

Details of Module and its structure

Module Detail	
Subject Name	Education
Course Name	Contemporary Indian Education
Course Code	EDU501
Module Name/Title	<i>Educational Thoughts and Practices: Critical Reflections on the Educational Thoughts and Practices of Rabindranath Tagore with respect to the Relevance in the Present Education System.</i>
Module Code	CIE007
Pre-requisites	Nature & Forms of Education, Educational Philosophies, and Educational System
Learning Outcome	<p>After going through this lesson, the learners will be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply Educational thoughts & Educational Practices of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore in new situations. • Evaluate by making comparisons and judgements on Educational thoughts and Educational Practices of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore. • Gather information, Conclude and Evaluate the Present Educational System. • Critically Relate the Educational Thoughts & Principles of Rabindranath Tagore with Present Educational System.
Keywords	Educational Thoughts; Educational Practices; Present Educational System; Critical Reflection, Relevance etc.

1. Development Team

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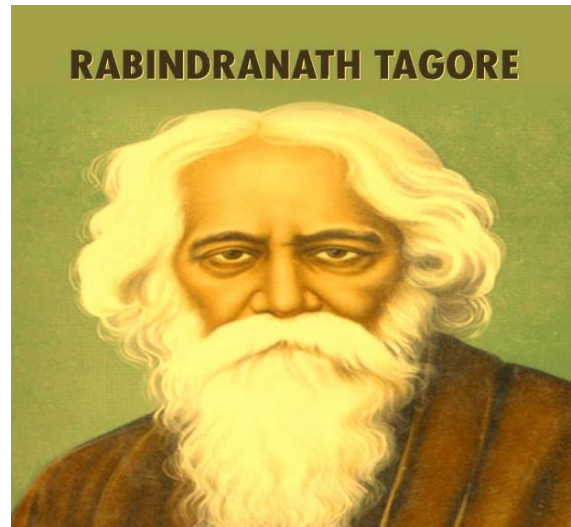
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1. Introduction:

- “Education means enabling the mind to find out that ultimate truth which emancipates us from the bondage of the dust and gives us the wealth not of things but of inner light not of power but of love making this truth its own and giving expression to it.”

Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore



Picture- 1

Rabindranath Tagore's system of education emphasizes on the intellectual, physical, social, moral economic and spiritual aspects of human life by which a man can develop a whole sole and towering personality. Tagore's thoughts and practices are very much adopted in modern education system. But due to galloping advancements in science and technology some critiques have been erupted as relating those to the modern system of education which is growing and advancing day by day due to digitalization in the present era. We will discuss those aspects after carefully understanding the thoughts and principles of Rabindranath Tagore who was a philanthropist, novelist, poet, philosopher, dramatist, humanist, vedanist, nationalist along with naturalist. He was also a short story writer, lyricist, song composer, director, painter and was a multi-dimensional genius. He will be remembered by generations to further generations.

2. Life Sketch in Brief (May 07, 1861 -August 7, 1941)

On May 7, 1861 in Jorasanko mansion in Calcutta in Bengal Vishwakavi Rabindra Nath Tagore was born. Father Maharishi Debendranath Tagore a brahamo samaj leader, a rich man apart from an aristocrat and mother Sharada Devi educated him at home by a tutor in his formative years as he left school. Education of Astronomy, Sanskrit and Upanishad he received from his father. Getting educated within the four walls made him unhappy and he called schools as a book learning factories as he was a curious and creative

child. Self-learning played a vital role. Inspire of being educated at home, he was knowing many subjects and there was a system and routine in his studies. He followed the day as mentioned below:

- a) He would leave bed early in the morning.
- b) After physical exercise he would study Mathematics, History, Geography, Bengali and Sanskrit.
- c) Afternoon was devoted to Drawing, English & Games.
- d) Hours of Sundays were spent to learn music and conduct experiments in Science.
- e) He was happy to read plays of Kalidas and Shakespeare.
- f) He had a special interest in Bengali, which was his mother-tongue.

Later on he was sent to a public school at London, where he became a student of Prof. Henry Morley whose lectures influenced Rabindranath to take interest in English literature. He developed interest in English culture, traditions and literature. While studying in England, he wrote a poem "Broken Heart". After 18 months in England, he returned to India without taking any degree.

"Gitanjali" is a well-known collection of his poems. Rabindranath Tagore was the first Indian to get a Nobel Prize in 1913 and the British Government conferred on him knighthood and gave him the title of "Sir".

A school started in 1901 at Bolpur, a village 112km. north Kolkata under the name Brahmacharyashram was later changed to Brahma vidyalaya and finally to Shantiniketan. It specializes in arts, crafts, music and dance besides rural reconstruction. Students come to Shantiniketan from so many countries to study. He established Viswabharathi University near Santiniketan in 1921 which is currently a Central University.

Being a good artist he learnt painting at the age of 60. He drew more than 2000 pictures, which were exhibited in many countries. Our National Anthem "Jana gana man was given by Rabindranath Tagore and was written when he was in Madanapalli in Andhra Pradesh on the eve of the Rishi Valley School Anniversary at the invitation of Dr. Arundale, the Principal. He was a great philosopher and a teacher and was called "Gurudev" by everyone. He breathed his last on August 7, 1941.

3. Educational Thoughts & Practices of Rabindranath Tagore

He had an original picture of world. His thoughts were shaped by various socio-political, religious beliefs and economic conditions of the nation.

4. Physical & Intellectual Development

Rabindranath Tagore emphasized physical & intellectual development of students through physical exercises, imagination, intellectual progress and self-learning which can lead them to a new development. In Shantiniketan, Ashram of Rabindranath Tagore yoga, games, sports, and different kinds of exercises were an integral part of the educational curriculum. Physical and intellectual development accompanied development of imagination, creativity, constraint curiosity and alertness of the mind apart from healthy

body and physique. The learner should be free to adopt his own ways of learning which can bring an all-round development in him.

Picture- 2



5. Aiming Education towards Self-Realization

Self-realization develops an ability to recognize in a learner their weak ended areas and strengths. The learner should spend maximum time and efforts in the areas they are not at all satisfied and try to upgrade those skills up to higher levels. Self-realization helps learner to make a manifestation of a good and total personality. It enhances students thinking ability and expand internal resources to a vast possibility. All skills get assembled in one human being. Through self-realization there forms a way to brighten skills and abilities. Self-realization is the essence of humanism. Manifestation of personality depends upon the self-realization and spiritual knowledge of an individual.

6. Love for Humanity and Universality for Perfection

As per Rabindranath Tagore's educational philosophy, international sympathy and universal brotherhood leads to humanity among human beings of one nation with the other. The feeling of singleness should be replaced through the concepts like brotherhood and universality for perfection. All beings are equal on this earth. Tagore held that education can teach people to realize oneness within the globe. Education for international understanding and universal brotherhood is an aim of his educational philosophy.

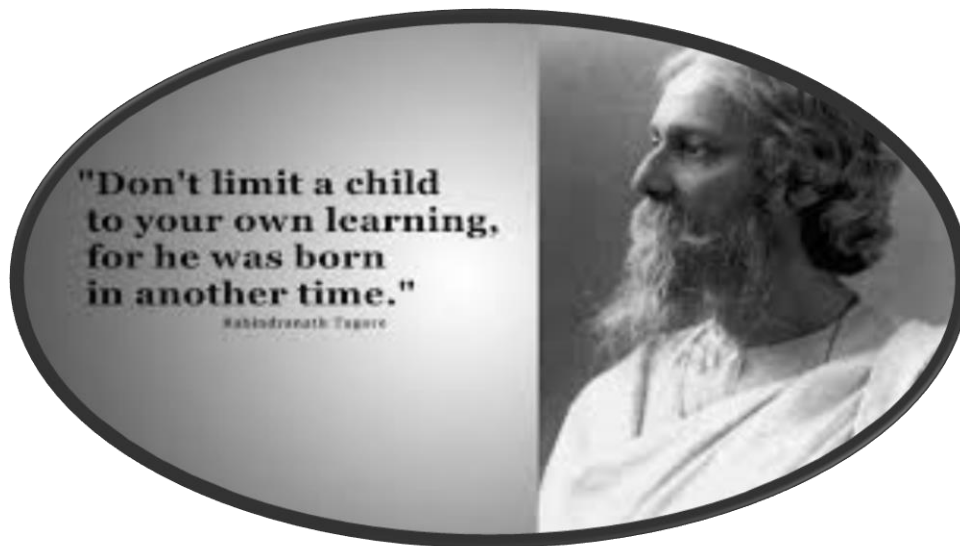
7. Freedom & Natural Growth in Natural Circumstances:

Freedom is an integral part of human development. Tagore says "education leads to learning only when it is imparted through the means of freedom. Nature is the best teacher to the learners as per Tagore. Nature provides the students necessary situation to earn knowledge. No pressure should be exerted upon the student to learn the things. It will have built up his behaviour and character. With that object he had opened Shantiniketan, Sri Niketan and Brahma Chari Ashram.

Accordingly, he gave free choice to students to develop their interest in any field they want. He explained freedom in three-categorized ways viz freedom of heart, intellect and will. Education imparted in a natural way will lead to the fulfillment of these three freedoms. Heartfelt desire of Tagore was self-discipline. He was against the educational system that was prevalent in his time. Because such a system of education snatches the child from the lap of

nature and confines him within the boundaries of school and then put him in to an office or factory. He felt that education had become artificial being separated from the stream of life and confined within the four walls of the classroom. In this connection he stated from his experience "***There was no particular trouble in the school. Yet after all it was a school. The room were pitiless, its walls stood like sentries. There was nothing like a home in it, it was like big box with many compartments***"

8. Mother Tongue as the Medium of Instruction



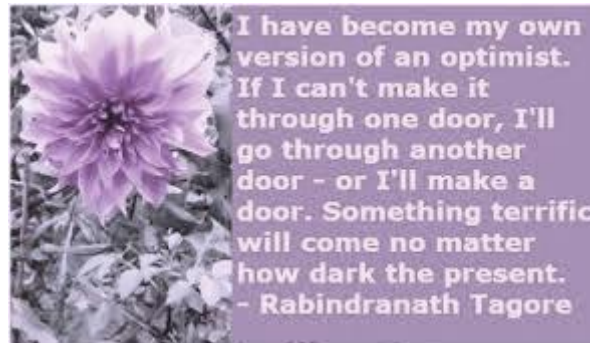
Tagore knew the value and need of the mother tongue in providing all the required educational nourishment of the learners. Language is the true vehicle of self-expression. When mother tongue is the mean of instruction for the child the education becomes easier to understand. Mother tongue should be kept above to other languages. Language is the true vehicle of self-expression. Man can freely express his thoughts in his own language. So Tagore had emphasized mother tongue as the medium of instruction for the child`s education.

9. Social, Aesthetic, Moral and Spiritual Development

Socialization, morality, aesthetic sense & spiritualism is the essence of humanism. As children attain maturity as per their age. These developments take place through all means of education. Students gain knowledge through books but these maturities are attained by them after seeing other person`s behaviour. Tagore emphasized on social, aesthetic, moral and spiritual training in his educational thought. Such developments and education is more important than bookish knowledge for a wholesome

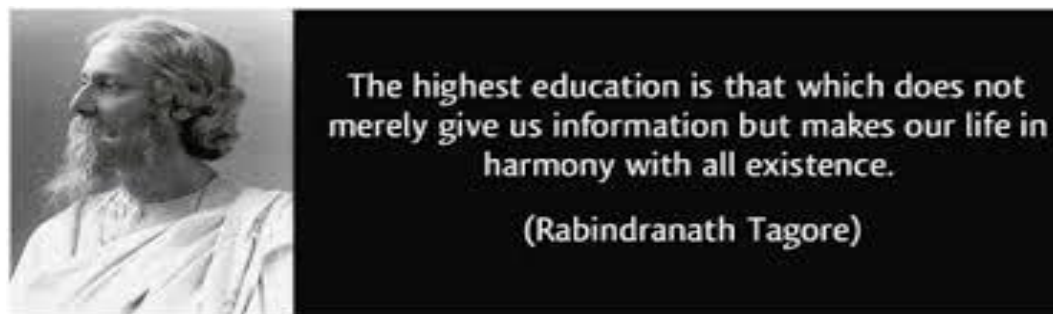
development of human personality. There must be an adequate provision for the development of self-less activities, co-operation and love fellow feeling and sharing among the students in educational institutions. As per Tagore, “Brahma” the supreme soul manifests himself through human being and other creatures. As he is the creator of all human-beings and creatures, so all are equal. Rabindranath Tagore therefore said, **“Service to man is service to God”**. Everyone should develop social relationships and fellow-feelings from the beginning of their life. The social development of senses is as important as the intellectual and other developments. Rabindranath Tagore wrote,

“In our country, in every village, let the cooperative principle prevail introducing and distributing wealth—this is my desire”.



Picture- 4

10. **Establishment of Relation between Man and God & Co-relation of Objects:** Co-relation exists between God, man and nature. A peaceful world is only possible when correlation between man and nature, man and God is established as the qualities and potentialities of men are different from God. So, initiation of classes with prayer is must to be performed in Rabindranath Tagore’s Ashram.



Picture- 5

11. **Practical and Real form of Teaching:** As per Tagore’s practice, teaching should be practical and real both rather artificial and theoretical. As a naturalist out and in, Tagore laid stress on the practical aspect of education which definitely increases the creative skill within a learner. Creativity can bring perfection in the learning process and the learner can be a perfectionist in his own area but not a slave to mere theoretical and artificial knowledge.

12. **Creative Self Expression with Palace of Fine Arts (Dance, Drama, Music, Poetry etc.:** Tagore emphasized on fine arts in his educational curriculum. To him, games, dances, music, drama, painting etc. should be there in the curricular areas. learners should take active part in developing these skills. In his own words-

"Speaking is for mankind and music for nature speaking is clear and limited by its needs; whereas music is mystic and expressive for a romantic eagerness. That is why; speaking creates nearness between man and man, while music helps us to identify ourselves with nature. When the harmonies of sounds are released with our expression then speaking loses much of its limited significance, but on the contrary getting together of the two muses had an all pervading character".

13. **Unity of West and East and Harmonious Relationship with Society:** The realistic education is that which not only give us information but bring our life in harmony. Tagore opined that harmonious bond of man with man, with surrounding- nature etc and with other nation is essential. Tagore's education revealed a novel mixing of the ideas of the East and West masses. The spiritualism of Indian philosophers and progressive outlook of the western people were mixed together to give an educational thought and practice which marked its distinction in comparison to other educationists of India.

14. **Goodbye to Book-Centered Education:** Tagore established a new mile-stone in the educational system by rejecting a book centered education for learners. As per his thinking it is not good to confine the mind of learners to merely text-books. It may kill the natural instincts of a learner and make him bookish apart from killing his creative skills. So, they should be freed from the book centered education and should be given a expanded avenue for learning.

15. **Utilitarian Knowledge in Women & Education besides Equality:** As per Tagore's classification two types of knowledge, pure and utilitarian is the right of everyone to receive. To receive pure education i.e. academic is the right of every woman to get as men receive. Women have to play the role of wife and mother so home science should be the utilitarian or vocational knowledge provided to women apart from pure education.

16. **Service to Mankind as the Service to God in Religious Education:** Performing rituals, keeping blind faith on anything may enhance communalism in the society so Tagore said, true religiousness lies in gladly recognizing the values of man as man"

17. **Vocational, Industrial & Mass Education:** For eradicating the poverty in the country such education was needed. For mass education, the education has to be made free and compulsory and provision of adult education in the form of night classes must be made.

18. **Image and Task of a Teacher:** He believed that not the method but teachers who are filled with love, patience, joy and enthusiasm are more effective. He wanted positive attitude of teachers. Teacher must take care of purity and innocence of child and should give love, affection and consideration to him. From his own experience he wrote

"Of the teachers, I remember only one, whose language was so foul that, out of sheer contempt for him, I steadily refused to answer any one of his question".

19. **Subjects of Study & Curriculum:** Tagore was not satisfied with the educational curriculum of his time as he wanted to develop the man in totality. A curriculum based on activities and broad experience in real life situation can only develop the full-fledged personality of the child. Keeping this view in mind he established his school 'Shantiniketan' where History, Geography, Nature's study, agriculture and practical subjects were taught. Besides these; Horticulture, Gardening, Field study, laboratory work, original creations, Drawing, music, Arts, Sculptures, Vocational, Professional and technical subjects formed part of the curriculum. Training of not only the intellect but also emotions was imparted in Shantiniketan. He considered critically the method of his time to be artificial and mechanical.

20. **Education for Rural Reconstruction:** Tagore was well acquainted with the rural poverty of India. So, he wanted to eradicate it through education. The practical training given through different skills to the students will make them skilled artisans in their fields. They can remove the poverty of the rural bulk by applying their information, knowledge and skills in helping thereby in the process of rural reconstruction.

Tagore considered the following methods of teaching which were based on the real problems of life.

20.1. **Teaching & Learning while walking:** Tagore felt that the mind of a student within the four walls of a classroom remains passive, inert and inactive. So he believed that during walking mind remains awake and students can easily grasp knowledge of any thing by coming directly in its contact.

20.2. **Discussions based Learning:** Discussion and question answer method makes students free from cramming of bookish content. If the problems are opened for discussion students will be able to think logically with arguments.

20.3. **Activity Dominant Learning:** learning by doing implies activity based method. According to Tagore this method activates and shakes all the faculties of body and mind. So he made learning of handicrafts compulsory in his school and university. He even allowed physical exercise or activity even during class teaching or regular study.

20.4. **Heuristic Method:** As followed in Shantiniketan the learner is in the position of discoverer. The students when in difficulty ask questions and the teacher solves the problem and clarifies and further teacher asks questions in order to test their comprehension.

Critical reflections on the Educational Thoughts and Practices of Rabindranath Tagore with respect to the relevance in the present Education System

- i. A look into Tagore's educational writings make it clear that in some places he has clearly stated the aims but in other places they have to be inferred from contexts. He never talked about them in a unified way, they had an integral unity.
- ii. in spite of relating Tagore's principles and practices still there is need to redesign the present educational system as it is not geared enough to solve some of today's problems. Some of the problem solving skills are required to be inculcated to solve external problems which are present for the last 200 years of dehumanization.
- iii. Subjects of study, activities and occupation and actual living and community services are technologically equipped in the present system of education that's why Tagore's method which require walking while teaching can rarely be adopted in today's schools in urban localities.
- iv. As Tagore felt that man can acquire pure knowledge and can become mature human being through education. In his work '*Shikshar Bahon*' (the vehicle of education) he highlighted the problem of expansion of education among the masses adopting natural setting. In today's technological or digital era cent percent adoption of the natural setting for education is a bit difficult.
- v. As Tagore was against the bookish and examination oriented teaching as all these are against nature of child. Tagore was of the view that the child should be brought in contact with nature so that the child can develop overall in natural way but in this era freedom is not a compulsory issue. In case we give studies and learning more freedom, learners will change their attitude towards learning and will get indulged in games and sports most of the time. So, less freedom can change the attitude and behavior of children towards studies.
- vi. The methods adopted by Tagore were based on life and vitality, but question arises on the application of such methods in present education system.
- vii. Tagore advocated mother tongue to be the medium of instruction in educational institutions but as per new developed culture children understanding mother tongue only is not giving a remarkable result

and progress to the learner as world is progressing through all dimensions. Studies are done through the social media and internet. Maximum content is provided using English language. One can chat with any person in the world using English language easily to exchange ideas. English being a well-known language throughout globe It's not feasible and practical after knowing mother tongue only. Every language has its own masses. Only the mass may understand that particular language.

- viii. Also as Tagore stressed the importance of play way in the early education of children because play way was regarded by him as a free and spontaneous expression of creative activity, growth and joy. Unless a child becomes aware of his creative sensibilities, education turns out to be a mechanical training of the mind and allows no room for improvisation. In present system at this stage of education as well the technology is mediated and as children are born in digital, internet and web era play way method has also altered.
- ix. Apart from above Tagore appreciated a wide curriculum which could satisfy learners aesthetic, creative, spiritual and vocational needs. Here also technological aspect was given very little space as latest developments, Internet and digitalization were not existing in that era.

21. Summary

Educational thoughts and practices of Rabindranath Tagore includes physical and intellectual development of learners, aiming education for self-realization, love for humanity and universality for perfection, freedom & natural growth in natural circumstances. Also mother tongue as the medium of instruction, social, aesthetic, moral and spiritual development, establishment of relation between man and God & co-relation of objects. Moreover, practical and real form of teaching, creative self-expression with palace of fine arts (Dance, Drama, Music, Poetry etc). Apart from it unity of west and east and harmonious relationship with society, goodbye to book-centered education, utilitarian knowledge in women education besides quality, service to mankind as the service to God in religious education. Vocational, industrial & mass education, image and task of a teacher has great impact on learners. Method of teaching included, teaching & learning while walking, discussions based learning, activity dominant learning, heuristic method. In the present educational system due to highly evolved technological era freedom, natural setting, methods of teaching are dominated by digitalization, internet or world wide web.

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Description: In self-assessment Question No. 1 to 12 consist of multiple choice questions in which learners are required to select the correct one out of the four alternatives and Question No. 13 to 27 learner has to identify about true/false statements.

1. Rabindranath Tagore was a
 - a) Pragmatist
 - b) Realist
 - c) Naturalist
 - d) Idealist
2. When Rabindranath Tagore was born?
 - a) 07 May, 1861
 - b) 07 Nov, 1861
 - c) 16 July ,1881
 - d) 20 Feb, 1889
3. Which among the following is not written by Rabindranath Tagore?
 - a) Tapovan
 - b) Shiksar vahan
 - c) (c)Sandhya Sangeet
 - d) (d)Emile
4. Tagore received Nobel Prize in 1913 for his work on
 - a) Tapovan
 - b) Galpaguccha
 - c) Gitanjali
 - d) Shiksar vahan
5. According to Tagore true religiousness lies in
 - a) helping the peasants
 - b) gladly recognizing the values of man as a man
 - c) cleaning the surroundings
 - d) Doing prayers daily
6. The great Indian saint Tagore was totally against
 - a) Theoretical Knowledge
 - b) Practical Knowledge
 - c) bookish knowledge
 - d) Agricultural knowledge
7. Tagore recommended that Education must be provided in the company of
 - a) Nature
 - b) Friends
 - c) Family
 - d) Society
8. As per Tagore Education should be meaningful in the context of them
 - a) content
 - b) illustration
 - c) examples
 - d) existence

9. Through subjects like crafts, music, drawing and dramatics mostly which skill can be promoted among children
 - a) Imagination
 - b) Speaking
 - c) reading
 - d) Creativity
10. Which method of teaching was given by Tagore to avoid teaching within four walls of classroom?
 - a) Teaching by walking
 - b) learning through heuristic method
 - c) learning through debate
 - d) learning through activities
11. Which of the following is not a constituent part of Vishwa- Bharti?
 - a) Shantiniketan School
 - b) University
 - c) Physical training University
 - d) Institute of Rural Reconstruction
12. Rabindranath Tagore passed away on
 - a) 09 August 1943
 - b) 07 August 1941
 - c) 07 Nov 1941
 - d) (d)19 August 1941
13. Rabindranath Tagore's mother 's name was Sharada Devi (True/False). ()
14. Early education of Rabindranath Tagore was given in London (True/False) ()
15. Tagore was an idealist(True/False) ()
16. Tagore never believed on harmonious relationship(True/False) ()
17. As per Rabindranath Tagore freedom given to a child helps in spontaneous development(True/False) ()
18. "Tapovan" was written by Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore(True/False) ()
19. M.K. Gandhi said, "Mankind must realize a unity, wider in range, deeper in sentiment, stronger in power than ever before" (True/False) ()
20. As per Tagore's thoughts regarding curriculum he said it should be broad based consisting of subject of study, activities and actual living. (True/False) ()
21. Teaching by Travelling is the worst method as per Tagore's educational practice (True/False) ()
22. Vishwa Bharti is at Shantiniketan (True/False) ()
23. Tagore classified knowledge into two domains: Pure knowledge and utilitarian knowledge(True/False) ()
24. Only a good learner can be a good Teacher was the view of Tagore(True/False) ()

Answers: -

1 (c), 2 (a), 3(d), 4(c), 5(b), 6(c),7(a), 8(d), 9(d), 10(a), 11(c), 12(d)

13(True)	14(False)	15(False)	16(False)
17(True)	18(True)	19(False)	20(True)
21(False)	22(True)	23(True)	24(True)