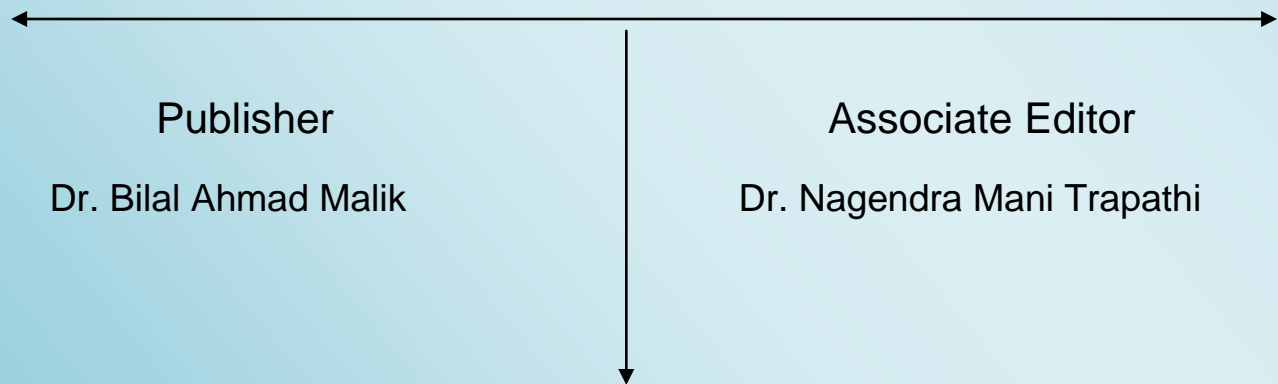


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# NATURE, EDUCATION AND RABINDRANATH TAGORE

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## ABSTRACT:

*Tagore's worldly outlook springs from views embedded in the Upanishad. His philosophy is pillared by ancient Indian world outlook for sustainable development and eco-ethical human living. In the omega environment, a question may arise are we conscious enough regarding about the Tagore's geo-environmental awareness? The answer is, yes we are but not up to demark. We are polluting, concrete dam, unnecessary wastes, toxic chemicals, bomb, war fear weapons which intern herms (own) to our mother earth. We are working against of nature. But the relevance of Tagore's thought is contemporary. We are moving again to destroy the concrete dams and embankment (Decommissioning of Dam) in USA. We are spreading this ecological thought in our present life through the enacting of his dramas like "Mukhtadhara", played on Lipica Auditorium (Santiniketan) by the students of Visva-Bharati in March-2011, organized by Akhil Bharat Bhuidya O Paribesh Samiti (NGO) of Santiniketan in West Bengal (India). This drama has also acting in different portion of West Bengal like in Siliguri town in West Bengal. Again in this mechanized era we are also practicing the bull-plough based agro-Philosophy or halakarshan; which was observed by Tagore to adopt the earthen practices or Philosophy in nature. So Tagore's aesthetic visions have a great relevance in modern Philosophy, in mechanized world.*

**Keywords:** Upanishad, Mukhtadhara, modern Philosophy.

## INTRODUCTION:

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), Asia's first Nobel Laureate, was born into a well-known Calcutta family known for its socio-religious and cultural innovations during the 19th Bengal Renaissance. The profound social and cultural involvement of his family would later participate a burly role in the formulation of Rabindranath's educational priorities. His grandfather Dwarkanath was involved in supporting medical facilities, educational institutions and the arts, and he fought for religious and social reform and the organization of a free press. His father was also a leader in social and religious reform, which encouraged a multi-cultural exchange in the family mansion Jorasanko. Within the joint family, Rabindranath's thirteen brothers and sisters were mathematicians,

journalists, novelists, musicians, artists. His cousins, who shared the family mansion, were leaders in theatre, science and a new art movement. The tremendous excitement and cultural richness of his extended family permitted young Rabindranath to absorb and learn subconsciously at his own pace, giving him a dynamic open replica of education, which he later tried to recreate in his school at Santiniketan. Not surprisingly, he found his exterior formal schooling to be inferior and boring and, after a brief exposure to several schools, he refused to attend school. The only degrees he ever received were honorary ones bestowed late in life. His experiences at Jorasanko provided him with a lifelong conviction concerning the importance of freedom in education. He also realized in a profound manner the importance of the arts for developing understanding and understanding, and the necessity for an intimate relationship with one's cultural and natural environment. In participating in the cosmopolitan activities of the family, he came to reject narrowness in general, and in meticulous, any form of narrowness that separated human being from human being. He saw education as a vehicle for appreciating the richest aspects of other Philosophys, while maintaining one's own cultural specificity. As he wrote: I was brought up in an atmosphere of aspiration, aspiration for the expansion of the human spirit. We in our home sought freedom of power in our language, freedom of imagination in our literature, freedom of soul in our religious creeds and that of mind in our social environment. Such an opportunity has given me confidence in the power of education which is one with life and only which can give us real freedom, the highest that is claimed for man, his freedom of moral communion in the human world.... I try to assert in my words and works that education has its only meaning and object in freedom—freedom from ignorance about the laws of the universe, and freedom from passion and prejudice in our communication with the human world. In my institution I have attempted to create an atmosphere of naturalness in our relationship with strangers, and the spirit of hospitality which is the first good value in men that made civilization possible.

### OBJECTIVE:

To discuss the environment philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore.

### METHODOLOGY:

It is based on literature review of Tagore's environmental thoughts.

### DISCUSSION:

The Nobel Laureate depicted his intense affection for the nature and its beauty in his literary works-

*“Chander hasir bandh bhengechhe, uchhle pore alo  
O rajanigandha tomar gandho sudha dhalo”*

[Tagore, 1927. Geetabitan: lyric no.94 (prem paryay), p.289]

The mirth of the moon has surpassed all its limits or Bindings, with its lights overflowing in all directions and desiring the tuberose to spread out in all its eternal fragrance all around.

His aspiration was to build a nexus between the man and his surrounding nature. To build his eco-thought on society, he framed his *Brahmacharyaasram* or *Santiniketan* on the lap of Nature. A perfect significance can be drawn from the fact that classes at *Santiniketan* are conducted under the shade of trees.

He realized the importance of 'free and open environment' for complete upliftment reflection and expression of any person's mine and soul. So the natural environment had great importance in Tagore's thoughts. Through his lyrical-poem 'a tame bird was in a cage,' Tagore brought out the plight of a tamed bird. One bird is in the cage and the other in the forest both of them met and fall in love. The caged bird forgotten even to sing. But it can imitate its master's voice. The free bird knows that the songs of nature can never be taught. They flutter their wings in yearning and sing:

*'come closer, my love!*

*The free bird cries, it cannot be, I fear closed doors of the cage,*

*The cage bird whispers, Alas, my wings are powerless and dead.'*

(The Gardener, poem no. VI, pp.19-28)

It highlighted the way in which man wanted to domesticate nature according to his own perspective rather than the nature good well. Truly it was the faction form finite to infinite. From this his aesthetic thought has been flourished too some extent.

Tagore's travelling history bears the environmental consciousness. For instance, in 1926 Tagore has planted a tree (Plate 1) in Balatonfured (Hungary) during his Europe travels (it was done by Tagore mainly on the request of the authority of Balatonfured to establish or bear the Tagore's incoming sign) and that was now dedicated as Tagore promenade or Tagore Setany. His pre assume line about environmental consciousness that is till now presented as plaque (plate 2) at the foot of the tree planted by Tagore in Balatonfured, the lines are:

*"When I am no longer*

*On this earth, my tree*

*Lelh the ever-renewed*

*Leaves of thy spring*

*Murmur to the wayfarer"*

[Tagore. Balatonfured (Hungary), Nov., 1926]

The changing technological periphery and changing social Philosophy around riverside has been clearly expressed in Tagore's writing. He knew that the green periphery of Ganga River is now replaced with brick-smoke-mills and he wrote: '...our little riverside (Ganga) nests, clustering under their surrounding greenery, have been replaced by mills which now dragon-like, everywhere rear their hissing heads, belching forth black smoke. In the midday glare of modern life even our hours of mental siesta have been narrowed down to the lowest limit, and hydra headed unrest has invaded every part of life. May be this is for the better but I, for one, cannot account it wholly to be good' (1917, Reminiscences, pp.208-209). Human's aggressive science have invaded in the sky, not only land or soil or in water world. Man could kiss the sky with invention of Aeroplane though it wasn't equally eco-friendly as birds. This creates a sound & radio pollution in sky and that will be cause of disturbance for other avian society. Tagore elaborates the modern situation:

*"Yantra danab manabe karile pakhi  
sthal jal yata tar padanata  
Akash achhila baki.*

...

*Akasher sathe amil prachar kari  
karkash sware garjan kare  
Batasere jarjari/  
Aji manuser kalusita itihase  
Uthi megha loke swarga-aloke  
Hasichhe attahase.../*

(Tagore, 1940. Nava Jatak, Poem Pakshi-Manav)

'Satanic machine, you enable man to fly  
Land and sea had fallen to his pown;  
All that was left was the sky.

...

In the brutal roaring of an aeroplane we hear  
Incompatibility with sky,  
Destruction of the atmosphere.  
High among the clouds, in the heavens, its din  
Adds new blasphemous grating laughter  
To man's catalogue of sin.'

People's consumption level has become so high that they forgot the health of nature as well as the earth and there will be a time when nature will be a revenge on destroying persons for their non eco-friendly activities. But he also knew that nature is too sympathetic and tolerable about their child and with respect of this he stated:

*'Jahara tomar bishaiche bayu, nibhaiche tabo alo  
Tumi ki tader khama kariacho, tumi ki bescho bhalo.'*

*(Tagore, 1931. Sanchayita: poem Proshno, p.645)*

'Have you loved them?

Have you forgiven them? Those who have made your air poisonous.'

If we search the geographical philosophy of Tagore, we get environmental deterministic philosophy. He wrote: 'In man, the mind, life impulse and the body system, all the three together help carry out all activities. Compromising these three factors our speed of action sets up a rhythm. The body and the mind, both adjust themselves according to the prevailing atmospheric condition. In cold countries the fire has to be roused up within the body, while in a hot country the same heat lies outside' (1925, Pashchim-yatrir Dairy, p.491). Tagore highlighted the view that if we have to sustain on earth for longer time then we have to nourish our fundamental elements of nature. So he presented the opinion:

*"batas, jala, akasha, alo,  
sabare kabe basibe bhalo,..."*

So these lines reveal that when will all be able to love the breeze ("batas"), water ("jala"), the sky ("akasha"), and the light ("alo"). Tagore believed five primordial elements arrange our nature and natural world.

1. "Ksiti" or Soil: Addressing the soil as the very first element of nature, the poet urges the young sapling which is being planted be held firmly into the soil. Tagore expressed his respect to earth through:

*"Mati tomai nomi..."* (Tagore, 1909. Gitanjali: poem no.48, p.39)  
'my greetings to soil.'

The Poet hears the call of earth and which was elaborated in:

*"Chirodin mati amai dekechhe..."*

*(Tagore, 1936. SeshSaptak: poem no. 44, p.109)*  
'earth has enchanted me...'

2. "Ap" or Water: The second primal element of our environment. According to the poet and traditional Indian concept, water represents a kinetic power in the form of motion, arising out of its fluidity. Tagore expressed that motion and sound (means life) was firstly generated and founded in water. He portrait the line:

*“Dhora tale chanchhsalata  
Saba age nemechhilo jole  
Sabar prothom dhoni uthechhilo jege....”*  
(Tagore,1939, Akaskpradip: Jol poem)  
‘Motion is beneath the earth  
Was down first in water  
Sound or life was awake first’

3. *“Tejas”* or Energy: Light is the source of energy. Tagore would like to move the way of *“jyotir”* or light (the consciousness of knowledge) from the darkness of ignorance (lack of knowledge). He has given the enlighten view:

*“Alo amar alo ogo alo bhuban bhora  
Alo nayan-dhoa amar,alo hriday bhora.”*

[Tagore, 1927.Geetabitan:song no.46 (bichitra) p.476]

Through the light is spreading in whole earth as well as in me and this light has refreshed my eyes which also touch my heart were the light is the knowledge and the knowledge is the light.

4. *Marut* or the Wind power: He sketched his view in the following lines:

*“Batas tomay nami  
Amar ghuchuk abosad.....”*(Tagore,1909.Gitanjali, poem no. 48, p.39)

‘O wind, I bow down to you,

may my tiredness be removed.’

From these lines it is cleared that Tagore gave his salutation to wind and he also expressed the application of the wind to reduce the fatigue condition of health. The poet invokes the soothing quality and the healing power of soft breeze. Poet accepted the blowing wind in its motion, as a very close friend. The ferrous wind wipes out everything that comes on its way. The poet expresses the fearful form of violent storm in many of his poetic works-



*“Jete jete ekla pathe nibhechhe mor bati  
Jhar eseche, ore, ebar jharke pelem sathi...”*

[Tagore,1927.Geetabitan:song no.205,(puja parjal), p.128]

‘on a walk with alone , the light is put out

Storm is here and it is a companion me...’

5. “*Vyoma*” or cosmos: Tagore was conscious about the Space and its importance on the earth. He wrote:

*“Akash, tomar sahas udar dristi  
Matir gabhire jagay ruper srusti...”*

(Tagore,1928. Banabani:poem Vyoma, p.115)

To Tagore, the brightly smiling sky enlighten the deepest part of the earth which is a bliss indeed.

In the essay “*Aranya Devata*” (Forest Deity: R. R. edition Vol. 14, p.373), Tagore expressed his opinion that modern man indulges too much in luxurious and decadent living. Here he showed how land became uninhibited in his actions and wrote about the matter in which the kinship with the forest was spoiled. As long as he used live in and around the forest, he had a deep love and respect for the forest and therefore he used to live in perfect harmony with forest and its different organisms. As soon as he became a city dweller, he lost his love for the forest which had been the source of his nourishment. Willful destruction of forests, in order to supply timber for city life, brought about a nuisance on human race. Scarcity of rainfall endangered human life and the swift spread of deserts started engulfing human habitation in various parts of India. So Tagore emphasized we should retrieve our love and respect for the forest and restore symbiosis with the forest in order to prevent threat.

In the article “*Tapavana*” (The forest for meditation, Rabindra Rachanabali.edition, Vol.7, pp.690-704), Tagore analyses the ecological imbalance and also he investigates the inner causes of this imbalance. He expresses that *ripus* (the basic vices like: greed, jealousy, pride, lust etc.) are the sources of commercialism, consumerism, and economic competition among human’s aspiration; that is the inner manifestation of the causes of ecological instability. Trees are being felled for fuel and are spoiling the ecological balance and human civilization is hurtling towards doom. Hence Tagore pointed out in ancient society of *Tapavana* (Tagore, 1909. *Prabashi patrica*) where he speaks: “...a strange matter has been seen about India. Civilization here takes root not confined for space or packed like sardines. In those places there was abundant opportunity for man to be in close proximity with trees and vegetation, river and lakes”. In the article “*Bilaser Pha`ns*” (The noose or loop of luxurious living: R.R.editionVol.6.pp.526-530), Tagore opines that consumerism is now making in vista into the Indian society and lifestyle, which was the food meal of Western society. Actually the problem that is being rooted in society is personal consumption; which losses the Indian social identity and humanitarian attitude and has made them self-

centered. To maintain their demand's geography, people are trying to spend beyond their means; which creates extra- pressure or mental hazard.

“It is a universal problem to save forest resources from man's excessive greed...The creator sent life, he made arrangements for nurturing it all around...but man with his greed has supplied the instruments of death. Human society is cursed for his transgression of God's scheme. Greedy humans have invited their own ruin by destroying the forest. Man has uprooted the very trees and vegetation which purify air, and the falling leaves of which make the land fertile. Callousness on the part of mankind destroyed nature's gifts of good...his welfare” (Rabindra Rachanabali, vol.14, p.373).

In his different story he developed the theme of love to nature through plantation trees. In the short story “*Bolai*” Tagore highlighted a young boy's love for a *simul* (silk cotton plant) tree in front of his house. The mechanized bureaucracy exploits the nature and man which this concept was highlighted in the play of “*Raktakarabi*”(red oleanders,1925) and Tagore was inspired by the image of a red oleander plant crushed pieces of discarded iron that Tagore had witnessed while taking a walk in Shillong. The king play's central character is king who cruelly exploits nature and man to develop an almost mechanized bureaucracy. Another drama “*Muktadhara*” (The Water flow, 1922, p.336), tells the story of man's limitless greed and backlash from nature. The plot revolves around a monstrous machine created by the king to block the natural flow of a huge river and how a prince joined the commoners to protect nature by revolting against the king through the destruction of *Muktadhara* dam. The important philosophy that reflects in some lines from this drama:

*“Citizens of Shivtarai: Water (River) is an abounded God creation, nobody can restrain it  
Bibhuti (mechanical engineer): God has given water only for the commoners; he gave me the power to restrain the water flow. I have the power of mighty mechanical .*

*Dhananjai Bairagya: What are you saying! Is this matter normal about to bound the naughty power (river flow), may that is the outer or inner.*

*Avijit (Prince): I hear the call of mother tone from water.”*

So, 89 years from till from now Tagore depicted the great bitterness among the local people for putting up iron lock-gates and dykes stopping the natural flow of a hill-stream and eventually the people rebelled against the government, ultimately bringing about demolition of the dam. Tagore was awfully against putting up of big dams, huge reservoirs and large scale canal systems in the name of agricultural development. In 1907 he felt the natural instinct of be notorious and flow as it is. ‘The River flows -all its water are not used up in our bathing, drinking & growing our autumnal rice. The largest part of its water is mean to keep the river flowing ever on. Even without carrying out any other task, there is great significance in maintaining its flow’. Also he expressed his love to fluvial sphere through:

*“Keno more gelo nadi  
Ami bandhi tare, chai dhoribare  
Tai more gelo nadi. ...”*(Tagore, 1896. Chitra: poem Durakanksha)

‘Why river died  
I bound her, wish to restrain  
...  
For this river died.’

Tagore gave an alternative model of education with a new methodological approach. Santiniketan, founded by Rabindranath Tagore in 1901 in a small village in West Bengal, comprised of a children's school, a university and a rural reconstruction center. The art school emerged as an indigenous model based on the experiences of Tagore to address the local aesthetics and knowledge in complete harmony with the immediate environment of Bengali landscape. It was also a critical response to the colonial mode of education imparted at several art schools in Calcutta, Bombay and Lahore, which were serving local and English taste both in fine arts and crafts and design. At Santiniketan, singularity of Philosophy was dismissed while different Philosophys were explored to understand multiple voices in order to interact with people with difference in harmony, a key for peaceful and tolerant living<sup>[1]</sup>. For Tagore, the key to a balanced education was not only in looking deeply and closely at one's own roots and tradition, but also in embracing contemporary scientific and technological endeavors. Arts, including music, were an essential part of education at all levels, an idea which even in today's globalized world seems quite remote for any school or university in Pakistan that offers education in natural sciences and technology, or even the business and management sciences.

Another very important part of education in art schools is self-motivation. Amartya Sen argues, “Emphasis [at Santiniketan] was on self-motivation rather than on discipline, and on fostering intellectual curiosity rather than competitive excellence.”<sup>[3]</sup> At a certain level, the total experience of working and operating in art schools is merely to achieve certain percentages in the final exam and not about the actual understanding of the subject at large. The absence of self-motivation has resulted in stricter rules to regulate class disciplines and attendance marking. In the absence of feeling connected with one's environment and with strong motivation, it is not possible to enable students to respond to these challenges in design and architecture. The kinds of individuals that are being produced in these schools is another question. Schools are producing fine artists with great reputations who are aspiring to enter the international market, but to what extent is the local is considered at any level? Are they able to contextualize their practices in their given environments, or do they only respond to their immediate context to please an international audience? How art schools help artists develop their links with the local environment and integrate with the social fabric of society, is another critical enquiry.

The founding of my school had its origin in the memory of that longing for freedom which seemed to go back beyond the sky line of my birth' I Rabindranath's one of the noblest creations came out of his saddest experience in his boyhood. In the usual course boy Rabindranath was sent to school where, according to his own version he

received nothing but a depressing and painful experience. Perhaps his suffering were greater than that of other children as he had a very sensitive mind a great thirst for colour, music literature and all forms of beauty, which was not satisfied simply by routine work. He had to rely on his own instincts to build his own education from the school life dept such a permanent imprint on his mind that even after forty years he could vividly describe the humiliations to which he was subjected. In his words:

“The rooms were cruelly dismal with their walls on guard like policemen. The houses were more like a pigeon-holed box than a human habitation. No. decoration, no picture not a touch of colour, not an attempt to attract the child mind”. In those days neither the school nor the home was considerate of the needs and likings of the child. In school the child more quickly learnt the attitude of the teacher than the knowledge imparted by him, and Rabindranath also in his boyhood learnt all injustice, impatience, anger and partiality underlying the process of instruction more easily than his lessons. When out of dislike child Rabindranath played truant from school his well-to-do guardians employed half a dozen of private tutors for his home education and tyranny of an education dissociated from lire continued only in slightly different way. Out of his dislike about the process of education prevailing in those days, Tagore grew into a revolutionary against the educational system in vogue and always attacked and satire the imitation of the West in Indian educational system. He statically says: “what we now call a school in this country is really a cattery and the teachers are parts of it. At half past ten in the morning the factory opens with a ringing of a bell: as the teachers start talking, the machine starts working Toe teachers stop talking at four in the afternoon when the factory closes and the pupils go home carrying with them a few pages of machine made learning. Later this learning is tested at examination and labelled. Tagore felt that criticism of the misleading educational system could not do any good to the child and decided to do something constructive. He thought of establishing a model ideal school where the children would be saved from the wastage of their time and energy and damage to their personality. He says: “Thus may experience had impressed on me the suffering owing to the repression of personality, dissociation of life from the subjects od study which the boys endure from the school system in vogue in our country. Therefore when the call came I went from my home on the Gangesto Santiniketan in order to found there a school in the midst of Ashram itself”. But before he started his school Rabindranath had to consider the pros and cons of the problem which tormented him for a pretty long time his family circumstances helped him in getting some insight into what he was trying to do. The impact of three Philosophys: Hindu, Muslim and the Western were reflected harmoniously in his family environment. His grandfather, Prince Dwarkanath Tagore was one of the staunchest supporters of the spread of Western education and Philosophy in India, his father Davendranth Tagore, called Maharishi (a great sage) for his piety and faith, was deeply steeped in the Upanisadhic and Islamic traditions. All his elder brothers and sister received excellent Indian and English type of instruction. Then available in India. His eldest brothers and sister received excellent Indian and English type of instruction then available in India. His eldest brother Dwijendranath Tagore was a devout follower of Upanisadhic ideals whiles his second brother Satendranath Tagore being the first Indian. I. C. S. followed the European way of life. Thus Rabindranath was brought up through the interplay of three Philosophys which helped him to be attracted to the ideals of Upanisadhic and Buddhist philosophy on on eland and to appreciate the values embedded in the Islamic and Christian Philosophyless on the other. Again in his early youth when Rabindranath was entrusted with the responsibility of management of their family estate he had to spend a long period of his life among the common people of rural Bengal. He received a firsthand experience

about the plight of the vast majority of India's population and came in contact with the needs, joys and sorrows of the common mass. He felt that due to lack of knowledge about Britain and the difference with India. Being conscious of the economic condition of India, Rabindranath tried to evolve an inexpensive educational model which would suit the Indian society. But Tagore was basically a poet and a philosopher and as such his educational ideas were greatly influenced by his personal conceptions and views about life. Naturally his educational principles should be discussed in context with his philosophy and views about life. He admits that his educational ideas were greatly influenced by the Upanisadic and Buddhist Philosophy. He says: "To me the values of the Upanisads and the teachings of Buddha have ever been things of spirit and therefore endowed boundless vital growth and I use them in my own life and in my preaching as being instinctive indo-configuration my special testimony which must have its value because of its individuality' ! From the philosophy of ancient India Rabindranath imbibed the idea of the spiritual unity of all races which was the central theme of his philosophy. This also gave a peculiar colour to the individuality favoured by him. He felt that he was one with all beings, and yet he was unique in himself. In his own language. "At one pole of my being I am with sticks and stones...but at the other pole of my being I am separate from all". This is educational philosophy of 'individuality tinged with universalism'. He wants to be one with all in the world. He says: "O, Great Beyond, keen call of my flute I forget, I ever forget that the gates are shut Everywhere I dwell alone Religious barriers and he longed for his freedom for communion with all-irrespective of differences in class or caste, race or religion, Philosophy or economic condition. In his language "Freedom is all I want but to hope for it I feel ashamed," Rabindranath also strongly advocates for communion with nature in education and according to him separation from nature is equivalent to 'dividing the bud and the blossom into two separate categories and putting the grace to the credit of two different and antithetical principals". He also thinks that life in nature and in the open is the best means of spiritual progress and according to him divine inspiration is to lose oneself in the contemplation of nature as in silence and solitude man can enjoy the presence of the divine in nature. He says: "The earth, water and light fruits and flowers to her (Nature) are not physical phenomena to be turned into use and then left aside. They are necessary to her in the necessary to the completeness on a symphony". The feelings of such a metaphysical reality beyond all physical objects tend to veil his philosophical ideas in the eyes of one who approaches from a purely practical standpoint. This mysticism perhaps a product of this poetic enthusiasm, led many Western critics to misapprehend his idea of Ashram School. In fact Tagore used the word 'Ashram School' to indicate an educational colony.

Rabindranath wanted to break the isolation of school from home and society. His idea of bridging the gap between school and home on one hand and school and society on the other led him to found his residential school. Santiniketan Bramhacharyashram, later on renamed as Patha-Bhavana. Now he had time to cover the concrete aspects of school education, eg. Child nature, curriculum, school environment and teaching method. He felt that how to get the students interested in learning activities is the most important aspects of education. He gave highest priority to initiation of the students into learning and according to him a creative school atmosphere is essential for such initiation. Daniel Defoe's description of 'Robinson Crusoe's island' inspired him to build a similar environment for his school. He says: "Robinson Crusoe's island came to my mind when I think of an institution where the great lesson in perfect union of man and nature, not only through active combination may be learnt unobstructed." Tagore perceived that love and affection are only media through which perfect knowledge

can be obtained and that the object of knowledge should be wisdom and not pedantry. So, he wished that his institution should 'not only train up one's limb', and mind to be ready for all emergencies but to be attuned to the response between life and the world, to find balance of their harmony which is wisdom: Tagore wanted to create through education a harmonious balance between life and the world i.e. education in Tagore's view is to cultivate both spirit and reality each accelerating the development of the other. To achieve this goal Tagore wanted to found his institution in a solitary place away from the busy bustles of urban life amidst the serene and soothing beauty of nature. Where the pupils could have the opportunity to grow up like little Robinson Crusoes, through adventure, perseverance, experimentation and adaptation to new environment. With this imagination Rabindranath established his residential school at Santiniketan in 1901 on a beautiful plot of land and away from pollution and yet it was not too far to get the amenities of urban life. He founded his school as a retreat where the students and the teachers would live together under the same roof dedicated to learning. He hoped that the school environment itself would help the teachers to become the friend, philosopher and guide of the pupils and the teachers and the taught would be bound together with a bond of regard and affection. He hoped: Tagore wrote poems, plays, short stories and also split group of lyrics in the form of poems for songs under the name of "*Prakriti Paryay*" ( here, *prakriti* means nature and *paryay* means chapter), emphasizing the need to protect nature as well as our mother earth. He not only wrote widely on man's relationship with the environment but implemented it too, by building *Santiniketan*. It is delimited by greenery on all sides. He created an example for the whole world in terms of the relationships between nature and human. Tagore's pen and writings is the pavement of geo-environmental awareness for the earth. Tagore's vision was concentrated to conserve our nature and natural world with human touch. Different festivals were encouraged in *Santiniketan* and *Sriniketan* by Tagore. Festivals were the milestones of Tagore's awareness about the earth. In July, 1927 Tagore started the observance of the festival of the earth through *briksharopan* (plate 3 & 4), *halakarshan* and *barshamongol*. He was an environmental pioneer and was conscious about the relation between progress and preservation. He very well-expressed the exploitation of environment even a century ago. He first became concerned about man's impact on the geo-environment after seeing an oil spill at sea on his way to Japan in 1916. This experience provoked him to write about at length about his anger at the way of modern man was failing to respect nature. Tagore was the pioneer of the eco-lover and he expressed his great respect to nature or to climatic seasons through different. Like he started the *borshamongol* or an annual celebration of the arrival of the monsoon at the end of dry season. He was the earthen philosopher and Tagore himself once said to plough earth using bull in the year 1927. On 14<sup>th</sup> July, 1928, Rabindranath Tagore started the *briksharopan* Utsav by planting a *bokul* (*Mimusops elengi*) sapling in Santiniketan, at which the student would sing and read his poem. Briksharopan now has become synonymous with 22 *Sravan* (Bengali month) or death anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore in Santiniketan. But when Tagore was alive the ceremony was celebrated around rainy season, but not in any particular date. The first *Briksharopan* was held in 1332 (Bengali year), on his very birthday on 25<sup>th</sup> *Baisakh* (Bengali month), when Tagore planted five trees or the famous '*Panchabati*' around his new house as referred in the books, which probably lies within the present *Uttarayana* Complex. The '*Panchabati*', namely Amlaki, Asoke, Asathya, Batobriksha & Bel (*Aegle-marmelos*) is a concept that originated from the *Upanishada* and Tagore planted those 5 trees with a whole ceremony conceived in consonance with the unique style of Santiniketan. This approach gave his environmental movement a very positive image. Tagore's eco-perception is outlined by the *Amartya Sen* in his book *Bharatbichitra* (July-December 1997) as: 'he (Tagore) wanted more

official and unofficial promises for protecting environment' (Basu, 2009) . These all writings reflect Tagore's visual aesthetic thought about geo-environmental consciousness.

At *Santiniketan* he started the festival of the earth through *halakarshan*, (tilling the land) introduced in July, 1927. On such occasion, Tagore wrote the song –

“*maruvijaye ketan urao he shunne...*”

[Tagore,1927.Geetabitan:Lyricno.12(Anusthanic Paryay),p.514]

‘rise up the flag of the conquest of the desert.’

It was a clarion call to increase the green cover across the deserts through plantation. Perhaps it was the first attentive move in the world to build up mass environmental awareness.

## CONCLUSION:

Rabindranath did not write a central educational treatise, and his ideas must be gleaned through his various writings and educational experiments at Santiniketan. In general, he envisioned an education that was deeply rooted in one's immediate surroundings but connected to the Philosophys of the wider world, predicated upon pleasurable learning and individualized to the personality of the child. He felt that a curriculum should revolve organically around nature with classes held in the open air under the trees to provide for a spontaneous appreciation of the fluidity of the plant and animal kingdoms, and seasonal changes. Children sat on hand-woven mats beneath the trees, which they were allowed to climb and run beneath between classes. Nature walks and excursions were a part of the curriculum and students were encouraged to follow the life cycles of insects, birds and plants. Class schedules were made flexible to allow for shifts in the weather or special attention to natural phenomena, and seasonal festivals were created for the children by Tagore. In an essay entitled “A Poet's School,” he emphasizes the importance of an empathetic sense of interconnectedness with the surrounding world: We have come to this world to accept it, not merely to know it. We may become powerful by knowledge, but we attain fullness by sympathy. The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence. But we find that this education of sympathy is not only systematically ignored in schools, but it is severely repressed. From our very childhood habits are formed and knowledge is imparted in such a manner that our life is weaned away from nature and our mind and the world are set in opposition from the beginning of our days. Thus the greatest of educations for which we came prepared is neglected, and we are made to lose our world to find a bagful of information instead. We rob the child of his earth to teach him geography, of language to teach him grammar. His hunger is for the Epic, but he is supplied with chronicles of facts and dates... Child-nature protests against such calamity with all its power of suffering, subdued at last into silence by punishment. (Rabindranath Tagore, *Personality*,1917: 116-17) In Tagore's philosophy of education, the aesthetic development of the senses was as important as the intellectual—if not more so—and music, literature, art, dance and drama were given great prominence in the daily life of the school. This was particularly so after the first decade of the school. Drawing on his home life at Jorasanko, Rabindranath tried to create an

atmosphere in which the arts would become instinctive. One of the first areas to be emphasized was music. Rabindranath writes that in his adolescence, a 'cascade of musical emotion' gushed forth day after day at Jorasanko. 'We felt we would try to test everything,' he writes, 'and no achievement seemed impossible... We wrote, we sang, we acted, we poured ourselves out on every side.' (Rabindranath Tagore, *My Reminiscences* 1917: 141) In keeping with his theory of subconscious learning, Rabindranath never talked or wrote down to the students, but rather involved them with whatever he was writing or composing. The students were allowed access to the room where he read his new writings to teachers and critics, and they were encouraged to read out their own writings in special literary evenings. In teaching also he believed in presenting difficult levels of literature, which the students might not fully grasp, but which would stimulate them. The writing and publishing of periodicals had always been an important aspect of Jorasanko life, and students at Santiniketan were encouraged to create their own publications and put out several illustrated magazines. The children were encouraged to follow their ideas in painting and drawing and to draw inspiration from the many visiting artists and writers. Most of Rabindranath's dramas were written at Santiniketan and the students took part in both the performing and production sides. He writes how well the students were able to enter into the spirit of the dramas and perform their roles, which required subtle understanding and sympathy without special training. As Rabindranath began conceiving of Visva-Bharati as a national centre for the arts, he encouraged artists such as Nandalal Bose to take up residence at Santiniketan and to devote them full-time to promoting a national form of art. Without music and the fine arts, he wrote, a nation lacks its highest means of national self-expression and the people remain inarticulate. Tagore was one of the first to support and bring together different forms of Indian dance. He helped revive folk dances and introduced dance forms from other parts of India, such as Manipuri, Kathak and Kathakali. He also supported modern dance and was one of the first to recognize the talents of Uday Sankar, who was invited to perform at Santiniketan. The meeting-ground of Philosophys, as Rabindranath envisioned it at Visva-Bharati, should be a learning centre where conflicting interests are minimized, where individuals work together in a common pursuit of truth and realise 'that artists in all parts of the world have created forms of beauty, scientists discovered secrets of the universe, philosophers solved the problems of existence, saints made the truth of the spiritual world organic in their own lives, not merely for some particular race to which they belonged, but for all mankind.' (Tagore 1922:171-2) To encourage mutuality, Rabindranath invited artists and scholars from other parts of India and the world to live together at Santiniketan on a daily basis to share their Philosophys with Visva-Bharati. The Constitution designated Visva-Bharati as an Indian, Eastern and Global cultural centre whose goals were:

1. To study the mind of Man in its realisation of different aspects of truth from diverse points of view.
2. To bring into more intimate relation with one another through patient study and research, the different Philosophys of the East on the basis of their underlying unity.
3. To approach the West from the standpoint of such a unity of the life and thought of Asia.
4. To seek to realise in a common fellowship of study the meeting of East and West and thus ultimately to strengthen the fundamental conditions of world peace through the free communication of ideas between the two hemispheres.
5. And with such Ideals in view to provide at Santiniketan a centre of Philosophy where research into the study of the religion, literature, history, science and art of Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Zoroastrian, Islamic,



Sikh, Christian and other civilizations may be pursued along with the Philosophy of the West, with that simplicity of externals which is necessary for true spiritual realisation, in amity, good-fellowship and co-operation between the thinkers and scholars of both Eastern and Western countries, free from all antagonisms of race, nationality, creed or caste and in the name of the One Supreme Being who is Shantam, Shivam, Advaitam.

In terms of curriculum, he advocated a different emphasis in teaching. Rather than studying national Philosophys for the wars won and cultural dominance imposed, he advocated a teaching system that analysed history and Philosophy for the progress that had been made in breaking down social and religious barriers. Such an approach emphasized the innovations that had been made in integrating individuals of diverse backgrounds into a larger framework, and in devising the economic policies which emphasized social justice and narrowed the gap between rich and poor. Art would be studied for its role in furthering the aesthetic imagination and expressing universal themes.



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