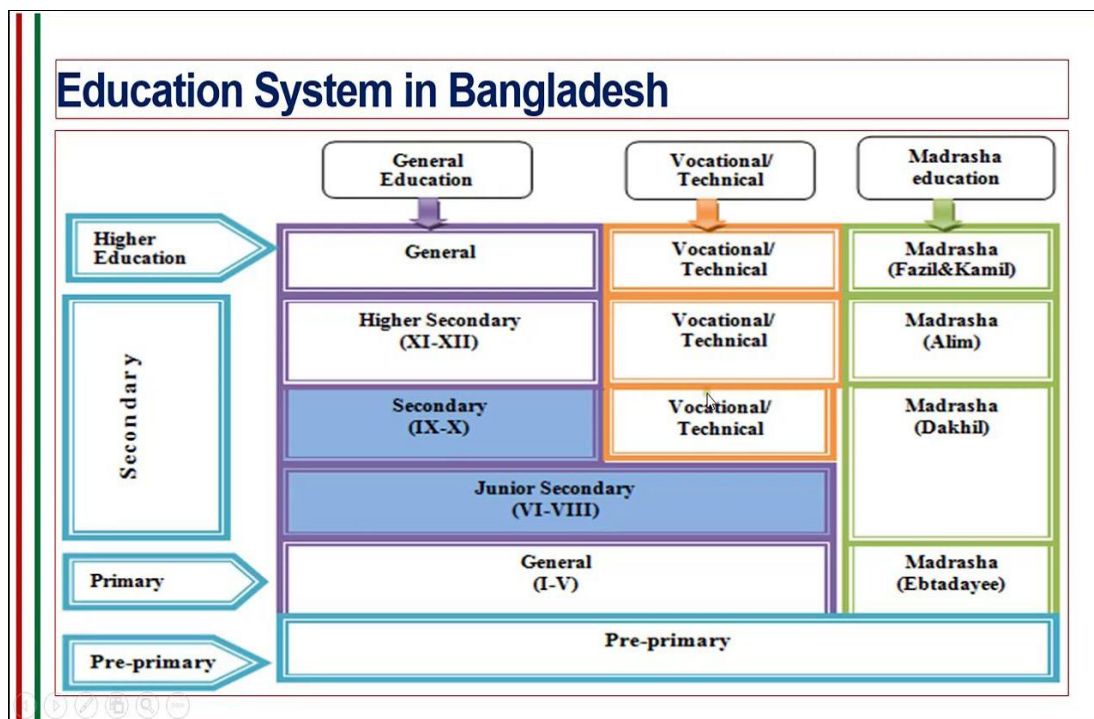


Figure 1: Existing Education System in Bangladesh (UNESCO, 2020)

At the primary level all systems teach math, English, and Bangla. However, there are significant variations in the quality of training, leading to further disparities (Banu et al., 2018). In addition, religious establishments known as madrasahs place a high priority on studying the Quran and Arabic (I and II). Both public and private institutions prioritize social science and science over religious education (Latif, 2005). English Medium Schools,

however few in number, maintain exemplary standards and curricula from prominent countries. Nevertheless, they are exclusive due to exorbitant tuition prices, and they frequently foster students who exhibit apathy towards their own nation and culture (Kono et al., 2018). Furthermore, non-formal schools possess unique syllabi and exhibit considerable variation in standards among them. Schools offering English versions often adhere to the same framework as their Bangla version equivalents; however, students in the English version attain a higher level of English proficiency (Milon et al., 2018). Private schools also exhibit variability in curricula while upholding elevated standards, as evidenced by standardized evaluations such as the PSCC (Karim et al., 2023).

The aims of various educational institutions might result in societal divisiveness. The general education system seeks to foster scientifically inclined, secular pupils, whereas the Madrasah system emphasizes the cultivation of students with religious drive. This may affect the nation's political landscape and shape its advancement (Asadullah & Chaudhury, 2016). Moreover, English Medium Schools, however few in number, maintain exemplary standards and curricula from prominent countries. Nevertheless, they are exclusive due to exorbitant tuition prices, and they frequently foster students who exhibit apathy towards their own nation and culture (Karim, 2018).

Non-formal schools possess unique syllabi and exhibit considerable variation in standards among them. Schools offering English versions often adhere to the same framework as their Bangla version equivalents; however, students in the English version attain a higher level of English proficiency (Mustari, 2022). However, the aims of various educational institutions might result in societal divisiveness. The general education system seeks to foster scientifically inclined, secular pupils, whereas the Madrasah system emphasizes the cultivation of students with religious drive that may affect the nation's political landscape and shape its advancement (Al-Hasani, 2020; Islam, 2012; Malak et al., 2013).

Methodology

Research Design and Sampling Technique

A cross-sectional study design was used to conduct the research on the analysis on the nature and structure of educational system in Bangladesh on the basis of Robindranath Tagore's philosophy of education. This type of research design is frequently used to find out what a population is like over a certain period of time (Olsen et al., 2004). A qualitative research approach was employed for conducting this research. As an approach, it comprises philosophical assumptions that furnish directions for gathering and analyzing data from multiple sources in a single study (Creswell & Clark, 2011). For collecting qualitative data, In-depth interview (IDI) and Key-informant Interview (KII) were used. Uddin (2024) and Pereira (2016) also used such approach while conducting research on education system in Bangladesh.

This study adopted purposive sampling techniques for selecting the respondents, as the study required specific people who can share information regarding the education system in Bangladesh. This is the most widely used approach because it is less costly and doesn't need a list of every category of component (Acharya et al., 2013). Total 15 in-depth interviews

(IDIs) with students, instructors, and parents, as well as 15 key informant interviews (KIIs) with education officials, administrators, policymakers, and NGO representatives in Bangladesh were interviewed. The participants were purposively selected to guarantee a diverse range of socioeconomic backgrounds, education, age, and gender. The IDI participants were between the ages of 15 and 50, while the KII participants were professionals between the ages of 30 and 60, all of whom had at least a bachelor's degree. Moreover, representatives of both genders were equitably selected. Nevertheless, all interviews were audio-recorded with informed consent, transcribed, and securely preserved to ensure confidentiality and validity.

Data Analysis Plan

The study's secondary data were gathered using thematic analysis. The first step in the transcription process was gathering the data and organizing it so that scholars could easily interpret it. In this stage, the writer arranged supplementary written materials, assembled responses, and typed IDIs and KIIs for the investigation. The data was collected, arranged, and then dissected by the researchers. It entails breaking down the data and using code to classify it into relevant areas. Data is gradually turned into useable form through the coding process, which finds similar themes, concepts, or ideas. Coding is a complex process that entails the methodical identification of significant data features that are scattered across the course of the data collection. After that, the researcher put the codes back together and put them in order to create themes. This theme illustrated a particular degree of structured response or relevance within the data set and summarized pertinent information about the data in respect to the study issue. After obtaining codes and themes from the data, the researcher made analytical inferences. After themes are identified and clarified, interpretations follow. This can be achieved by giving a thorough description of the standards and categorization processes, together with an interpretation of the data that is produced.

Findings & Discussion

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the current state and structure of Bangladesh's educational system in comparison to Rabindranath Tagore's educational philosophy. The findings demonstrated that the Bangladeshi education system receives support from the policy level as a result of the established national educational policy and the numerous acts and policies that pertain to the integration of ICT into education. In contrast, the philosophy of education, which is the actual meaning and purpose of education as elaborated by Tagore, is far removed from the nature and structure. Therefore, it is imperative to establish both short-term and long-term strategies to enhance the quality of educational systems, thereby guaranteeing the mental development of humanity and the capacity of future workforces. This can be achieved through the implementation of policy assistance. Additionally, Tagore emphasized that the education approach should enhance students' adaptability to the evolving environment, necessitating the help of the external environment to achieve success. The primary level of the application and integration of social development perspectives in education necessitates an advancement to an advanced level for both students and teachers to guarantee a free and high-quality education.

However, Bangladesh's educational system is plagued by the same issue as that of developed countries: it has evolved into a memorization-based system. The delivery of education to students must be reevaluated by policymakers, curriculum developers, and instructors. The entire objective of education cannot be achieved through the mere act of memorizing, which is a limited component of education as mentioned by Tagore. Furthermore, redesigning textbooks with real-world scenarios, practical examples for practice, and the use of teaching aids in the classroom to consider alternative solutions to these issues could be the solution to these issues. A revised assessment system also must be developed to ensure that students are not solely motivated and compelled to comprehend the material they are taught, as memorization alone will not be effective. However, based on the findings the themes that are generated from the study relevant to the following crisis in Bangladesh's educational systems were identified for comparison with the educational philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore,

Aim of Education

According to Tagore's philosophy of education, the primary goal of education is to acquire knowledge and implement it for the betterment of humanity, self-realization, realized the universal soul in himself and in nature, flourishing the human being, etc. Being a lover of humanity, Tagore wanted to make a synthesis between eastern and western culture. He wanted to promote inter-cultural and inter-social understanding for the unity and harmony of mankind. He believed that service to man is service to God. On the contrary, nowadays the aim of education in Bangladesh is to create labor for the job market.

An IDI participant stated that,

"Our education structure is based on the philosophy of creating laborers who will serve the labor market." We are far away from the actual notion of education, as said by Rabindranath Tagore, that aims to develop humankind. The goal of acquiring knowledge is to enhance one's financial capabilities rather than contributing to the betterment of humanity." (IDI Participant 5)

However, the education aims to foster the development of individuals and the promotion of these values, thereby enhancing their ability to address environmental and development issues in any given country. Education is also instrumental in the development of a sense of ethical responsibility, welfare attitudes, skills, and behavior, as well as awareness. But the present nature of Bangladesh's education system is very poor in term of objective and goals to be achieved by the learners. The major crisis of the education sector in Bangladesh is that the aim of education is totally individual based that doesn't emphasize the demand of humanity and society as well (Mousumi, 2021, Ahsan et al., 2007).

Education as a memorization exercise

In order to evaluate cognitive capacities in Bangla, English language, and math, DSHE performed a study in 2016. Policymakers designed this government-authority study to understand the current situation at the secondary level. According to the study, sixth-grade students needed help understanding English vocabulary definitions and choosing the right tense when writing sentences in the language. Unexpectedly, learners in this grade level were unable to determine the meaning of a common Bangla expression that was given in an

odd context. In addition, even though Bangla is their mother tongue, they have no idea what many Bangla words imply. When it comes to algebra and geometry, the pupils find it difficult to apply the concepts in practical situations.

A KI participant mentioned,

“Our students strive to commit every topic they read to memory. They don't aim to gain a comprehensive understanding of They simply commit the material to memory the night before the exam in order to pass it and secure a promotion to the next grade. Such a practice undoubtedly poses a risk for the country's future generation” (KII Participant 3)

However, understanding Bangla and English, as well as the proper application of grammatical rules in context, are difficult for eighth-grade students. Students at the same grade level were unable to apply mathematical reasoning to real-world situations or understand the reasoning behind the solutions. They also have weaknesses in their understanding of geometry and their ability to connect concepts to real-world applications. As a result, it is clear that pupils view learning as a process of memorizing as opposed to comprehension. Thus, despite their memorization skills, they struggled to apply what they learned.

Curriculum: The Outdated assessment system

Tagore was entirely opposed to a rigid and standardized education. He stated that learners ought to pursue their education based on their individual interests that will be ensured by the curriculum provided by the government. He was totally against the fixed curriculum system. To him, the curriculum must be flexible and child centered (Mondal & Gayen 2021). But in this country, the teachers were under pressure to educate because it was solely for the test, which put strain on them. Teachers who wish to attain the skills outlined in the secondary national English curriculum suggested altering the examination method. This study discovers, however, that instructors had differing opinions regarding the testing procedures and learning objectives.

A KII participant shared that,

“The present curriculum isn't based on the educational philosophy of Tagore. In addition, the Bangladeshi curriculum was never focused on the actual notion and purpose of education. The curriculum is totally based on the development of such necessary skills that will help the students to take part in the job market and service the economy of the country. Thus, we are far behind in terms of developing human quality through education.” (KII participant 10)

Nevertheless, Sultana (2019) also found in another study that even though communicative language has been the cornerstone of Bangladesh's English curriculum for the past 20 years, teachers' efficacy in evaluation systems was limited by their lack of formal academic and professional testing backgrounds. She also mentioned that tests make up the majority of Bangladesh's educational system, with teachers preparing their pupils for many exams over the course of the academic year. However, that any student may pass the examinations without understanding the language or the framework to utilize in real-world scenarios is

depressing. Furthermore, evaluations must to be grounded in more than just the exam (Al Amin & Greenwood, 2018).

Role of Teacher: The Less qualified teachers

Tagore held educators in high regard within the teaching and learning process. The main object of teaching is not to give explanations, but to knock at the doors of the mind (Tagore, 1994). Every child regards their instructors as their "Guru". They instruct the children in making suitable life decisions. They serve as the guiding beacon for learners in their life. According to Tagore, "a teacher can never truly teach unless he is still learning himself. A lamp can never light another lamp unless it continues to burn its own flame. The teacher who has come to the end of his subject, who has no living traffic with his knowledge but merely repeats his lesson to his students, can only load their minds, he cannot quicken them" (Tagore, 1994). But in the context of Bangladeshi society, teachers aren't enough qualified. They lack proper knowledge and aren't able to update themselves with the modern world. Hence, they got behind with the present curriculum that restricts them from providing actual learning to their students.

One IDI participant mentioned that,

"Most of the time, our teachers lack enough knowledge regarding the modern education system. They lack the ideas about digital learning that are paramount in modern society. However, proper training based on the actual philosophy of education is required that will help both the teachers and the students to be well educated." (IDI participant 2)

However, according to a study, a teacher with a master's degree in Bangladesh has a beneficial impact on students' performance (MPME, 2018). According to this report, just 37% of Bangladeshi math and Bangla instructors hold a master's degree in basic education. Student performance may be severely hampered by this shortcoming. To make sure that qualified applicants are chosen, the minimum recruitment requirements for teachers at the school level should be reevaluated. The pay structure needs to be flexible enough to pay qualified teachers, which is something the current school system does not do. Professional teachers at the school level can improve the quality of education as a whole, which will eventually help our children grow up to be competent adults (Alam et al., 2018).

Lack of social recognition for teachers

The capacity to select one's occupation can influence one's motivation for it. According to CAMPE (2015), teaching has become the preferred job option for Bangladeshi graduates. Few parents aspire for their children to pursue careers in teaching. There is a lack of incentive to pursue a teaching career due to the absence of a professional advancement structure for educators.

One KII respondent stated that,

"In our society, teachers often lack the respect they deserve." Teachers often receive insufficient respect due to their lack of both financial resources and authority. They do not hold any dominant positions in society. Once upon a time, they were held in high regard, but

in modern times, they are viewed as the most vulnerable groups within society.” (KII Participant, 13)

Moreover, nearly all educators contend with issues pertaining to workload and other classroom dynamics. The monotonous and tedious tasks that educators undertake throughout the day exhaust them. Their inadequate remuneration compels them to seek alternative non-teaching employment to augment their income. These substantially undermine teachers' morale and their capacity to fulfill professional responsibilities when they intermittently require pupils to pay for private tuition. They failed to serve as an exemplary role model for their students, potentially adversely impacting the kids' future professions (Thorton, 2006 & Talukdar, 2021).

Learner's Freedom

In Bangladesh, students don't have the freedom to choose what to read or not. They aren't taken while selecting study materials. The highest authority selects the curriculum in which the student's freedom isn't considered. According to Das and Bera (2020), “Like Rousseau, Tagore also upheld Nature as the most effective and powerful teacher for a child.” He advised to give freedom to child. Tagore mentioned, “I never said to them. Don't do or don't do that. I never prevented them from climbing trees or going where they liked. I wanted to make these children happy in an atmosphere of freedom.” (Chakrabarti, 1988). As an individualist, Rabindranath Tagore believed that everyone has the right to shape their own life. To him, in the field of education, freedom is required in the development of individual personality. That's why he mentioned- “So, in my institution I try to make provision for these three aspects of freedom– freedom of mind, freedom of heart and freedom of will” (Tagore, 1996). In this way, he stood for the freedom and activities of learners. Hence, the overall purpose of education isn't well developed as Tagore demanded.

One IDI respondent stated that,

“We can't figure out what we're reading. Every now and again we receive a curriculum that does not suit our tastes. We don't read these to learn new things; we read them only to make sure we pass the test. It is not our place to choose which literature to read.” (IDI Participant 10)

Siddique (2020), Sultana (2017) also showed the actual scenario of present education structure based on learner's freedom to choose study materials.

Language: Medium of Instruction

Universal education is designed to ensure that all individuals receive an education, irrespective of their origin or discrimination. In order to ensure long-term efficacy and societal advancement, Tagore contended that teaching in one's mother tongue is essential. He contended that the acquisition of additional languages facilitates global integration by providing access to knowledge in a variety of disciplines. Tagore, who founded Vishva Bharati to foster global brotherhood, was both a nationalist and an internationalist.

One KII participant stated that,

"In the modern world, relying solely on mother tongue in the education system isn't a great idea." Globalization has led to the widespread and powerful use of these languages worldwide. For example, without learning English, one cannot compete in today's job market. Therefore, it is necessary to teach students in multiple languages. (KII Participant 1)

Hamid et al. (2009), Nur (2021) also showed that, in our education system mother tongue isn't the only medium rather English is given priority in the modern time. But the mother tongue should have the priority.

Instructional strategies & Teaching Method: Different education streams

Tagore criticized traditional classroom education and advocated for students to learn from nature and the natural world. He advocated for outside learning opportunities, such as field trips and historical tours. Moreover, he emphasized studying subjects like geography, history, agriculture, and pragmatics. He emphasized freedom of expression, helping students reach their full potential, and promoting mother tongue instruction in educational institutions. He also emphasized the importance of students choosing their courses based on their interests. Yi Sun (2017) mentioned, according to Tagore, the educational system should be like that-

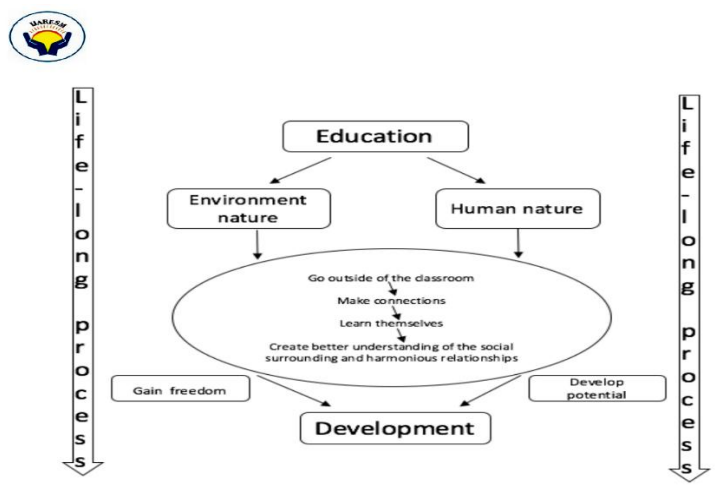


Figure 2: Two Kinds of Nature in Education Process (Sun, 2017)

The Future of Education, 2020, identified diversity among students in the classroom as a strength of developed countries' educational systems. However, Bangladesh's efforts to establish diversity in the classroom have been unsuccessful, with its implementation limited to the education branch (NHRC, 2014). Education Policy 2010 also identified it as a challenge in our educational systems and underscored the need for a transition to a unified stream (GoB, 2020). In response to the practical realities of social conditions, Bangladesh divides its education system into four main streams: the national curriculum (in Bengali and English), the English medium, vocational studies, and madrasa education (NHRC, 2014). It guarantees the right to education for all, despite the ongoing debate regarding the diversity of educational streams. However, the primary flaw in these streams is the variability of the curriculum, which requires resolution to pursue further education or employment. Society's educational quality is subject to variation due to the extensive range of infrastructure facilities among these streams.

Conclusion

Education has a profound effect on entire human lives and is crucial for the mental development of humankind. This study has highlighted the nature and a number of significant issues that beset Bangladeshi education structure and the system based on the Rabindranath Tagore's philosophy of education. The nature of education and the system of educational institutions are far different from the Tagore's philosophy of education. Nowadays, the purpose of the current education system is to get a well-paying job by obtaining a degree. For the fulfillment of this purpose and to get good marks in exams, the current students have no time to desire to go deep into any subject and acquire knowledge. Neither the parents nor the teacher making the students interested in acquiring knowledge. One of the aims of education system now is to get more marks in the shortcut way as soon as possible. Moreover, where numbers are the only means of judging the good and bad of the students, their only purpose is to get numbers. Knowledge is now entirely book-centric. Along with this, the environment and necessary elements of the educational institutions are very poor. Consequently, the country suffers and has considerably lagged behind other nations in terms of science, technology, politics, the economy, and social and cultural aspects. Worryingly, the nation is also moving away from its original concepts and purposes of education. Moreover, the education system has numerous loopholes and challenges that pose threats towards the development of wise and intellectual generations. So in this situation Rabindranath Tagore's educational thinking is very relevant.

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