

Tagore as Text: A Critical Analysis

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Abstract: Rabindranath Tagore, who lived from 1861 to 1941, is well remembered around the globe for becoming the first poet from Asia to be awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913. He was a British subject throughout his life and passed away in colonial India. However, any engagement with studies of Tagore would reveal that, despite his outstanding achievements in creative writing and music, he deserves to be remembered as the only poet of international standing who not only founded a self-funded university but also designed a curriculum that radicalised traditional institutionalised education in colonial India. This is something that should be remembered because Tagore deserves to be remembered as the only poet of international standing who deserves to be remembered. The purpose of this article is to investigate Tagore's re-imagining of the process of institutionalised instruction as well as the goals of education. Undoubtedly, the ideas and models of the teaching-learning process that Tagore outlined bear the stamp of a poet-philosopher who tried to distance himself from the public educational sector. In colonial times, the public educational sector was exemplified by the formidable University of Calcutta, which was under the administration of the British. Tagore's Visva-Bharati University in Santiniketan is obviously a private sector operation; nonetheless, it is historically considered as a one-of-a-kind experiment in inclusive education that debunks rote learning and fragmented knowledge. Its viability in the 21st century, however, is up for question.

Keywords: Diversity; inclusion; Tagore; texts; India

INTRODUCTION

The 1929 prospectus of Rabindranath Tagore's university, Visva-Bharati, stated:

College students are expected to become familiar with the working of existing institutions and new movements inaugurated in the different countries of the world for the amelioration of the social condition of the masses [emphasis added]. They are also required to undertake a study of international organizations [emphasis added] so that their outlook may become better adjusted to the needs of peace. (Nussbaum, 2012, p. 84–85)

In this day and age of globalisation, in the year 2019, how many of our educational institutions have included in their prospectus such a paragraph on social outreach, global politics, and the critical importance of peace, just as was found in the prospectus of Rabindranath Tagore's VisvaBharati University almost 90 years ago, in colonial British administered India?

In terms of a comparative research, a good litmus test would be to mention the recently redesigned National Policy of Education that was announced by the education sector of the government of India. Rabindranath Tagore's alternative system of education, which was first implemented in Tagore's Patha Bhavan school and Visva-Bharati University, was not mentioned at all in the policy draught, despite the fact that it mentioned the rich heritage of ancient Indian educational systems. This omission was quite noticeable. In light of this, it should come as no surprise that the recently revised national policy on education makes no mention whatsoever of the motivating aspirational signifiers that are essential for the development of young minds. These include freedom, creativity, research, and critical thinking that go beyond the pedagogical stereotypes.

It is interesting to note that the final paragraph of the draught of the National Policy of Education 2019 indicates, without a shadow of a doubt, that the controlling mechanism of education targets used by the government of India, as implemented by the regulatory bodies of the education sector, gives mechanised socio-economic progress and the utilisation of human capital the highest priority:

The National Education Policy 2019 provides a framework for the transformation and reinvigoration of the education system in order to respond to the requirements of fast-changing, knowledge-based societies while taking into account the diversity of the Indian people, their traditions, cultures, and languages. It seeks to ensure that human capital, the most vital form of capital that would fuel the necessary transformation, is secured and strengthened. Highest priority is accorded to the task of ensuring universal access to an education of high quality and breadth that would support India's continued ascent, progress, and leadership on the global stage—in terms of economic development, social justice and equality, environmental stewardship, scientific advancement and cultural preservation, and help develop and maximise our country's rich talents and resources for the good of the individual, the country, and the world. An education system built on the premises of quality and equity is considered central to sustainable development, achieving success in the emerging knowledge economy and society, for socio-economic mobility, and for building an equitable, just and humane society. (p. 35)

As a direct consequence of this, Rabindranath Tagore's thoughts and efforts continue to provide a singular vantage point from which to look beyond the confines of the regulated information economy and the exuberance of nationalisms. This is something that is quite noticeable. It is possible to track how artistic practise, analytical thought, and educational institutions can be linked to move us beyond the myopia of nationalism through the study of Tagore's literary and nonliterary texts. This creates a space to rethink and even disrupt the increasingly powerful homology in which home, family, language, and nation have come to stand for each other to divide rather than unite. The necessity of addressing opinions on global education while emphasising the culturally particular and geographically distinct requirements of local education is becoming increasingly apparent. It's possible that this is what the concept note for this conference was trying to say when it said, "It aims to decentre/decolonize our minds from an obsession with the West and Western knowledge, culture, theories, and epistemologies in the conduct of social science research and knowledge production." However, it is important to take precautions to prevent one fixation from taking

the place of another. The strategy should be objective, comprehensive, and all-encompassing, and it should eliminate the exploitation of regional pride and prejudice for political gain.

TAGORE AS TEXT: A HISTORIC OVERVIEW

It is necessary that a brief historical study of the origins of Tagore's institutions be conducted for the purpose of gaining a clear grasp of the paradigm shift in programming that Tagore implemented in his institutions. The Visva-Bharati Santiniketan prospectus (2019) states as follows:

In 1863, on a 20 Bigha plot at the site of the present institution, Debendranath Tagore, the poet's father, had built a small retreat for meditation, and in 1888 he dedicated, by a trust deed, the land and buildings, towards the establishment of an Asrama where seekers after truth, irrespective of their formal religious affiliations, sect, creed and caste, could come and meditate in seclusion; a Brahmaavidyalaya and a library. Rabindranath's school Brahmacharyasrama which started functioning formally from December 22, 1901... From 1925 this school came to be known as Patha-Bhavana. (p. 6)

Tagore reached the most difficult part of his mission in life when Visva-Bharati, the university of his dreams that represented the globe in one nest, was established. This marked the beginning of Tagore's journey to fulfil his life's purpose. He oversaw it until the end of his life, tending to it like a parent or a gardener tends to a sapling, addressing the macro issues of sustainability and fundraising entirely on his own, and remarkably, he did not seek guidelines or funding from the British government in India. He did this because he believed that he was capable of doing so on his own. Visva-Bharati invited lecturers from all over the world, from both the East and the West. As a result, the institution became an island that celebrated the confluence of cultures. Here, German, Chinese, Japanese, British, and Bengali scholars, writers, teachers, and artists collaborated side-by-side to produce a multi-disciplinary space for creativity, cultural inter-exchange, and the exchange of ideas and skills. In a piece he penned on Santiniketan in 1991, Satyajit Ray said: "Santiniketan opened my eyes for the first time to the splendors of Indian and Far Eastern art. Until then, I was completely under the

sway of Western art, music and literature. Santiniketan made me the combined product of East and West that I am” (Sen, 2005, 115).

We hear the voice of the local cosmopolitan and a validation of the dream of the founder of the university in Satyajit Ray's assertion. The founder of the university had to travel all around the world to raise funds to sustain his university, primarily by writing and delivering series of lectures despite having indifferent health. Satyajit Ray's assertion is a validation of that dream. Uma Dasgupta (2009) states:

For a while, Tagore was witness to his Visva-Bharati offering hospitality to the world. In the 1920s and the 1930s scholars, painters, musicians, economists, agriculturists, and medical experts from different parts of the world gathered on the soil of Santiniketan and Sriniketan to join hands with the local populace in their common goal of learning and creating and serving without national barriers. (p. xxxiii)

Rabindranath Tagore encouraged artists and academics from all over India and the world to share their traditions and cultures with the students of Visva-Bharati University by inviting them to live together in Santiniketan on a daily basis. This helped the university maintain its diverse local and international networks. Visva-Bharati Santiniketan was established as an Indian, Eastern, and worldwide cultural centre by the university's constitution (Visva-Bharati Santiniketan, 2019, page 2), with the following aspirations for the institution:

1. To investigate the human mind in its capacity to comprehend a variety of elements of reality from a variety of vantage points.
2. To bring into closer interaction with one another through patient study and investigation the many cultures of the East on the basis of their inherent connectedness in order to create a more intimate relationship between them.
3. To approach the West from the vantage point of such cohesiveness in Asian life and philosophy.
4. To work toward the realisation of the meeting of East and West in the context of a shared academic fellowship, with the end goal of ultimately enhancing the basic conditions of world peace via the unrestricted exchange of ideas between the two hemispheres.

5. And with such ideals in view to provide at Santiniketan a centre of culture 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 culture of the West, with that simplicity of externals which is necessary for true spiritual realization, 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.
6. In addition to this, one of the goals of the university will be to bring together the cultures of India, the East, and the West. This will be accomplished, among other things, through the recruitment of students and adhyapakas from different parts of India and different nations around the world, as well as through the provision of incentives for these activities.

In terms of education, Tagore promoted the Socratic technique of argument and discussion, sometimes known as the dialogic style. Rather of studying national cultures for the wars fought and cultural supremacy imposed, Tagore established a teaching method that examined history and culture for the progress achieved in overcoming social and religious barriers:

The school was a conscious repudiation of the system introduced in India by the British rulers [emphasis added], and Rabindranath initially sought to realize the intrinsic values of ancient education in India. The school and its curriculum, therefore, signified a departure from the way the rest of the country viewed education and teaching. Simplicity in externals was a cardinal principle. Classes were held in the open air in the shade of trees where man and nature entered into an immediate harmonious relationship. Teachers and students shared the single integral socio-cultural life. The curriculum had music, painting, dramatic performances and other performative practices. Beyond the accepted limits of intellectual and academic pursuits, opportunities were created for invigorating and sustaining the manifold faculties of human personality. (Visva-Bharati Santiniketan, 2019, p. 6)

Such an approach stressed the advancements achieved in integrating people from all origins into a bigger framework and developing economic policies that prioritised social justice and minimised the wealth gap. Art would be investigated for its contribution to the aesthetic imagination and the expression of universal ideas. Hardcore conventional pedagogic approaches specified by the British system of a rigorous curriculum that emphasised rote learning for the locals in the various British colonies could not comprehend this liberated, inclusive approach to varied races, cultures, places, languages, and people. Traditional teaching approaches focused on selective training of the mind, encouraging students to accept stereotypes as indestructible monuments of culture rather than provoking intellectual inquiry and timeless knowledge. No wonder, “Tagore hated every school he ever attended, and he left them all as quickly as possible. What he hated was rote learning and the treatment of the pupil as a passive vessel of received cultural values. Tagore’s novels, stories, and dramas are obsessed with the need to challenge the past.” (Nussbaum, 2012, p. 70)

Tagore's trips across the world were mostly lecture tours aimed at earning money for his university. This must be the only time in human history when a poet not only donated the whole Nobel Prize money to a university, but also travelled across the world giving lectures to help the university stay afloat. He despised the technique of institutionalised, fragmented information and memorised notes, as well as the resulting lack of fresh ideas and inventiveness, which he claimed paralysed rather than empowered pupils.

Tagore expressed his reservations about educational institutions in a letter to an unidentified correspondent, referring to Calcutta University's resolution to introduce vernacular languages at the postgraduate level, while supporting the resolution that the vernacular language was more effective as a tool of communication and empathy. Tagore wrote in 1918, referring especially to Bengali language and literature taught at Calcutta University:

But I have found that the direct influence which the Calcutta University wields over our language is not strengthening and vitalizing, but pedantic and narrow. It tries to perpetuate the anachronism of preserving the Pundit-made Bengali swathed in grammar-wrappings borrowed from a dead language... The artificial language of a learned mediocrity, inert and formal, ponderous and

didactic, devoid of the least breath of creative vitality, is forced upon our boys at the most receptive period of their life (Das, 1996, Vol. 3, 743).

A FRAMEWORK FOR DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Tagore envisioned a school for youngsters (Patha Bhavan) who would learn about world history and culture and be encouraged to imagine a world beyond the confining barbed wires of nationalism in his alternate configurations of providing official and informal education at Santiniketan. But it was only the start. According to Uma Dasgupta (2009),

The mind that conceived Santiniketan school did not remain complacent with just those beginnings... Within two decades of the existence of the Santiniketan school, he announced that Santiniketan was “a sapling that would grow into Visva-Bharati, a widely-branching tree”. Visva-Bharati would be an international university of higher learning for studying and understanding the cultures of ‘East and West’ (p. xxix).

Rabindranath was invited to various nations throughout the world after receiving the Nobel Prize in 1913, where he hosted Maghmela 1, and as a result, he was exposed to a significant section of the world and its people. By 1917, the breadth of his experience and the restlessness of his research had led to his own self-clarification on the notion of Santiniketan as a centre of Indian culture. According to his plan, the centre would provide:

[F]or the coordinated study of the different cultures... music and the fine arts are among the highest means of national self-expression... in the proposed centre of our culture, music and art must have prominent seats of honour... This centre should not only be a centre of the intellectual life of India but the centre of economic life as well. Participating thus in all the major spheres of Indian life, the institution would attain a representative character and enter into an encounter with the rest of the world. (Visva-Bharati Santiniketan, 2019, p. 6)

Tagore was always wary of the fragmented education disseminated by the British-run Indian colleges. Tagore described his concept of what he thought to be a full education in his essay "the Centre of Indian Culture":

[O]ur education should be in full touch with our complete life, economical, intellectual, aesthetic, social and spiritual; connected with it by the living bonds of varied co-operations. For true education is to realize at every step how our training and knowledge have an organic connection with our surroundings. (Das, 1996, vol 2, p. 469)

As a result, Tagore believes that total education is attainable when all cultures, ethnicities, and genders are brought together regardless of geographical location. According to Tagore, VisvaBharati University will be able to deliver this type of comprehensive education. He stated without ambiguity, "So, in our centre of learning, we must provide for the coordinated study of all these cultures—the Vedic, the Puranic, the Buddhist, the Jain, the Islamic, the Sikh and the Zoroastrian. And side by side with them the European—for only then shall we be able to assimilate the last" (Dasgupta, Chakravarti, & Mathew, 2013, p. 487).

The inclusive motto of the Visva-Bharati University was this statement in a Vedic text "Yatra visvambhavatyekanidam (where the world makes a home in a single nest).

On 23 December 1921, Visva-Bharati became a registered public body which adopted a constitution of its own. The aims and objects as set forth on the occasion have since then remained the objectives of Visva-Bharati.

In 1922, the Department of Higher Studies became Uttara Vibhaga to be renamed Vidya-Bhavana in 1925. Hindu philosophy, medieval mysticism, Islamic culture, Zoroastrian philosophy, Bengali literature and history, Hindustani literature, Vedic and Classical Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit, Chinese, Tibetan, Persian, Arabic, German, Latin and Hindi formed its areas of study and research.

Vidya-Bhavana was the manifestation of the ideal of the proposed centre of comprehensive studies in the cultures of the East and the West. The centre was

viewed principally as a community of scholars, Indian as well as foreign, who would be engaged in the creation and dissemination of systematized and philanthropic reasoning. The concern was epistemological. (Visva-Bharati Santiniketan, 2019, p. 6)

Tagore's re-invention of educational systems drew a lot of intellectuals to Santiniketan. Between 1924 and 1925, Leonard Elmhirst worked as Tagore's private secretary, and in 1926, he co-founded Dartington Hall in Devon, England, inspired by Tagore's work. It is a significant factor that a pattern of dissent against the British administration's colonial education system meted out to the "natives" was not only propagated by Tagore, who emphasised the importance of vernacular languages and bilingualism, but also appeared to be strikingly similar to the critique of the British education system in Ireland that Irish nationalist leader Patrick Pearse described as a murderous control and power mechanism. Pearse claimed in his essay "Murder Machine," published in the Irish Review in 1913:

Modern education systems are elaborate pieces of machinery devised by highly-salaried officials for the purpose of turning out citizens according to certain approved patterns. The modern school is a State controlled institution designed to produce workers for the State and is in the same category in which a dockyard, or any other State-controlled institution which produces articles necessary to the progress, well-being, and defence of the State are included. We speak of the "efficiency", the "cheapness" and the "up-to-dateness" of an education system just as we speak of the "efficiency", the "cheapness" and the "up-to-dateness" of a system of manufacturing coal-gas. (Pearse, 1916, p. 6)

The notion of the teacher as a "transformative intellectual" who can "give direction to history" and the definition of education as "a practise of freedom" explain and define Pearse's educational endeavour in a unique way. Commentators including Tolstoy, Pearse, Tagore, the Elmhirsts, Curry, and Russell put their misgivings into practise by creating schools outside of the mainstream (Walsh &Lalor, 2015, p. 595-617). They were expressing their displeasure with the current educational system and their intention to establish an alternative. Classical humanism is definitely the forerunner of their perspective, and by evaluating the act of

education in relation to interested parties, such as the state, they highlighted and insisted on the integrity of learning as fundamentally important, independent of consequences.

Pearse told potential donors that his unique bilingual school was "contemporary in the greatest sense," giving an education that was "wholly Irish in complexion and multilingual in approach" while seeking for funding. The endeavour was a resounding success." He explained:

Apart from its Irish standpoint, our College is distinguished from other secondary schools and colleges in Ireland by the appeal which its ideals make to the imagination of its pupils, by its objection to the cramming system, its viva voce teaching of modern languages and, in short, its linking of the practical with the ideal at every stage of its work. (McGreevy, 2016)

Tagore was aware of several experiments in the European education sector, and his own endeavours in reviewing and reforming the educational process in colonial India, influenced by these advances, were ground breaking in many ways. He was one of the first in India to advocate for a humane educational system that was environmentally conscious and focused on complete personality development. Santiniketan became a model for vernacular education and the production of Bengali textbooks, as well as one of South Asia's first coeducational programmes. The founding of Visva-Bharati and Sriniketan resulted in ground breaking work in a variety of areas, including models for uniquely Indian higher education and popular education, as well as pan-Asian and worldwide cultural interchange. 2

Following in the footsteps of Tagore, John Dewey, Froebel, and other like-minded educationalists, such as Martha C. Nussbaum, advocated for an inclusive learning approach; she states that, rather than focusing on world history as a theatre of war, battles, and civil war, students should focus on local history, "when a culture's history and economy are studied, questions should be raised about differences of power and opportunity about the place of women and minorities, about the merits and disadvantages of different structures of political organizations" (Nussbaum, 2012, 89).

Rabindranath Tagore is a part of a global network of pioneering educators like Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, Montessori, and Dewey who emphasised the need of developing non-authoritarian learning methods suitable to their different environments. Maria Montessori paid a visit to Visva-Bharati and praised Tagore's efforts. So, according to Nussbaum, “world history and economic understanding then must be humanistic and critical if they are to be at all useful in forming intelligent global citizens, and they must be taught alongside the study of religion and philosophical theories of justice” (Nussbaum, 2012, 94).

THE TEXTS OF TAGORE

If intellectual and cultural freedom were the overt agenda of Tagore's formulation of an alternative system of education free of pedagogic shibboleth and intellectual myopia, as defined repeatedly in his many essays on educational practises, his literary texts also attempted to push against the boundaries by attempting cultural and intellectual de-territorialization. So, according to Gayatri Spivak (2013), when Gora decides to drink water brought in by the Dalit lady Lachmiya, he actually becomes free, not via a shift in epistemic self-positioning but through empirical assertiveness.

Gora's conclusion therefore demonstrates how the humanities and social sciences, which have historically been lumped together as "arts," are intertwined in the intertextuality and critical diversity paradigms that are central to intersectionality research. Gora addresses Anandamoyee, his surrogate mother, as his sole mother after learning that he was an Irish orphan raised in a Hindu family. “You have no caste, no-castejudgement, no contempt—you are nothing but the image of our good! You are my Bharatvasha, indeed.” (Spivak 2013, p. 303).

Spivak, however, said clearly as a cultural critic that, while Gora closes with a summons to the Dalit domestic servant Lachmiya, Tagore "builds nothing on it." Spivak observes that, quoting Mahasweta Devi's heroine, Mary Oraon, the key character in "Shikar," “Mahasweta takes the hybrid and puts a machete in her hand. Daughter of the rape of a Christian tribal domestic worker by a white imperialist displaced at Independence, Maryhas a Christian name as Gora has a Hindu corrects the failure of decolonization by the solitary exercise of a wild justice, a re-inscription of aboriginality” (Spivak 2013, 315).

Interestingly, Marxist critics such as Georg Lukacs panned GhareBaire, which he called as a "petit bourgeois tale of the shoddiest sort" and "at the intellectual service of the British Police" (Sen, 2015, p. 109) when it was released in 1916.. In 1936, Tagore wrote Char Adhyay, his third political book, which was a criticism of the Swadeshi movement and armed conflict. The social novels, on the other hand, were mostly focused on women. However, Tagore's inclusion attitude was important for sharing unrestricted information in all of these fictional storylines, a strong belief that led to his founding his exclusive educational institutions to practise inclusive knowledge.

So, in the true spirit of VasudhaivaKutumbakam, "the world is one family," Gora transforms from a prejudiced Hindu fanatic to a free and secular man. Gora says that he has discovered his identity and individuality, "I am Indian today. In me today there is no conflict among Hindu, Muslim and Christian society" (Spivak, 2013, p. 26).

Furthermore, Gayatri Spivak noted in her book, *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization*, that the parasitic pandemic of internet culture and the risks of globalisation romanticise artificial intelligence, post-human discourse, and programmed robotic reactions that become paradigmatic. "linguistic diversity can only curb the global. In the ferocious thrust to be 'global', 'the humanities' and the 'qualitative social sciences', 'comparative' at their best, are no longer a moving epistemological force. They will increasingly be like the opera, serving a peripheral function in society" (Spivak, 2013, p. 26). Rabindranath Tagore would have agreed with Spivak's observations and proviso, since it is clear that both these public and transformative thinkers thought that intellectual and cultural freedom were crucial for sustaining the inclusive spirit of universal humanism.

My central argument is that through holistic education and democratic approaches, Tagore's work demonstrates a radical effort to think beyond nationalist and gendered ideologies to create a truly international but also local field of practise, which can be described as cosmopolitan nationalism and underpins inclusive practises. Local Bengali cultures, agricultural methods, worldwide arts and ecumenical educational practises should all be regarded as intrinsically interrelated, according to Tagore, providing an alternative to realpolitik, rote learning, and utilitarian moral reasoning. This option is a step toward reconsidering gender, family, and nation. Tagore established a template for comprehensive

education in the early twentieth century while interrogating fractured knowledge. Tagore stated the following in an article about the aim of education in India:

Education can only become natural and wholesome when it is the direct fruit of a living and growing knowledge... our education should be in full touch with our complete life; economical, intellectual, aesthetic, social and spiritual; and our educational institutions should be in the very heart of our society, connected with it by the living bonds of varied co-operations. For true education is to realize at every step how our training and knowledge have surroundings. (Dasgupta, 2009, p. 148).

Tagore's overt agenda regarding an alternative education system can be used to formulate interdisciplinary studies, cross-cultural studies, transdisciplinary studies, intersectionality studies, and critical diversity studies, leading to an inclusive approach enabling fortification of knowledge systems often disrupted by systemic fissures and ruptures, in order to decolonize the hegemony of Western knowledge paradigms in the global South, specifically India. Binaries and monoliths that solidify canons can be changed by inclusive knowledge paradigms and policies through cross-cultural comparativist exchanges, as is clear.

If such steps are not done, our rote learning will have the horrific outcome of destroying creative freedom, creative imagination, and leadership in the realm of ideas. In his well-known story, "The Parrot's Training," Tagore depicts the sad outcome of such myopic teaching in vivid detail. The parrot, who had been flying and singing all day, was imprisoned in a gilded cage, with encapsulated clichés from the past stuffed down its throat and its wings removed. The story reads like a Spielberg screenplay, grotesque and satirical, and is enlivened by Tagore's distinctive lyrical insight:

The nephew said, "Your Majesty, the bird's education is now complete."

The King asked, "Does it still jump?" The nephew said, "God forbid."

"Does it still fly?" "No."

"Does it sing anymore?" "No."

"Does it scream if it doesn't get food?" "No."

The King said, "Bring the bird in. I would like to see it."

The bird was brought in. With it came the administrator, the guards, the horsemen. The King felt the bird. It didn't open its mouth and didn't utter a word. Only the pages of books, stuffed inside its stomach, raised a ruffling sound. Outside, where the gentle south wind and the blossoming woods were heralding spring, the young green leaves filled the sky with a deep and heavy sigh.

(Tagore, 2004)

Without concern about deviating from normative standards defining the aim of education, such as being job-oriented, skill-developers tied to corporate industries, Tagore's Visva-Bharati University's 2019 prospectus confidently asserts that:

Visva-Bharati is a pilgrimage for education and culture. It reflects the Tagorean ethos of making a complete human being. It is a hallowed place of learning cradled in a serene environment in the lap of Nature, where Rabindranath founded a school for children at Santiniketan, and it was around this nucleus that the structure of an unconventional University [emphasis added] developed through careful planning and meticulous execution of those ideas and ideals. (Visva-Bharati Santiniketan, 2019, p. 6)

CONCLUSION

Tagore's educational worldview will surely be impossible and unachievable in the education sector, from basic schools to colleges, with its specific registry of commercial profits and private education industries—actively pushed to link to corporate sectors. As a result, Tagore's VisvaBharati University has followed the normative norms adopted by all state government aided and central government helped educational institutions since it became a central government supported university. The teaching-learning process at Visva-Bharati now prioritises the value of university degrees, as well as the required scores and grades for targeted job acquisition. As a result, in the age of globalisation, the pursuit of knowledge for the nourishment of a critically informed, emancipated mind has become more marginalised as unnecessary, idealistic, and useless.

Furthermore, with its transition from the esoteric private to the exoteric public education sector, Visva-Bharati Central University at Santiniketan no longer reflects Tagore's idealistic priorities for education as a nurturing platform for an inclusive internationalist outlook derived from a systemic training in the humanities and performing arts. Because of the hegemony of economic and cultural globalisation, Visva-Bharati has succumbed to the pressures imposed by fast changing times, where job-oriented education is emphasised as the main focus. It is perhaps ironic that the Tagorean paradigm of a "unconventional University" should be regarded as a supremely viable project in the twenty-first century, where the teacher is regarded as a "transformative intellectual" in the role of a friend, philosopher, and guide, and education is defined as "practise of freedom" in the registers of empiricism, epistemology, and ontology.

However, in terms of spatio-temporal and geo-political attitudinal shifts considering education as a highly valuable enterprise, the process of experimenting in the education sector will necessarily be a continuing one, both internationally and locally. Experiential learning has already evolved, or rather re-emerged, as a viable new method of instruction that stimulates intellectual curiosity and creativity in the public education sector. However, the newly structured mechanisms for such complex experiential learning rather than rote learning may be traced back to Tagore's unique curriculum at VisvaBharati in Santiniketan, before it got national recognition as a public sector institution supported by the Indian government.

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