

Tagore's Philosophy: A Study from Selected Sources

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Tagore's Philosophy: A Study from Selected Sources

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(Ananya Banerjee)

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CHAPTER-1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Tagore is the greatest of the Indian writers in English. His fame as a poet in English rests chiefly on The “Gitanjali” which is a “transcreation “of the Bengali original. It was with this work that he achieved international fame and recognition, and was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. He is one of the greatest lyric poets of the world, and Edward Thompson calls his handling of poetic prose an “impeccable metrical achievement”. His thought and imagery are Indian, and his poetry is in the tradition of the Indian devotional poetry. His message is spiritual, both Hindu and universal at one and the same time. In his poetry Indianness acquires a universal significance. According to Verghese the main features of his poetry are, its humanistic essence combined with spirituality, a love of nature and man and the expression of the beauty and splendor of the earth. The poet’s spiritual message does not however , enjoin us to run away from the “fret and fever of life” and seek shelter in a hermitage, but insists on our full participation in the joys and sorrows of life. Stress on Tagore’s mysticism has led to a neglect of his poetry as poetry; it has tended to obscure his greatness as a poet and artist. He perfected a kind of incantatory rhythmic prose and demonstrated that Indian sentiment, thought and imagery can be as well expressed in English as in any Indian language.

1.2 Statement of the Problem: “Tagore’s Philosophy: A Study form Selected Sources”

1.3 Explanation of Terms

Philosophy: The word philosophy is derived from two Greek words—‘philos’and ‘sophia’means wisdom. Thus, philosophy means love of wisdom.

To R.W.Sellars----Philosophy is a persistent attempt to give insight into the nature of the world and of ourselves by means of systematic reflection.

To Bertrand Russell---Philosophy like other studies, aims primarily at knowledge.

1.4 Objectives of the Research

- To study Tagore's philosophy.
- To study the components of Tagore's philosophy as reflected in the "Gitanjali"
- To draw out implications from Tagore's philosophy.
- To study the relevance of Tagore's philosophy in modern age.

1.5 Research Questions

- ✓ What are the philosophical ideas reflected in the selected poems?
- ✓ What are the ideas of Tagore's Philosophy?
- ✓ How Tagore's philosophy is reflected in the selected poems of the Gitanjali?
- ✓ What are the educational implications of Tagore's philosophy?
- ✓ How can philosophies of Tagore as reflected in the Gitanjali be implied in the educational system in modern age?
- ✓ What is the central idea of the selected poems of the 'Gitanjali'?
- ✓ What has the writer tried to portray in the selected poems?
- ✓ Which attributes/values have been highlighted in the selected poems?
- ✓ What are the perceptions of the author regarding knowledge?
- ✓ What are the author's feelings towards his country and countrymen?
- ✓ What are the perceptions of the author regarding the society at large?
- ✓ How philosophies of Tagore as reflected in the 'Gitanjali' can be implied in the education system.

1.6 Delimitation of the Study

The present study is based only on some of the selected poems of the Gitanjali".The English Gitanjali is not a literal and comprehensive translation of the Bengali Gitanjali. It contains many poems of the Gitanjali, but others are from "Navedya"."Kheya"and"Gitimalya". The English poems are free translations expressing the main ideas of the Bengali poems and may be treated as fresh compositions. It is translated by W.B.Yeats, published by Rajiv Beri for Macmillan India Limited. The present study delimited to some selected poems of The Gitanjali in English.

1.7 Rationale of the Study

The researcher is form Literature background and being a student of education feels urgency to know philosophy of educators like Rabindranath Tagore. The researcher is also eager to know values and opinions and philosophies as revealed in the 'Gitanjali' and also interested to know whether that values and philosophies are still relevant or not. Though there have been many studies on that subject but the researcher has selected particular topic for own interest. The researcher is also interested to give own judgment and views on that.

1.8 Scheme of Chapterization

Work in future is the representation of planning It is necessary to plan out any work to do it. The present study is an amalgam of 6 chapters.

Chapter 1: The first chapter is the introduction, explanation of terms, objectives of the research, research questions, delimitation, rationale of the study, scheme of chapterization.

Chapter2: Chapter 2 is the conceptual framework. It deals with relation between philosophy and education, classification of educational philosophy, life sketch of Ranindranath Tagore, philosophies of east and west.

Chapter 3: This chapter is about review of related literature in which the researcher includes review of past researches, review of selected journals, articles, books and some implications of reviewed literature.

Chapter 4: This chapter presents research methodology of investigation. It discusses the research method. Besides this research design, methodology adopted for the study and procedure for content analysis.

Chapter 5: This chapter consists of content analysis and interpretation. In this chapter the researcher has found some ideas, philosophies related to the selected poems and their interpretation and discussion.

Chapter 6: This is the last chapter. In this chapter conclusions and implications are drawn from the selected poems.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

2 .1 Relation between Philosophy and Education

Eternal questions which stand before us are : what is life ? What life aims at ? How can that aim be achieved? Answers to the questions lie in the domain of Philosophy and Education. Search for eternal truth, investigation into that eternal life, determination of the ways to the attainment of that goal point out the fact that Philosophy and Education are closely and integrally related with each other and those are interdependent. This relation is close and integral. Fichte in his “Address to the German People,” observed that the art of education would never attain complete clearness in itself without philosophy. There is an interaction between the two, and either without the other is incomplete and unserviceable. Gentile says the same thing. Sir John Adams describes education as the dynamic aspect of philosophy. Dewey, the father of Pragmatism in education, defines philosophy as the theory of education in its most general aspect. Education is the laboratory where philosophical truths are tested. Great philosophical truths have always been established in life when they have been spread, practiced and evaluated through education. The contention that the two-Philosophy and Education are the two sides of the same coin, would not be properly established if the definitions of Philosophy and Education are not explained and analysed. Let us consider the thing in the following lines.

Etymologically considered, philosophy is derived from Greek words ‘Philo’ meaning ‘love’ and ‘Sophia’ meaning ‘wisdom’. Now what is this wisdom ? Wisdom is not identical with knowledge. It is more than knowledge. Wisdom includes knowledge and goes beyond knowledge to find relationship and its implications. Philosophy means mature reflection about any problem in its complete perspective. If we turn to Plato’s Republic a clear conception of the term ‘Philosophy’ can be attained. “He who has a taste for every sort of knowledge and who is curious to learn and is never satisfied, may be justly termed as philosopher.” He is one who loves to know ; with an insatiable love for knowledge he eagerly applies himself to learn what the various sciences can teach him, delving into one plot after another of human

knowledge. But he does this with definite object in view. He is “a lover not of a part of wisdom only, but of whole.” Nothing is beyond his scope. Philosophy never means ‘armchair theorising’. It is something which comes naturally to every human being who makes use of knowledge and wisdom in deciding upon a course of action in a given situation. Every man who searches into the reason and nature of things, who arrives or tries to arrive at certain general principles and conceptions and who applies them to daily conduct of life is consciously or unconsciously behaving like a true philosopher. It is not wrong to say “Philosophy originated as soon as man started to reflect about his status to the end that he might gain great security and more happiness.” Schopenhauer is right when he says that everyman is a born metaphysician. Aldous, Huxley has asserted : “Men live in accordance with their philosophy of life, their conception of the world. This is true even of the most thoughtless. It is impossible to live without a metaphysic. The choice that is given us is not between some kind of metaphysic. The choice that is given us is not between some kind of metaphysic or no metaphysic; it is always between a good metaphysic and a bad metaphysic, a metaphysic that corresponds reasonably closely with observed and inferred reality and one that doesn’t.” Different philosophies thus give birth to different ways of life. The way of living obviously implies the environment of the process of education. Education, etymologically considered, not only signifies the process of leading out but also the process of nourishing and nurturing the latent qualities in an individual. Education can be defined as the deliberate and systematic influence exerted by the mature person on the immature through instruction and discipline. It means the harmonious development of all the powers of a human being-physical, social, intellectual, aesthetic and spiritual. “The essential elements in the educative process are a creative mind, well-integrated self, socially useful purposes and experiences related to the interests, needs and abilities of the individual as a participant in social living.” Thus education refers to the active part of philosophical belief, the practical means of realizing ideals of life. Percy Nunn truly asserted that education, being at bottom a practical philosophy, touches life at every point.

From the foregoing discussion it stands thus that education cannot be dissociated from philosophy. An analysis of the nature of philosophy and education reveals that philosophy looks at the ends and purposes of life in the light of the ultimate reality and furnishes a system of values, a set of goals towards which life activities are to be directed. It also throws light on

the means and methods for the realization of the aims of life. Education signifies self-development of man in and through his life experiences. Education is life itself. Every act of living is educative. The needs for education arise out of the needs of living. Educational opportunities are supplied by the life-environment. Motives, underlying educational activities, grow out of life experiences. Aims and goals of education are determined by, and correlated to, the aims and goals of life. Thus in a real sense, education is a practical philosophy and touches life at many points. Philosophy formulates the ideals of life and education seeks to organize a system providing practical means and methods for the proper guidance of the educands towards the actual realization of those ideals. So Fichte's remark that the art of education will never attain complete clearness in itself without philosophy, is quite justifiable.

So far discussion has been held on the close and integral relation between philosophy and education. Now the interdependence between the two in the actual situation should be explained categorically. Analysis of all the aspects of education will point out clearly that philosophy has great impact upon education in both theory and practice. The fundamental dependence of education on philosophy can be undeniably and convincingly proved by saying that the great philosophers have been the great educationists. The merest glance at a book on the history of education shows that educational movements are the working out of various philosophical positions; and the outstanding names found in such a book are largely identical with those found in the history of philosophy. Examples of such philosophers contributing excellent schemes of education in both West and East are numberless. Socratic method of questioning and cross questioning which has been adopted today as the method of teaching, is nothing but the outcome of his philosophy of self-realisation through scrutiny of the self. Likewise Plato's enquiry into the nature of Justice becomes a treatise on education. Most of the Republic does as a matter of fact deal directly with education. We find a further example of the intimate interconnection of philosophy, politics and education in the writings of Aristotle. We find the clearest example of the dependence of education on philosophy in the life and teaching of Jesus. He was supremely concerned with the education of his disciples. Examples of such dependence can be furthered by mentioning the philosophical ideals and their corresponding education doctrines, like empiricism of John Locke and sense realism of Amos Comenius brought forth Encyclopaedism in education. Rousseau's antisocial philosophy produced natural

education through Negative teaching. 'Emile' stands as the finest novel on education bearing testimony to the example of dependence of educational theme on philosophical outlook of Rousseau. Froebel's Pantheism and idealistic concept produces Kindergarten system. Herbert Spencer's scientific way of thinking influenced education and gave a new outlook in educational theory and practice. Project method is the direct outcome of John Dewey's Pragmatic philosophy. Rabindranath's educational doctrine of Natural education catering to the basic needs, interests and demands of individual students in and through the ideal social environment keeping in view the needs of both the educand and the society comes out of his philosophy of Eternal Truth, Goodness and Beauty and his unrivalled philosophy of Emancipation. Gandhiji's Basic education is the direct corollary to his philosophy of Human love, Non-violence and Dignity of Labour. Ross remarks correctly that the inevitable tendency for the philosopher to run educationist is as manifest today as at any former time. Examples of such thinkers as H. G. Wells, Bertrand Russel, A. N. Whitehead, Aldous Huxley, Findlay and others who in the light of their respective views about life, preach a system of education, illustrate this.

The dependence of education on philosophy can be justified by explaining that there is no aspect of education-aims, curriculum, methods, text books, discipline, role of teachers etc. which is not influenced and determined by philosophy. Thus goes the saying. 'Height and breadth of education is probed in by philosophy.'

Modern trends, tendencies and developments in education have made education complex. New problems have been raised in the domain of education by sociological and psychological tendencies. Lest we may go astray in the maze of modern developments, the study of philosophy to understand education is essential. Let us see now how philosophy influences educational aim, curricular organization, methodological approach, choice of textbooks, concept of discipline and the task of a teacher.

Aims, goals, ends or objectives of education are the first essentials of any educational system. Without them the entire educational process loses meaning. The aim of education has a reference to the aim of life. The aim of life is determined by the philosophy an individual has at

a certain time. Thus the ideal of education depends on the philosophy of education that prevails.

History reveals the fact that educational aims or ideals have been varied to keep pace with the prevailing philosophical ideals differing in different countries and in different ages. In Idealism education is regarded as a process of transmitting and enhancing human culture, a process of self-realisation and enrichment of personality. Naturalism regards education as a process of self-expression and spontaneous self-development without any sort of interference from outside. Pragmatism holds that education is a socially directed growth of the individual through concrete life experiences and continuous reconstruction of experiences. Marxism in education believes that the aim of education should be to combine productive labour with instruction and gymnastics, not only as one of the methods of adding to the efficiency of production, but as the only method of producing fully developed human beings. Thus we see that since the dawn of civilization educational aims have been varied and diversified in accordance with the philosophies as prevalent in countries and ages. Extreme socialism of ancient Sparta gave birth to the socialistic pattern of education whereas individualism of Athens has great influence upon the individual upbringing in and through education. Nazism during Hitler's regime in Germany crushed individuality at any cost and cultivated in individual citizens unquestioning loyalty and obedience to the Nazi regime by means of rigid, militarized system of education that was consciously evolved. In Indian context, now the country is in the transitional stage and under the sway of democratic ideals and so the educational aim is bound to be influenced by that ideal.

Let us turn our attention to the very important aspect of education which is highly determined by the prevailing philosophies in different times. The choice of studies must cater to a philosophy. Bode and Briggs strongly feel that the determination of curriculum needs philosophers or leaders of thought. Briggs in discussing curricular problems remarks, "It is just here that education seriously needs leaders, leaders who hold a sound comprehensive philosophy of which they can convince others, who can direct its consistent application to the formulation of appropriate curricula." However history bears testimony to the fact that different schools of philosophy have different notions about the curriculum in accordance with

their beliefs. Idealists want the children to inculcate in them higher values of life. They, therefore, wish the children to study Ethics, Religion, Logic, Fine Arts and Literature. Through these studies school of a nation will be able to consolidate its spiritual strength, to maintain its historic continuity, to secure its past achievements, to guarantee its future. Through its schools a nation should become conscious of the abiding sources from which the best movements have always drawn their inspiration, should come to share the dreams of its nobler souls, should constantly submit itself to self-criticism, should purge its ideals, should reinforce and redirect its impulses.” The Naturalistic school of philosophy wishes that the present experiences, interests and activities of the child should determine his subjects of instruction.

Herbert Spencer, a scientific naturalist and a hedonist regards self-preservation as the highest aim of life. Hence he classifies the subject of studies in order to their importance in self-preservation. The pragmatists lay emphasis on the principle of utility as determining factor in the choice of subjects. They would include in the curriculum subject which will be useful to the child not only for the present life, but also for the future life as an adult. John Dewey, the chief exponent of pragmatism, contends that the experience that a child undergoes in school, must be based on his natural activities and interests because activity is the chief characteristic of childhood. The learning process is an active way of doing things, the curriculum for children should concern itself with the realities of their nature and life; the various activities of real life should form its basis and content. Pragmatists advocate the study of functional subjects like Language, Social Studies, General Science, Practical Arithmetic, Arts and crafts. They do not want to stuff the memory with unfunctional knowledge. So the determination of the courses of studies will be always followed by the basic, philosophical principles. So is true in the case of the selection of textbook appropriate for the students. Idealism generally prescribes extensive text books for the fostering of cultural values in children whereas Naturalism emphasizes the spontaneous interests and activities of the students and Pragmatism stresses upon the problematic acts and concrete life experiences. Though the recent trend is to minimise the domination of textbooks in class room situation yet textbooks occupy a very important place in institutionalized system of education.

Philosophy further influences education in respect of the method of teaching. Let us define the pedagogical method. In the words of Rusk, method is a process of establishing and maintaining a relationship between the subject-matter and the pupil. The determination of the type of method to be applied in the actual teaching learning situation will be dictated by the type of philosophical ideal dominating the field of education. Idealistic philosophy having interest more in ideas and ideals than in children prescribe logical method whereas the psychological methods are prescribed by the Naturalistic Philosophy. Pragmatism which considers knowledge as an instrument to successful adjustment with ever-varying life conditions attaches importance to problem solving method which led to the origin of project method, heuristic method etc.

Discipline also takes its shape in the domain of education as philosophy directs its course. Repressionism directs discipline to act opposing all the innate tendencies of children. Graveyard silence with the help of rod is the outcome of such a philosophy. Naturalism in Education declares in an unfaltering voice that true discipline is free discipline, it touches the inmost springs of conduct, it comes from within and not from without. Thus Discipline by Natural Consequences or free discipline is supported by the Naturalists. This is the outcome of the Emancipationistic philosophy in education. Dewey's pragmatism believes that in and through free activities and participation in cooperative enterprises auto-discipline within pupils can be developed.

Lastly but not with the least importance can a teacher's task be valued in the perspective of the philosophy he possesses. With what aim he would proceed, how he would analyze the curricula, in what way he would motivate students to study textbooks, what would be the way of teaching, how and what type of discipline is to be maintained, what should be the place of reward and punishment, how the relationship between the teacher and the student should be maintained-all of these problems are solved in accordance with the philosophy of the teacher-that may be idealistic or materialistic, negative or positive, optimistic or pessimistic. According to Plato, a teacher should always be a good and great philosopher, otherwise, the task of education which is much more than instruction would be futile.

2.2 Major Philosophies of Education

The major philosophies of education are Idealism, Naturalism, Pragmatism, Realism, Humanism ,etc.

2.2.1 Idealism

Idealism is a popular philosophy of life represented by such thinkers of past and present as Socrates, Plato, Berkeley, Hegel, Kant, Guru Nanak, Tagore, Gandhi, Vivekananda and Radhakrishnan.

Idealism is a philosophical thought which maintains that “knowledge acquired through the activity, creativity and exercise of the mind is more important than the knowledge acquired through senses”. In the words of D. M. Dutta “Idealism holds that ultimate reality is spiritual.”

The chief assertions of idealism are

- Ultimate reality is mental or spiritual in nature----the material world is nothing more than an outward manifestation of ultimate reality.
- The material world is mortal and changing----ultimate reality which consists of ideals and values is eternal and unchanging.
- On this basis, body is false and mortal, soul is true, is immortal.
- Man is essentially a spiritual being and his spirituality alone distinguishes him from animals. His spirit alone enables him to control his environment.
- Man is free agent, free in the choice of his ends and means to realize them.
- Values are pre-existing, ultimate and unchanging----Man cannot create values, but the aim of life is realization of ultimate values—Truth, Beauty and Goodness for their own sake.
- Highest knowledge--- the knowledge of spiritual reality, Brahma, Gyan is the highest knowledge.
- Fullest development of personality---Idealists believe in the fullest development of personality of an individual. According to them, the development of personality means achievement of perfection.

2.2.2 Gandhiji's Philosophy

- Gandhiji's philosophy of life is based upon the philosophy of idealism. He believed in God implicitly. According to him, though individuals have different bodies, yet the same soul pervades in all of us. This soul is a part of that bigger entity which we call as God, Raheem or Christ. Gandhiji advocated that as the source of all the rays of the sun is the sun absolute and one whole, in the same way though the persons are different and innumerable, yet the same soul pervades in all of them. In short, Gandhiji experienced and realized unity in Diversity,. His philosophy of life has four elements namely-(1) Truth, (2) Non-Violence, (3) Fearlessness and (4) Satyagraha. We discuss these elements in some details as under :
- (1) Truth – Gandhiji's aim of life was to realize god. He firmly believed that this creation is mortal. Only God is immortal. Hence, the ultimate aim of life should be to realize God. According to him, truth is the only way to realized. God. To Gandhiji truth is the supreme principle. In it other principles namely Beauty and Goodness become imbedded. To Gandhiji, there is no difference between Truth and God. According to him is somebody uses truth in his mind, words and deeds and uses it together with Ahinsa sincerely and constantly, he will be able to realize God someday. In this way, according to Gandhiji Truth does not mean truthfulness of words or speech only but its field is very wide. These principles of Truth should be employed in all fields of life. Hence, Gandhiji devoted all his life in search to Truth.
- (2) Non-Violence – Non-Violence of Ahinsa is the second main tenet of Gandhiji's philosophy of life. Gandhiji was of firm view that devotion to truth can only be practiced through devotion and strict adherence to Ahinsa. To him Truth and Ahinsa are the two sides of the same coin. One cannot exist without the other. Gandhiji has insisted that the supreme aim of life is to realize God and the only

effective way to realized that is to practice Ahinsa by thoughts, words and deeds. Gandhiji has explained the meaning of Ahinsa as-**“Ahinsa is complete absence of ill-will against all that lives. In its dynamic condition, it means conscious suffering. Non-violence is, in its active form, good-will towards all life. It is pure love.”**

- (3) Fearlessness-Gandhiji's Ahinsa was not negative tendency. It was positive capacity which included two other attributes namely-(1) Fearlessness and (2) Satyagraha. Thus, fearlessness is the third element in Gandhiji's philosophy of life. Gandhiji has emphasized that without fearlessness, it is practically impossible to practice Truth and Ahinsa. A coward person cannot adhere to these principles of Truth and Ahinsa. Explaining his concept of fearlessness Gandhiji has written-**“Fearlessness connotes freedom from all external fear-fear of disease, bodily injury and death, or dispossession of losing one's nearest and dearest, of losing reputation or giving offence, and so on.”**
- (4) Satyagraha-Gandhiji explained Satyagraha as hold fast to death. This principle is based on truth and love. Herein the opponent is not given any pain, mental or physical, but he is made rather persuaded to accept truth by the effect of one's own experiencing pain or loss. It is to achieve change of heart by self-suffering of the adherence of truth and non-violence. In the words of Gandhiji **“So the Doctrine came to mean vindication of truth, not by infliction of suffering on the opponent but on one's self.**

2.2.3 Naturalism

“Naturalism is a system whose silent characteristic is the exclusion of whatever is spiritual or indeed whatever is transcendental of experience---from our philosophy of Nature and Man.”

To the view of Dr. Prem Nath, “Naturalism is an attitude rather than a specific system of philosophy.”

The following may be regarded as the major tenets of Naturalism:

- Nature----the ultimate reality. To Hocking “Naturalism denied existence of anything beyond nature, behind nature, other nature, such as supernatural or other worldly.
- Belief in science-naturalism upholds belief in science and scientific knowledge. Scientific knowledge is final. They believe that as the time advances, science also advances and basic concepts also change.
- No faith in soul---Naturalism interprets human life in terms of matter. There is no such thing as spirit or soul or divine.
- No distinction between body and Mind ---Naturalism does not distinguish between body and mind. Mind exists because of brain and brain is essentially matter.
- Senses, the Gateway of knowledge--- Naturalists regard the senses as the gateways of knowledge. All knowledge is comprehended through senses.
- Essential goodness of Man ---Man is essentially born good. It is the society that makes him bad.
- No absolute good or bad---According to Naturalism there is no absolute good or evil in the world. All values are inherent in human nature. They change with the change of time.

2.2.4 Rousseau’s Philosophy

- Rousseau’s philosophy is the philosophy of naturalism-the direct outcome of which is emancipation. He has all through sung the glory of freedom of an individual in every aspect of life. So his educational scheme is bound to be a natural process of development of an individual’s innate powers. In his scheme of education, the detail of which follow in the course of our discussion, Rousseau prescribed negative education, the exact corollary to his idea of naturalism. However Rousseau’s negative education can be interpreted only in the light of the times when he wrote.

- The prevailing idea of human nature as the product of sin which was supposed to be remade through education, shocked Rousseau. Rousseau opposed this idea by saying, “The first education then should be purely negative. It consists not in teaching the principles of virtue or truth, but in guarding the heart against vice and the mind against error.” He thought that the entire education of the child was to come from the free development of his own nature, his own powers, and his own natural inclinations. There should not be any coercion or interference. The concept of Negative education of Rousseau seems to be paradoxical. But if we reflect on his ideas thoroughly we shall be convinced that by negative education Rousseau did not mean to say that there should be no education at all, but that there should be a type of education only different in kind from the accepted educational practices.
- In one place he differentiates Negative education from the positive one by describing their respective nature. He wrote, “I call a positive education one that tends to form the mind prematurely and to instruct the child in the duties that belong to a man. I call a negative education one that tends to perfect the organs that are instruments of knowledge before giving this knowledge directly; and that endeavours to prepare the way for reason by proper exercise of the senses. A negative education does not mean a time of idleness, far from it. It does not give virtue, it protects from vice, it does not inculcate truth, it protects from error. It disposes the child to take the path that will lead him to truth, when he has reached the age to understand it, and to goodness when he has acquired the faculty of recognizing and loving it.” This is clear from the lines given above that education must be based upon the ideal of non-imposition. An individual child will catch every lesson of his direct acquaintance with man, nature and things.

2.3 Rabindranath Tagore

Rabindranath Tagore is regarded as one of the eminent philosopher and educationist who has intermingled the shades of Idealism and Naturalism. He has emphasized development of ideal character in naturalistic conditions.

2.3 .1 Life sketch of Rabindranath Tagore

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) was the youngest son of Debendranath Tagore, a leader of the Brahmo Samaj, which was a new religious sect in nineteenth-century Bengal and which attempted a revival of the ultimate monistic basis of Hinduism as laid down in the *Upanishads*. He was educated at home; and although at seventeen he was sent to England for formal schooling, he did not finish his studies there. In his mature years, in addition to his many-sided literary activities, he managed the family estates, a project which brought him into close touch with common humanity and increased his interest in social reforms. He also started an experimental school at Shantiniketan where he tried his Upanishadic ideals of education. From time to time he participated in the Indian nationalist movement, though in his own non-sentimental and visionary way; and Gandhi, the political father of modern India, was his devoted friend. Tagore was knighted by the ruling British Government in 1915, but within a few years he resigned the honour as a protest against British policies in India.

Tagore had early success as a writer in his native Bengal. With his translations of some of his poems he became rapidly known in the West. In fact his fame attained a luminous height, taking him across continents on lecture tours and tours of friendship. For the world he became the voice of India's spiritual heritage; and for India, especially for Bengal, he became a great living institution.

Although Tagore wrote successfully in all literary genres, he was first of all a poet. Among his fifty and odd volumes of poetry are *Manasi* (1890) [The Ideal One], *Sonar Tari* (1894) [The Golden Boat], *Gitanjali* (1910) [Song Offerings], *Gitimalya* (1914) [Wreath of Songs], and *Balaka* (1916) [The Flight of Cranes]. The English renderings of his poetry, which include *The Gardener* (1913), *Fruit-Gathering* (1916), and *The Fugitive* (1921), do not generally correspond to particular volumes in the original Bengali; and in spite of its title, *Gitanjali: Song Offerings* (1912), the most acclaimed of them, contains poems from other works besides its namesake. Tagore's major plays are *Raja* (1910) [*The King of the Dark Chamber*], *Dakghar* (1912) [*The Post Office*], *Achalayatan* (1912) [The Immovable], *Muktadhara* (1922) [The Waterfall], and *Raktakaravi* (1926) [*Red Oleanders*]. He is the author of several volumes of short stories and a

number of novels, among them *Gora* (1910), *Ghare-Baire* (1916) [*The Home and the World*], and *Yogayog* (1929) [*Crosscurrents*]. Besides these, he wrote musical dramas, dance dramas, essays of all types, travel diaries, and two autobiographies, one in his middle years and the other shortly before his death in 1941. Tagore also left numerous drawings and paintings, and songs for which he wrote the music himself.

2.3.2 Educational philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore

The educational philosophy of Tagore is the outcome of his philosophy of life which has its origin in the Upanisadic thought. So at the very outset we should say something about the basic principles of the Upanisadic thoughts. These have cast tremendous influence upon his philosophy of education form which emanated the ideas of Santiniketan, Brahmcharysarama, and the Visva Bharati, other branches of studies and activities having their great impact upon the well-being of an individual and the society. This is known to everyone interested in Rabindranath and his gigantic contributions towards Indian heritage that he had imbibed the spirit of the Upanisadic culture from his father, Maharshi Devendranath Tagore who was initiated in the Brahmo religion. The Brahmo religion is nothing but there formed Hindu religion, absolutely based upon the Vedic-Upanisadic ideal. Particularly the salient features of the Upanasadic teaching-like the omnipresence of Brahman, the emanation of everything from the ananda, the Bliss, the unity in the entire creation, the boundlessness of human power as man is the spark of the D ivine, the exercise of eternal life, have found their grandest expression in Tagore's philosophy. He could hear the vibration of life in every natural object. So he found interrelatedness amongst all the creation. This is the outcome of the ananda, the blissful power of Brahman. He realized that there is truth in the vision of the ancient Indian sages who could feel in themselves the eternal power of the trio—the Truth, the Goodness and Beauty. Rabindranath also felt within the core of his heart that this universe is never the blind, mechanical conglomeration of some material objects. There is spirit underlying everything and it is the life force described by BERGSON ---Elan Vital, which is always dynamic, active in creating the numberless expressions of the Truth, Goodness and Beauty. Man's nature together with the phenomenal nature is absolute harmony can fulfill the aspiration of Brahman . So a man is basically free—free in action and thought. His freedom lies in the participation in the natural and

socio cultural activities. He is never free when alone. His emancipation with all ---the natural objects and the social surroundings. In his creation he finds the fullest expression of his divine power. There he is emancipated.

Rabindranath never feels that the path of freedom lies in the complete abstinence from the worldly matter but in the restrained enjoyment of the life of man. Tagore feels that renunciation comes not through complete denial of matter but through acceptance of those with a sense of detachment. Man , a divine being, has the power to rise above temptation and march ahead towards the path of self restraint. To the poet a man is ordained to be monarch to all the surveys. So he has first to make himself a man, a full fledged man. From his ideas of freedom—which is the very watch word if Upanisad, the Unity in diversity, of harmony in cosmic creation and of the revelation of Truth, Goodness and Beauty in every aspect of nature and man, he came to the concept of universal humanism. The concept of Universal humanism has been expressed in various form in all his writings, The basic tenet of such a philosophy is that a man can never be limited to any particular region. He has the open sky to see, the open air to breathe, the ever expanding heart to communicate with all.

Although it is not intended to discuss here the merits of Rabindranath as an educationalist, yet one writing on his contributions to education cannot conclude without mentioning, however briefly, the wonderful literature he has created and the educational value of it. While reading them one cannot help feeling that had Tagore done nothing else except compositing poems and his brilliant prose, he would have still remained as outstanding figure in the educational history of Bengal and for that matter, India and the world. His poems especially those in the Gitanjali, the book that conquered for him the literary world, contain in them thoughts and ideas which are of immense educational value. Enshrined in the book are poems and imaginings which for their elevated tone, for the nobility and grandeur of expression, for the loftiness of thoughts win our hearts at once and give us courage and spirit of calm resignation when we are tossed in the storm and stress of life and cannot see our way clearly through the world. For the eternal theme of the book is the Almighty Father, the creator of this beautiful and awe inspiring world, at whose feet our heads bow down in peace chastened and elevated and purified and sublimated in spirit. The educational value of the Gitanjali is established beyond dispute.

The rich associations of Indian philosophy, with its theme and spirit, are present in Tagore's poetry. The first song of Gitanjali describes the human body as the temple of the soul and the abode of God, thereby declaring that the human soul is immortal. "This little flute of a reed thou hast carried over hills and dales and hast breathed through its melodies eternally new." The poet here not only affirms that the human soul is immortal but he also says that the ups and downs in life are nothing but the melodies played by Krishna. The thought and imagery of Gitanjali are Indian and its songs are in the great Indian tradition of devotional poetry. But the spiritual message that is contained in them is universal. The English language is so skillfully adapted that the Indian myth and imagery go well with it. The legend of Radha and Krishna is used in song no 23 of the Gitanjali which signifies "Love's search through the tempest". The main features of Tagore's lyrical poetry is thus a combination of humanism with spirituality, a love of nature and man and the expression of beauty and splendour of earth. The spiritual message which the poet conveys in his poetry is not that man should run away from life and seek shelter in a hermitage, but it enjoins on him to fully participate in the joys and sorrows of life. "Why does my servant wander to seek me, forsaking me,"---this is what God tells the would be ascetic who is preparing to give up his home in search of God.

2.3.3 The development of Visava Bharati

The then colonial pattern of education which was far away from the national character of India was producing individuals absolutely stunted as such type of education did not cater to the different needs and demands of the young people, keeping in view the socio-cultural aspirations. He also viewed with great pain that the vehicle of education, that is, the medium of instruction was English. He thought that a foreign language being the medium, a barrier was being created between the contents of knowledge and the process of knowing, resulting in the unhappy and undesirable growth of the individuals, absolutely detrimental to the prosperity of the nation. During this period of strife and strain the Indian national leaders had been thinking of evolving an educational system which would be national in character. They approached Rabindranath to give his suggestion as to education of the people of India. Rabindranath told them that establishing any national institute would not solve the problem.. The national aspirations of the people would give birth to such an institution of national character. The poet

had his own ideas on education. He felt the need of educating the young people in an atmosphere of absolute freedom and joy. The ideas of mass education, rural reconstruction for making the people self-reliant were cherished in his mind. Moreover, the poet Tagore could feel that the education of the day must need upon the ideal of National Solidarity and International understanding. He had profound faith in the ancient Indian treasure of wisdom. He considered that the revival of the asramik system of education based upon the ideal of Brahmacharya with the necessary modifications in accordance with the demands of the society can fulfill the conditions required for the proper educational scheme.

Thus in December, 1901, an experimental school known as Brahmacharyasrama, which had its genesis in the reaction which the joyless, mechanical system of education then prevailing in the country had on the poets' mind, was started by Rabindranath with only ten students on the roll. The idea was to provide students with an education which was not divorced from nature, so that the pupils could feel that they were members of a larger community, and thus grow up in an atmosphere of freedom, mutual trust and joy. The Tapovanas (forest homes) of ancient India had a special appeal to the mind of Rabindranath and it was after the Tapovana ideals that he tried to model his newly founded school. This school at the very initial stage was not recognized by the countrymen but after some years he received cooperation of some dedicated souls in the fulfillment of his mission. These educational experiments gradually made the poet think anew in the sphere of university education. Moreover, the poet could visualize that some mischief was the inevitable result of the worship of power and the collective egotism of the people. His visit to Europe in 1920 made him realize that humanity could only be saved by the awakening of a new faith. He declared, "For this, the one thing that is needed, most of all, is to make place in our education for some great idealism."

The poet thought of Santiniketan as a place, where the ideals of life and wisdom contributed to the world by the different countries of Asia, would be cultivated, where the wealth of ancient learning might be brought into living contact with modern influences. He received the most warm and sincere co-operation from his colleagues. The name 'Visva Bharati' came at this time and its motto-'Yatra Visvam Bhavatyekanidam.' 'Where the whole world makes its home in a single nest'-was chosen.

The poet Tagore, “Visva Bharati represents India where she has her wealth of mind which is for all. Visva Bharati acknowledges India’s obligation to offer to others the hospitality of her best culture and India’s right to accept from others their best.”

Thus the idea of establishing a centre of learning where the whole world would meet in a cultural communication took a more definite shape during his tour of foreign countries immediately after World War I. When he returned to India in 1921 the poet had before him threefold programme. :

To concentrate at Santiniketan, within the Ashrama Vidyalaya, the different cultures of the East, especially those that had originated in India, or found shelter in it.

To lay at Sreeniketan the foundations of a happy, contented and human life in a village, and finally, through Visva Bharati as a whole, to seek to establish a living relationship between the East and the West, to promote inter-racial amity and inter-cultural understanding and fulfil the highest mission of the present age-the unification of mankind.

The formal inauguration of the Visva Bharati took place in December, 1921 at a meeting presided over by Brojendra Nath Seal. Since then Santiniketan has been the seat of Visva Bharati-an international university, seeking to develop a basis on which the cultures of the East and the West may meet in common fellowship. Visva Bharati is, according to Rabindranath, “India’s invitation to the world, her offer of sacrifice to the highest truth of man.”

After the inauguration of such an institution eminent savants from the different countries responded to the call of the poet. Thus with different branches the Visva Bharati rose to the peak of its glory. This is also to be noted that from India itself the Visva Bharati has been no less unfortunate in attracting the devoted services of distinguished educationists, scholars, artists and men of practical idealism. The practical idealism of Rabindranath found shape in the institute of Rural Reconstruction of Sreeniketan under the inspiring leadership of Leonard K. Elmhirst.

However, soon it became necessary to have a constitution for the newly formed Visva Bharati, Surendranath and Prasanto Chandra Mahalanabish drafted a constitution which was adopted and

registered in May, 1922. This was the period of expansion. Under single fold of the Visva Bharati different departments having their specific functions to discharge can be found. Those are Patha Bhavana, Vidya Bhavana, Siksha Bhavana, Sangeet Bhavana, Kala Bhavana, China Bhavana, Hindi Bhavana and later on Vinay Bhavana. After the poet's demise the Rabindra Bhavana was set up. The latest development of Visva Bharati was made in May, 1951 when it was declared to be an institution of national importance and was declared to be a unitary, teaching and residential university, administered and financed by the Central Govt. of India.

2.3.4 Salient Features of Tagore's Educational Scheme

Rabindranath's ideas and practices in education are contained in his various writings as well as in his experiments. The collection of essays, like 'Sikshar herfer'. 'Sikshar sangikaran'. 'Sikshar milan', 'Sikshar Bahan' etc. preach his educational thoughts. To Rabindranath, education is life and naturally the **objective of life** and the **objective of education are identical**. Education, does never mean, to the poet, attainment of some degrees and diplomas and getting a job. Education is the expression of life force, the 'elan vital' of Bergson. This is communion with greater part of the self not in the sense of individual self alone but the self which is always absorbed in the real integral spirit, undivided, unbounded and glistened with Truth, Goodness and Beauty. The objectives of education have been described as the objectives of life. As life has got two objectives-ultimate and proximate. Para and Aparā; so also education is having such classification in respect of its aims. Educational objective as ultimate refers to the fullness of human life, fullness in creativity, free communion with phenomenal nature in a spirit of joy-that is the ultimate goal of human life. This goes without saying that Rabindranath got idea of such para vidya from the upanisadic philosophy. Secondly, the proximate objective refers to satisfaction of all the demands of individual life and society. He was an idealist, a cosmic humanist, naturalist, a pragmatist too. For fulfilling such objectives the poet always highlighted the national system of education through conserving the socio-cultural heritage and transmitting those to the people who are the carriers of new message to the world of today and tomorrow. He tried to break the barrier between man and a man in respect of geographical boundaries. So, he set up Visva Bharati.

For the implementation of the objectives mentioned above Rabindranath wanted to revive the Tapovana system, where the teacher and the taught would live together in the atmosphere of freedom in nature and social environment. In this essays and also in his experimental school of Santiniketan the poet vehemently opposed the use of English as the medium of instruction. But he was never a parochial person, so he did not disrespect the language as the language of the ruler but he thought that a child can never find out the ingredients for his development through the medium of foreign language, which creates a gap between life and education, knowing, doing and feeling. The dissemination of knowledge, the assimilation of the same, finds stumbling block if the child does not learn in his own mother language which is a life-giving to him as his mother' milk. He also found the scarcity of properly trained and equipped English teachers. So, to him, the medium of instruction in all the stages should be mother tongue. But he was a poet, so to him, the media of education are varied. Songs, dance, painting, drawing, nature study, storytelling, are the media through which the little child becomes enlightened to socio-cultural treasure and can participate in the sacrifice of 'yajna' of diverse streams of wisdom.

The curricula, the courses of study for the children and adolescents are to be based upon the national and socio-cultural heritage, imbued with internationalism and should be linked with the scientific and technological advancement of the western world. The curricula must be varied, specific, but must exceed the limits of curriculum. Rabindranath gave emphasis upon vocationalisation of education. So his education wanted to utilize all the optitudinal differences amongst the students. His ideas about curriculum and its relation to the present needs of the society, got its manifestation in Rural Reconstruction Programme at Sreeniketan.

Curricula cannot be living if no proper **method of education** can be evolved. The poet's method of education was absolutely far away from the traditional method. The method was psychological, naturalistic, scientific and based upon the lie of the child and learner. The method is learning by doing, play-way principle saturated with the essence of joy, freedom and communion with phenomenal nature and social surrounding. An individual child is treated as an individual, but every effort is made to keep him abreast with the sociocultural environment. Play, different types of activities is organized in the school and students participate in such

activities and learn the lessons. This method can remove the tedium of the class room learning and help the students to assimilate the lessons and thus the education of the whole man, the total man can take place. In school students can develop their linguistic power not by turning the pages of the books but by speaking with people, being acquainted with other languages. Original thinking, originality in the power of expression are emphasized upon. Social and physical sciences, life sciences are taught through self-learning method. The students can explore, innovate their areas of interest and can bridge the gap between the lessons and the teachings of nature. The joyful, free atmosphere can motivate pupils to take part in the teaching-learning process. In the context of teaching method Rabindranath has pointed out the task of a teacher. He says, 'when we see a living enthusiasm lacking in those who act as guides to their pupils, who are ready to raise to them ruling rods from a distance but not extend to them helping hand by their side, as is too often the case, they should be reminded that they have chosen a wrong vocation and should for the sake of humanity, change it without delay for that of a jail warder. A genuine sympathy and respect for the student create an atmosphere of freedom in the classes which is indispensable to education.'

In the poet's school does not have any scope for corporal punishment as, such a form to Tagore, kills the sensitiveness of the child's mind. "Life to be life at all" to quote the words of Mr. Elmhirst-"has to be lived, and the parents' or teacher's sins of repression and deprivation, of rod and iron-bound rule, are visited upon the children and may blast the future of those who are potentially great."

The poet Tagore does not overlook the role **of discipline in** educational environment. The spirit of freedom in the atmosphere is of profound importance, according to Tagore. 'Education', he says, 'has for its object freedom-freedom of intellect, freedom of sympathy, freedom in the material universe through our truthful dealings with her universal laws, freedom in the society through our maintaining of truth and love in all our human relationships. It is a most difficult ideal and that immense difficulty only proves the majesty of the human soul and the magnificence of our true civilization.' For the development of free discipline Tagore's school prescribes the spirit of school-self-Govt. (chhatra sashantantra) which was in existence

in Indian education as monitorial system. The captains or monitors elected from the students themselves are trusted with the charge of maintaining few discipline.

As to the role of a **teacher**, Rabindranath on various occasions has pointed out that teachers should be examples before the students. They should be students' constant companions, directing their lives passively, keeping in view the principle of freedom. A teacher is an ever-learner. According to him, if a teacher ceases to learn, he will fail to transmit his learning to his student. The ancient 'Guru' idol and the European 'teacher' with enthusiasm created a spell in his mind. So in his scheme of education, a teacher is supposed to have significant role to play.

So in Rabindranath Tagore's philosophy we find the essence of both naturalism and idealism. According to him a child should have idealistic mind and free environment.

CHAPTER- 3

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

3.1. Introduction

Review of related literature provides evidence that researcher is familiar with what is already known and what is still unknown and untested. Since effective research must be based upon past knowledge, this step helps to eliminate the duplication of what has been done and provides useful hypothesis and helpful suggestions for progressive investigation.

The present study is in the area of philosophy and differs much from other allied areas in education. Basically, it mostly engages socio cultural thinking and logical analysis which is totally dominated by the mental exercise rather than with pragmatic world of tool technique and materials.

Basically, there can be two different types of philosophy and the other type of study deals with only one philosophy and tries to find out how it emerged or to what extent this philosophy can be formed into theories so that its practical aspects can be found out Although the present study belongs to the second category, the following review has taken into consideration both types of studies, as the nature of both studies is somewhat similar.

3.1.1 Importance of the Review of Related Literature

According to K.G.Desai (1997,p-306)”The Review of the related literature should be distinct for the development of the problem and for the insight of the research.”

The review of related literature provides the highlights of related references. The researcher has selected a particular topic for research but the researcher should know more about the selected topic and how past researches has been done, what are their objectives, which are other related dissertation, thesis at M.Ed and Ph.D level and so on therefore the researcher refers past researches and related literature like research, journals, , handbook etc When researcher refers related literature researcher guideline for the study and thus can check the work done by researcher and how the researcher can proceed ahead in research work.

3.1.2 Objectives of Reviewing the Related studies

To develop insight into the present study.

To get information related to the present study.

The review of the related literature for having theoretical and research based knowledge for the present study.

To derive important aspects related to study from varied references.

3.2 Review of Related Literature

Padhiyar Tejal (2011) studied “Educational Implications based on selected chapters of Ramcharitmanas.” Her objectives of the study were: (i) to study Ramcharitmanas, (ii) to know about the values presented in Ramcharitmanas (iii) to know about the value of human relation (iv) to know about the life skills presented in Ramcharitmanas (v) to know about the importance of nature for human beings. The major findings of her study were: (a) Chaupais of Ramcharitmanas are full of moral values. There are values like respect for elders, devotion to God, discipline, love, aesthetic sense, modesty etc; (b) Ramcharitmanas presents values but it is also full of poetical suggestion about leading life. It gives us suggestion about problem solving, decision making etc (c) Ramcharitmanas presents ideal characters in all fields. Goswami Tulsidas has skillfully shown how people should behave in different circumstances. Ramcharitmanas is indeed a role model for people as he shows how an ideal son, husband and king and brother should behave in different circumstances as Rama is an ideal king, husband and brother.

Padhiyar K (2011) conducted a study of the Educational Thinking of Gijubhai Badheka and Its Relevance in the Modern Context.

The findings were Gijubhai Badheka was of the view that students should be self disciplined. Controlling the students by applying external pressure and fear does not help attain good result. Emphasis on discipline by Gijubhai Badheka is very well relevant in modern context as discipline is the fruit, the valuable by product of cooperative work. This discipline cannot however be developed in a vacuum. Effort has to be put in by schools and teachers. The school must aim at strengthening the desire for cooperation and afford students opportunities to translate

it into practice. No amount of improvement and reconstruction in the education will bear much fruit if the school themselves are undermined by indiscipline.

Pankaj, A. (2010) has presented paper on “A poetical philosophy of Ramcharitmans”

The paper focused on the tree of the universe is endowed with the un-ending and manifold miseries of birth, old age, death and grief, it changes its nature every moment like magic, a mirage, or a castle in the air the universe is perceived, only to vanish ultimately, it is non eternal like tree. The ultimate root of the universe is the supreme Brahman ascertained by Vedanta, its seed is ignorance desire, action and the manifestation.

Mishra, Y. (2009) has presented paper on “Ethics, Indian Values and HRM aspects of RAMCHARIT MANAS (Sunderkand as a case study)”

The paper concluded that the Ramcharitmans is an idol epic that gives us a path to survive in the world with our self confidence and high moral values, and we certainly manage all the organizational activities according to their available principles. The HRM policies, strategies and talent hunting and utilization of the resources is used and adopted in Ramcharitmans with high standard.

Patel , D.(2004) conducted a study on “Educational implication as reflected in the works of Saint Kabir.”

The findings of the study were;

- The purpose of human life is to serve the mankind because service to man is of service to God basically creation and the creator are one.
- The world is transitory, painful and full of sorrow. The way to have happiness is to surrender oneself at the mercy of God.
- The world is a stage and we are all guest-artists coming to perform our role on it. Do it to the best of your capacity and learn the fruit of actions into the holy feet of the God.
- There is no need to believe in casteism , caste, creeds sex, differences are man -made, and one must see the potential divinity in all.

Prasuda V.(2003-04) conducted a study on Implementation of SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S educational philosophy in Ramkrishna Mission School.

Objectives:

- To study the educational philosophy of Swami Vivekananda.
- To study implication of Swamiji's educational philosophy in R.K.M SCHOOL in terms of school activities.

Major Findings:

- Teachers said that mere book learning is not education. They want that education by which character is formed.
- The school gives that education by which character formed strength of mind is increased and
- Intellect expanded and by which one can stand on one's feet.
- Religious education is vital part of school curriculum. The institute is very much successful to imparting religious education.
- One of the aims of school is to bring up the children in the traditional ideas of Hindu life and conducted and to give them training in self help.

Sharma, I.(1992) conducted a study on "A Critical evaluation of J.Krishnamurty's thought on Education."

The objectives of the study were

- To state and analyze, J.Krishnamurty's general philosophy.
- To state and analyse J.Krishnamurty's thought on education.
- To trace the, uniqueness in the education thoughts of J.krishnamurty,

The findings were;

J.Krishnamurty has denied the existence of permanent soul and hold the view that the ultimate reality is homeless immensity, akin to energy discovered by science. His views about religion and God are secular.

The school should be a home for the student where he can flower in the environment of fear, competition, comparison, ambition and reward. It should not create jealousy envy hatred and wars in the long run.

Dubey,M.(1980) conducted a study on “Educational philosophy in Upanishads”.

The objectives of the study were

- o To study the educational philosophy of the Upanisads,
- o To review the changes in the educational philosophy since the Upanisadic age,
- o To search for the solution of the educational problems in the light of the educational philosophy of the Upanisadic age, etc.

The study revealed that:

- The Upanisadic philosophy of education aimed at arousing the spiritual vision of human beings for living and active worldly life but all for attaining salvation. For this purpose, it aimed at developing character, truthfulness and proficiency in several worldly subjects for livelihood.
- Education was open for all caste creeds and women irrespective of their socio-economic status.
- The entire educational system was residential. The student had to reside with the teacher in gurukul as members of his family
- The curriculum mainly consisted of two parts, para-Vidya, opra-Vidya etc.

Mishra, K.(1979) conducted a study on “The Educational system during Upanisadic Age of India.” The objective of the study was to provide an account of the system of education as revealed in the Vedic Upanishades.

The major findings were

- During the pre-Upanisadic age men were attached to the worldly power and self whereas during karmas without their knowledge was waste of energy and hence they moved from Karma-Kanda to jnamkanda. The

knowledge of para and qpara vidya was considered to be more valuable than that of yajas.

- The Upanisadic education aimed at the acquisition on of the supreme knowledge, physical development, character building, spiritual development, education for culture and individual and social development. Through these aims the ultimate goal of the life immortality was achieved etc.

Charlu M.K (1971) Studied “*The Educational Philosophy of Bhagavata Geeta.*”

It was a study of educational implications of the philosophical aspects of Gita with a view to forming a basis for the reconstruction of a sound education system. It was hypothesized that (1) The Bhagavata Gita contains many ideas which could become the basis for a sound educational philosophy, (2) the educational philosophy of the Bhagavata Gita is quite significant for various aspect of educational system in India.

The methodology of research was library research, and the sources examined were the Bhagavata Gita with Bhashyas by Sankaracharya and Ramanujacharya, other commentaries on the Bhagavata Gita by various scholars, books on eastern and western philosophy along with research literature on the problem.

In the light of the study, deduction are made regarding meaning and aims of education, educative process, teacher-pupil relation and curriculum and evaluation education is found to mean the complete development of man through the four successive stages of life and the preparation for life. It connects an exercise of hand and heart with a view to developing a synthesis of matter and spirit. The educative process is a harmonious development of physique, intellect, social efficiency and character. Education according to the Bhagavata Gita consists in the co operation of both the teacher and the pupils in order to gain the knowledge of supreme. It involves practicing this knowledge in everyday life for the spiritual uplift of the self and the good of the society. The quality of the teacher and taught, not the time, place and material instrument, are the basic constitutions its problems as one subject. The Bhagavata Gita holds the thesis that knowledge and selfless actions are the instruments to serve God. True education is evaluated by the actions of the learner, not by his knowledge alone.

Divekar S.M. (1960) conducted a *Critical study of the Educational Philosophy of Upnishadas*.

Upnishadas with a view to search for solution of the radically wrong in the fundamentals of existing education in India. Analysis of the philosophy of Upnishadas with respect to knowledge aims and objectives of life and education, ethical and psychological bases of education, methods of teaching and learning, teacher-pupil relationship, curriculum and rebirth and its educational significance and so on. The Upnishadic teachers built their educational edifice on the sound foundation of the highest concept of knowledge about 'man' and his surroundings. If education is a process through which it is aimed at the development of inner consciousness of man. So as to lead man ultimate divine light. The curriculum consisted of 'Para' and 'Apara Vidyas' might satisfy the material need of man. According to the Upnishadas, the teacher or the Guru should be a man of character, integrity and developed personality so as to naturally become an idol and ideal for the pupils. The important features of educational philosophy in the Upnishadas might be incorporated in modern educational system in India. Some of these suggestions were: (1) Analysis of Shreyas and prayas is useful to frame clear objectives, (2) Curriculum for character has to be built upon Para and Apara Vidyas and (3) establishment of Ashramic school and university would bring better teaching and learning.

Book Reviews

Bhatia,K,K., Ranga Rao,N.V.(2003) said that through him (Tagore)India has given her message to mankind and his unique achievements in the fields of literature, philosophy, education and art have won imperishable fame for himself and have raised the status of India in the world. Through his work, Tagore mirrors the ancient wisdom of India, though reseeded according to the needs of modern India.

Bose,B.(2001)said that Gitanjali has been rightly praised by the world: it is the quintessence of Rabindranath and a miracle of translation .

Banerjee,a.(2000) has found that Rabindranath an educator has left indelible mark in the sphere of education, besides all other dimensions he has touched. His concept of education as the natural process of development of an individual in close communion with nature and society, objective of education as total unfolding of qualities dormant in child and exaltation of

personality through national and international educational centers, curricular organization around the variety of life, method of work and play of varied interest, school as the nerve centre of community life, rural re-construction scheme, echo the modern trend in educational in the world of thought and culture. He democratized and humanized educational system, brought about an unprecedented change in the very perspective of life. So Rabindranath will be remembered for ever with reverence and gratitude not only as the poet and writer of outstanding ability but also as an educator of excellence.

The miracle is not that so much has survived, but the poems are reborn in the process, the flowers bloom anew on a foreign soil. Denuded of the sensuous metrical arrangements of the original and the more than Swinburnian rhymes, they are more quiet in the English, more decile, the surrender more utter. The Song Offerings are more of song in the original and more of an offering in the English. In English we find a strange freshness, a beauty. There are moments when the translation surpasses the original.

Ghosh, J.C.(1994) in Bengali Literature, said there never was a poet more of the earth, more earthy, than Tagore. The beauty and splendor of the earth he has proudly and lovingly sung in many a poem. But he also loves the earth, perhaps all the more, for her poverty and imperfection. “Infinite wealth is not yours, my patient and dusky mother dust...I have seen your tender face and love your mournful dust, Mother Earth.” In some poems he suggests that his love of the earth is older than his life. Following the Hindu doctrine of the transmigration of soul he delves into the sub conscious recollections of his previous birth when in non human forms, he lived as a part of nature going before his present body was born. Those dim perception beyond memory tell him of the fundamental oneness of all life, human and non-human cause him both the joy of union with the earth and pang of separation from it.

3.3 Conclusion

Reviewing the related literature provides the researcher with the aspiration for undertaking study and laid a sound foundation for the investigation. The Researcher could gain the insight into Tagore's Philosophy: A Study from selected Sources.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4. Methodology

4.1 Introduction

After reviewing the available literature the next step was to plan out the present investigation. The present chapter gives a detail of plan and procedure followed during the study. Successful completion of any inquiry or investigation can result with proper usage of appropriate methodology. So research methodology plays a supportive role to enrich the study. Educational research is an advanced frontier of knowledge. It may also be described as an intellectual activity adding in orderly way to the existing store of knowledge. It is the study of scientific methods of educational process. The whole process of educational research requires support of method. Here present study is philosophical type of research. The researcher has selected philosophical research as her genre as she tried to find the philosophy reflected in the Gitanjali.

In the present study the researcher has tried to analyze contents of the poems and drive out philosophical implications.

4.2 Research Design

The researcher has undertaken a philosophical/ qualitative research utilizing the content analysis technique. Such type of research aims at determining and presenting truthfully the important facts about life, character and achievements of important educators. In Indian context one may study the contributions of Gandhiji, Tagore and other leading educationists and their influence on current educational practice and thoughts.

4.3 Methodology Adopted for the Study

Content analysis

“Content analysis is a research technique for making inference by systematically and objectively identifying specified characters or characteristics within a text.”

As the data for the present study are qualitative in nature, the entire study was carried out through content analysis method. Content analysis is a systematic examination of the recorded work for further classification. The process involves investigation, analyzing and interpreting.

In the present study researcher has selected poems of the Gitanjali. So that when the researcher read those poems researcher found various philosophies underlying in those poems.

4.4 Procedure for Content Analysis

The researcher has read the poems thoroughly. After reading many times the researcher finds some ideas and thoughts which are the key thoughts or the essence of the poem. Then the researcher recognized and categorized those poems of those philosophies. The researcher clubbed the poems according to the philosophical thoughts. The researcher read again and again those poems with philosophical thought and made final draft. Analysis and discussion of the poems have been presented in the next chapters.

CHAPTER 5

INTERPRETATION, DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

5.1 Content Analysis

Any philosophical research requires data analysis or content analysis to get results. The researcher has analyzed the content of The Gitanjali to get idea on Tagore's philosophy. As a source to get idea of Tagore's philosophy the researcher has selected poems from the Gitanjali. Yet looking at the qualitative nature of the study, the researcher needs to restrict and delimit her present study from the point of view of time constraint. First she read the poems of the Gitanjali and then she found out the universal ideas, philosophies of Rabindranath Tagore. Tagore begins his "Gitanjali" with a beautiful conceit of human life. The human soul is eternal whereas his body is perishable and mortal, but God wills it so that man is in reality immortal. His mortality is an illusion. The reality is that God blows his spirit into him and thus lives on ever after, though the body may die again and again. God is the supreme creator who inspires eternally melodious music out of the frail instrument that is man. The limited and bound human heart expands into limitless joy and poetry is created out of divine inspiration. Man is a frail vessel, a breakable being and he is a little being, but he is endowed with an endless, everlasting life as God continues to pour his blessings on man and God's gifts are in such bounty that it is never exhausted. When the researcher read the poems in The Gitanjali, it was found that the ideas, views and thoughts projected through the poems are in line with those laid down by idealistic philosophy of east as well as west. The major ideas in the poems which reflect idealistic philosophy have been presented and discussed below.

5.2. Idealism as Reflected in the Gitanjali

Idealism as reflected in different poems of the Gitanjali has been described in Table 5.1. Here idealism recognizes ideas, feelings and ideals more important than material objects and at the same time emphasizes that human development should be according to moral ethical and spiritual values so that he acquires knowledge of unity in diversity. Idealism holds that spiritual

world is more important than material world. The chief reason is that material world is destructible and mortal. Hence, it is untrue and myth. On the contrary, the spiritual world is a world of ideas, feelings and ideals the knowledge of which reveals the reality of mind and soul. Ideas as reflected in different poems of the Gitanjali are presented in Table 5. 1.

Table 5.1. Idealism as Reflected in Different Poems of the Gitanjali

Poem no	Lines	Ideas	Page
i	“At the immortal touch of thy hands my Little heart loses its limits in joys and gives Birth to utterance ineffable.”	Birth and rebirth	1
v	“Away from the sight of thy face my Heart knows no rest nor respite, and my work becomes an endless toil in a shoreless Sea of toil.”	Yearns for union with the divine	4
xii	“The traveler has to knock at every alien Door to come to his own, and one has to Wander through all the outer worlds to Reach the innermost shrine at the end”	Human soul in search for the divine	8
I	“Thou has made me endless, such is thy Pleasure.”	Human life is constantly renewed.	1
xiv	“Day by day thou art making me worthy Of the simple, great gifts that thou gavest To me unasked—this sky and the light, This body and the life and the mind— Saving me form perils of overmuch desire.”	Poet’s unending search for God	9
xv	“I am here to sing thee songs.In this hall Of thine I have a corner seat.”	Poet is content to occupy an insignificant corner	9
xvi	“I Have had my invitation to this world’s Festival, and thus my life has been blessed.”	This world is the great festival of God and here the poet has been assigned an humble part	10
xviii	“Clouds heap upon clouds and it darkens. Ah, love, why dost thou let me wait out- Side at the door all alone?”	Poet ‘s longing of the soul for reunion with the divine	11

xxii	“Today the morning has closed its eyes, Heedless of the insistent calls of the loud East wind, and a thick veil has been drawn over the ever wakeful blue sky.”	God is both within there but there is “Maya” in between the Illusion.	13
xxiii	“I can see nothing before me . I wonder Where lies thy path?”	In search of God	14
xxix	“I am ever busy building this wall all around, and as this Wall goes up into the sky day by day I Lose sight of my true being in its dark Shadow.”	Materialistic craze comes in the way of the soul’s spiritual quest.	17
xxxi	“Prisoner, tell me, who was it that Wrought this unbreakable chain?”	The finite can never satisfy the infinite within us	18
xxxviii	“All desires that Distract me, day and night, are false and Empty to the core.”	Emphasis on spiritualism than materialism	22
xxxix	“When desire blinds the mind with Delusion and dust, O thou holy one, thou Wakeful , come with thy light and thy Thunder.”	God can bring us back to the path of righteousness lead from darkness to light	23
xxxvi	“This is my prayer to thee, my lord- Strike, strike at the root of penury in my Heart. Give me the strength lightly to bear my joys and sorrows Give me the strength to make my love Fruitful in service.”	Prayer to remove spiritual poverty	21
xxxv	Where the mind is without fear	True freedom lies in a full and virtuous living	20
ix	“Leave all thy burdens on his hands who Can bear all, and never look behind in Regret”	Believer of God	6

Tagore was a philosopher, poet, Dramatist, teacher, essayist and painter of outstanding repute. His philosophy of life was based on the ideals of dedication patriotism and naturalism. Although he was an idealistic philosopher, but the thought of naturalis , pragmatism and individualism are also reflected in his philosophy. The values which contributed a lot towards enrichment of life are discussed in the following section.

After reading the above mentioned poems the Researcher drew an insight that Tagore believed, man should realize the “Ultimate truth which will liberate him from the worldly lodged , Experience according to him is within the world of illusion (Maya) . He thought that the world is the place of both truth and illusion (Maya).

In Tagore’s view man is born with enormous surplus from which is excess of his physical need. This surplus is the limit less potentiality of human personality and creativity. In this lies the infinite future of man. The surplus potentiality manifests itself in man’s religious spiritual and moral activities. As an idealist he was an ardent supporter of truth, virtues and values. According to Tagore, “By art man can experience the wholeness of life. The fine arts were nothing but interacted and spiritual disciplines. He said Bhakti can spiritualize Karma.

“At the immortal touch of thy hands my

Little heart loses its limits in joys and gives

Birth to utterance ineffable.”

“Away from the sight of thy face my

Heart knows no rest nor respite, and my

work becomes an endless toil in a shoreless Sea of toil.”

That means his heart is always yearning after Divine union and in the absence of divine presence, his work becomes an endless drudgery.

In poem no XII , Tagore says that the individual soul is on its journey to seek the universal soul. It started its career at the dawn of creation and traveled for centuries through stars and planets. But God is everywhere and is imminent in all things. The soul is a traveler and has to knock at every door but at last finds the kingdom of God within it. The poet realized the presence of god in the innermost depths of his heart.

“The traveler has to knock at every alien

Door to come to his own, and one has to

Wander through all the outer worlds to

Reach the innermost shrine at the end”

In poem no XIII the poet expresses his longing to meet the Divine and sings the song of dedication. The days have been spent in stringing and unstringing his instrument but it is not yet in tune to produce perfect mercy.

“I have spent my days in stringing and unstringing my instrument”

and

“The leveling day has passed in”.

To a true poet poem comes as a blessing granted after numerous prayers have been offered at the altar of the supreme being Gitanjali is an embodiment of these sorrel at the fact of the divine given of inspiration .While praying we do not always plead for something .Sometimes we praise our god and sometimes we just share our sorrows and joys as if talking to a friend. At other times we simply meditate in order to compose our minds. Prayers are means to achieve inner harmony. The quality of poetry depends upon the intensity of this prayer. Tagore’s Gitanjali is indent of this prayers, a poet’s prayers and manifests in itself that harmony which the poet has experienced .A proper prayer is that which direct communion with supreme being .It is an extremely personal experience. Therefore, the puttee maceration inspiration experienced by a poet is also truly personal experience which one can consider as the benefit of prayer.

In the Ramayana we do see how Ravana through constant utterance of prayers wins the favor of lord Shiva. We can consider a poet too to be like that who certainly prays for inspiration and when the Masco are convinced of his sincerity the wish is granted .Since we are considering Gitanjali to be the poet’s prayer, we must understand that it is something which thawed poet has under gone singularly. The Tapasya (spiritual endeavour) of the poet cannot be therefore understood by all. One must have experience that same to be able to interpolate exactly as to what the poet is saying let an attempt is being made here to interpret the Gitanjali from the point of view of the poet’s various experience and the poet’s qualities that the song exhibits.

The very opening line of Gitanjali reflects the inner harmony that the poet has experienced. The words are an outburst endeavoring to articulate the intense pleasure that the poet's experience has conferred upon him.

“Thou hast made me endless such is thy pleasure.”

‘Thy ‘here become poet’s inspiration itself and ‘thou ‘the one who inspires. Anyone is bound to be ecstatic if his prayers are answered. We all the poet here starting at the peak of inspiration. In the life of very genuine poet such a moment does occur when he experience endlessness.

“Spreading his seat on the floor, but the lamp has not been lit and I cannot ask him into my house”

In poem no XIV poet’s desires are an impediment in the realization of god. God refuses to grant all his worldly desires so that the soul may drawn away from worldly objects and may sick the divine alone.

“Day by Day desire”

“I am here to sing Seat”

XV where the poet says he has come to this world only to sing songs. He cannot do any useful activity.

The same tint of idealism are found in the following poems.

“I Have had my in invitation to this world’s festival” XVI

And

“Clouds heap up that I hope” XVIII

In Poem No XXII

**“Today the morning has closed its eyes,
Heedless of the insistent calls of the loud
East wind, and a thick veil has been drawn
Over the ever wakeful blue sky.” XXII**

Tagore imagines that in the month of the raging July when the sky is covered with clouds and the east wind blows loudly and the street are all lonely and deserted it is the Divine alone his lord and lover who makes along the desired street in perfect silence. The poet says that the gates of other house are closed but not his own. He has kept them open for his friend and lover who is the Divine Master. The poet appears to him not to pass by but to bless him with his divine presence for he is waiting for Him with the gates open in his house.

Idealism gives full support to the principle of unity in Diversity. They believe that implicit in all the diversity is an essential unity. This implicit unifying factor is of spiritual nature. This may be called Universal Consciousness or Divinity. This underlying divine force maintains the existence and working of all entities. Idealists call this power as God, the supreme force which is omnipotent and omnipresent. Relaxation of this supreme force is one's 'self' is to attain divine and fullest development of personality which may be called spiritual fulfillment. Prof. H.N.Horne has rightly remarked – An Idealism philosophy of education, then is an account of man finding himself as an internal part of universe mind.

This sense of Idealistic belief is found in poem no XXIII

**“I can see nothing
Before me; I wonder
Where lies my friend. XXIII**

Idealists give much importance to the self of the individual. Hence they insist upon the fullest development of the personality of an individual. According to them the development of personality means achievement of 'Perfection'. Plato might say that each individual has an ideal self. He tries to develop that ideal 'self' more and more. This self realization is in the true sense of the term. It may be noted that self realization means knowledge of the 'self' or soul. This self realization can only be achieved in society. Hence development of social qualities is very essential for self realization as its expression itself in the form of love, sympathy, fellow-feeling and co-operation for the good of all and no discrimination among human beings on any basis of caste, creed, section, race or states etc. In short Idealism believes in the welfare of whole human community. J.S. Ross is right when he says- "Thus, the grandeur and worth of human life at its best are emphasized by Idealism. Human personality is of supreme value and constitutes the noblest work of God."

This alone theme is expressed in the poem:

"I am ever busy building

This wall all around and as this

Wall goes up into the sky day by day I

Lose sight of my true being in its dark

Shadow" . XXIX

To Idealist, man is more important than material nature. It is because man can think and experience about material object and material phenomena. Hence the thinker or one who experiences is more important than the object or phenomenal experience. Man is endowed with intelligence and a sense of discrimination. Thus he is not a slave of moulds and transforms the environment for his own good and welfare of the society. In short he creates his own world of virtue and his creativity achieves higher and higher length of art in many areas. The following words speak this truth.

“Prisoner, tell me , who was it that bound

You?

It was my master, said the prisoner”. ... XXXI

and

“All desires that

Distract me day and night, are false and

Empty to the core.”....XXXVIII

and

“When desire blends the mind with delusion

And dust, O thou holy one, thou

Wakeful, come with thy light and thy

Thunder.” XXXIX

Rabindranath Tagore asserts that to develop spiritual values in the individual's, pursuit of highest ideals namely- Truth, Beauty and Goodness should be encouraged more and more. The more an individual realize these ideals, the more spiritually developed he will become. Hence, education should strive its utmost in developing the child morally and spirituality so that he achieves self realization.

This idea can be found in

“This is my prayer to thee, my lord –

Strike, strike at the root of penury in my heart.

Give me the strength lightly to bear my

Joys and sorrows.” ...XXXVI

In the inspiring poem (XXXV), the poet prays to God for the spiritual emancipation of his country. True freedom lies in a full and virtuous living. Therefore the poet prays to God that his countrymen may be fearless, truthful, rational, good, noble and generous. Knowledge should be free and there should be no divisions of caste, creed or nationality. It is to be noted that the “heaven of freedom” for which the poet prays is not a heaven of political and economical freedom but of spiritual freedom, freedom from fear narrow-mindedness and evil desires.

“Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high

Where knowledge is free;

Where the world has not been broken up into

Fragments by narrow domestic walls;”

God, for Tagore, is the eternal, all pervasive, immanent, inscrutable, inevitable, omnipresent, omnipotent, kind and affectionate spirit. He fills His creation with fresh life. Mankind is like a flute through which He sings His eternal songs. He is the musician of musicians. He is the mother, and He is the father, the Absolute, as Shakti and Shiva are inseparable. God helps everyone. He is the bearer of our burdens. Tagore says:

**“Leave all thy burdens on his hands who can bear all, and never look behind in
regret.” IX**

He keeps the company with the companionless amongst the humble folk. The poorest the lowest and the lost are dearer to him than anyone else. The rich and the bourgeois are far removed from God because of their artificial living. That is why the Bible says:

“Blessed are the pure for they shall see God.” Again:

“He is above all, through all and in all.”

And Tagore says:

“And there rest thy feet where live the poorest, and lowliest, and lost.” X

God is within man, He dwells in Nature. The worldly pomp and the growing ego becomes a great wall that makes one lose sight of one's true being within. According to Vedanta the root cause of everything that binds a man is ego. The pure, honest and humble heart can achieve his spiritual bliss. He grants perfect freedom to the persons. He loves and continues to love them even if they do not pray to Him or keep Him in their hearts. God is won over easily by love and not by scholarship or austere practices. The king of all kings is the nest in which man's soul develops. He is the one, the ruler, the internal *Atman* of all beings.

“He it is, the innermost one, awakens my being with his deep hidden touches”.

Here, Mysticism, The term can be defined as the belief in the existence of state of reality hidden from ordinary human understanding. Mysticism is gaining direct communion with God through prayer and meditation. The mystic feels that the supreme soul or God is one and the same but it assumes different forms. He believes that “all things in the visible world are but forms and manifestations of the one Divine Life, and that these phenomena are changing and temporary; while the soul that informs them is eternal.” A mystic is thoroughly a traditional. He distrusts reason and intellect the world of sense and perception has no meaning for him. A mystic believes that human soul is eternal. It is the body which dies; the soul lives on. Death for him is merely a transformation or the only gateway to the eternal. The soul comes to the world from the Eternal and assumes a particular form; after death it still lives on in the Eternal and may assume some different form. This was also the faith of Plato, and this has always been the faith of mystics. It is also the basis of Tagore's view of life.

Tagore's mysticism is slightly different from the above. He is not a thorough-going mystic, for he does not completely distrust reason and sense perception. Moreover, Tagore's mysticism has certain peculiar features. Unlike most other mystics Tagore does not advocate a dissociation from everyday life. On the other hand, he is full of joy of living. He does not reject sense experience but makes it a medium of spiritual experience. Nor is Tagore the least inclined towards asceticism. Tagore's mysticism is thus counter balanced and kept in check by his intense humanism. Similarly his realistic tendency also restrains his mystic learning. Thus mysticism is only one strand in his viewpoint. However, in certain crucial aspects Tagore subscribes fully to

the mystical approach. The following poems in the “Gitanjali” express his mysticism or spiritualism or devotionism.

5.3 Spiritualism or Devotionalism or Mysticism as Reflected in the Gitanjali

Spiritualism or devotionism as reflected in various poems of the Gitanjali is referred in Table 2

Table 5.2 Spiritualism as Reflected in Various Poems

Poem no	Lines	Ideas	Page no
XCVI	When I go from hence let this be my parting word, That what I have seen is unsurpassable.	Joy and ultimate bliss	63
XCVII	When my play was with thee I never questiond who thou wert. I knew nor shyness nor fear, my life was boisterous.	Friendly relation with God	64
XCVIII	I will deck thee with trophies, garlands of my defeat. It is never in my power to escape unconquered.	God is the conqueror	64
XCIX	When I give up the helm I know that the time has come for thee to take it. What there is to do will be instantly done? Vain is this struggle.	Earthly existence as sea voyage	65
C	I dive down into the depth of the ocean of forms, hoping to gain the perfect pearl of the formless.	Universe as ocean full of myriad forms	66
CI	Ever in my life have I sought thee with my songs? It was they who led me from door to door, and with them have I felt about me, searching and touching my world.	The poet has sought the Divene,his maker through songs	66
CII	“I boasted among men that I had known you. They see your pictures in all works of mine. They come and ask me, ‘Who is He ?’ I know not how to answer them. I	Mystic realization of GOD	67

	say, 'Indeed, I cannot tell.' They blame me and they go away in scorn. And you sit there smiling"		
CIII	In one salutation to thee, my God, let all my senses spread out and touch this world at thy feet.	Makes an offering of all at the feet of the Divine	67

Another central theme of Gitanjali is th devotion. As the name of the book suggests that these songs are an offering to the Supreme, inscrutable one. Each flower of beautiful lyric is a symbol of love pure devotion towards the Eternal one. The constant and intense yearning of poet, the individual soul for the reunion with the Infinite makes Gitanjali, a mighty piece of prayer, pleading and exaltation. It is a work in which poetry aspires to a condition of prayer. The lyric has a mantric quality, as if they were hymns chanted by a true devotee to his maker, the Supreme.

The following poems give the ideas of Tagore's devotionism.

The poet says

When I go from hence let this be my parting word,

That what I have seen is unsurpassable. XCVI

At the time of his departure from this world, the poet gives his last message to his fellowmen. The joy and bliss of what he has experienced in this world is matchless. He cannot describe it in words. Here, in this world he has enjoyed the sweet honey of the lotus of divine love which suffuses the creation and which is vast and all-pervasive like ocean. He has experienced the bliss of divine love in this life, and this is his parting message to the world.

This creation is the *Lila* of God where He acts many parts and assumes many forms. (In Tagore's philosophy the world is a stage not only for man but also for God. Only His play is infinite and eternal, while that of man is momentary.) In the glory and splendour of the myriad

forms of the universe, he has seen the reflection of the greatness and glory of God who is formless and infinite. He has experienced the pleasure of His touch and his whole body has been thrilled by it. After experiencing such ineffable bliss he is content to die. This is his message at the moment of his death.

“WHEN my play was with thee I never questioned who thou wert. I knew nor shyness nor fear, my life was boisterous.” XCVII

Rabindranath explains that the creation is God’s *Lila*, and here the divine plays with Man and Man play with Him. During the greater part of his life, he plays with Him as with a friend and equal, without shyness or fear. He was wild with joy in this play, and never tried to find out who his playmate was. Early in the morning the divine playmate would call him, and in their play they would run from glade to glade. He never cared to find out the meaning of the songs, he heard his divine playmate singing to him. In other words, there were times when he was conscious of divine presence but did not realize the significance of such moments. Only he experienced ineffable bliss, and his heart danced with joy.

It is only towards the close of his life that he has realized who his playmate was. The truth has dawned upon him quite late in life. Now he realizes, that it was God, the king, before whom all creation including the stars and the sky bows down its head.

Truth about God, and man’s relation with Him, is realized only late in life. Earlier there might be moments of divine inspiration, flashes of illumination, but their full significance is not realized.

“I will deck thee with trophies, garlands of my defeat.

It is never in my power to escape unconquered.” CVIII

In this lyric God is the conqueror and the poet is the conquered. Like a defeated person, he will lay all that he possesses at the feet of his victor. He will give up all his pride, all his egoism, and his soul breaking free from the bondage of the body, will weep out all its suffering and agony at the feet of his Lord and Master. At last the lotus of God’s heart will open out like a flower, and

he will drink from it the nectar of divine love and mercy. At last, God will bless him with His love and mercy.

At last the day will come, when God will look upon him with love and call to him from His seat in the high heavens above. He will cheerfully welcome Death and go to His feet gladly. Death is welcome to the poet, for it is only in Death than the Human is reunited with the super-human.

In the following poem he says----

“When I give up the helm I know that the time has come for thee to take it.

What there is to do will be instantly done. Vain is this struggle.” XCIX

Earthly existence is here compared to a sea-voyage. Until now the poet himself was the pilot of the ship, but now he gives over its control to the Divine. He will no longer struggle in vain against His will. He will place himself entirely in His hands, and be resigned to His will. He will be quite satisfied with his place in life, and aspire to no higher one. He has realized that man is helpless before the will of God and all his efforts are in vain. Busy with worldly activity, with the earning of worldly wealth, man forgets the needs of the spirit. The poet will not do so any more. He will wait patiently for the arrival of his master, and welcome Him cheerfully whenever He chooses to come. The poet’s life is now drawing to a close and he prepares himself for death. He will welcome it when it comes.

“I dive down into the depth of the ocean of forms, hoping to gain the perfect pearl of the formless.” C

The poet compares this universe to an ocean full of myriad forms, In the depth of this ocean lies a perfectly beautiful pearl, which is God, the Infinite. All his life he has been searching for this pearl, the Infinite. In search of it he has sailed from one side of the ocean to the other and has been tossed about by the waves.

But now the days are passed when he enjoyed being tossed about by the waves. Now he is eager to die and so enter the sea of Eternity. In that fathomless sea of Eternity, in the great audience hall of the Infinite, there is played the divine music, and there he will take this harp of his life. When he has tuned it to divine music, he will offer it at the feet of the Eternal silence.

The lyric is remarkable for its picturesque images following in quick succession. God is compared to a 'perfect pearl', this universe to an 'ocean of forms', earthly existence to a 'weather-beaten boat' and then to a 'harp'. By the use of this vivid, concrete imagery the poet conveys his mystic longing for reunion with the Infinite which he hopes to realize through death.

“Ever in my life have I sought thee with my songs.

**It was they who led me from door to door, and with them have I felt about me, searching
and touching my world.” CI**

The poet says that all his life he has sought the Divine, his Maker, through his songs. He has used them in the service of his Maker. Whatever he has learned, and whatever experience, of pleasure or of pain, he has acquired, has been acquired through his songs. It is through them he has acquired many pearls of wisdom, and it is through them that he has seen into the heart of things.

The poet hopes that at last his songs would lead him to the gates of the palace of the Divine which is his destination, and which will be the end of his journey. The poet hopes to have a mystic reunion with God through his songs.

In poem no----

**“I boasted among men that I had known you. They see your pictures in all works of mine.
They come and ask me, ‘Who is He ?’ I know not how to answer them. I say, ‘Indeed, I
cannot tell.’ They blame me and they go away in scorn. And you sit there smiling.” CII**

The poet has had a mystic realization of God. He has tried to describe Him by drawing pictures of Him in his songs. He has sung songs of His greatness and glory which he has hoped will last forever. But when people have asked him to explain his meaning, he has failed to do so. This is so because the presence of God can be experienced through absolute faith, but such mystic

experiences cannot be conveyed through words. People look down upon mystics with contempt, because they cannot communicate their feelings, but God loves them, for they are His true devotees. He comes and sits by them, while the people of the world go away in contempt.

“In one salutation to thee, my God, let all my senses spread out and touch this world at thy feet.” CIII

This is one of the most moving lyrics of *The Gitanjali* or song-offering. The poet seized with absolute contentment, makes an offering of all that he has at the feet of the divine. He conveys a sense of his final and absolute surrender through a number of graphic images. Just as a cloud in July, full of rain, bends over the world and sheds its rain, so also he will bend low at the door of the divine, and offer all that he has at His feet. Just as stream flows into the sea, so also all his songs will unite to form a single stream which will flow into the Eternal sea. In this way will he offer all his songs to the divine. Just as the homesick cranes fly to their nests in the mountains, so also his life will fly to the Eternal home and have rest there, just as cranes have rest in their mountain nest.

This fine lyric is the poet's total offering of himself, and of all that he has, at the feet of the Supreme. It is thus a fitting conclusion to the poet's "song-offering".

Yeats was not wrong to see large religious element in Tagore's writing. He certainly had interesting and arresting things to say about life and death. Susan Owen, the another of Wilfred Owen, wrote to Rabindranath 1920 , describing her last conversation with her life. Wilfred said good bye with "those wonderful word of yours-beginning at 'when I go from hence let this be my parting word "when Wellford's pocket notebook was returns to his mother, she found "these words written in his dear writing-with your name beneath."

The idea of fearless relationship with God can be found in many of Tagore's religious writings, including the poem of the 'Gitanjali' from India's diverse religious traditions he drew many ideas, both from ancient texts and from popular piety. But "The bright pebbly eye of the Theosophists" do not state out of his verse. Despite the arches language of the original translation of Gitanjali which did not .I believe help to preserve the simplicity the original its elementary humanity comes through more clearly than any comes and intense spirituality.

“Leave this chanting and signing....beads”

An ambiguity about religious experience is central to many of Tagore's devotional poems and makes them appeal to readers of their beliefs, but excessively detailed interpretation can ruinously strip away that ambiguity. This applies particularly to his many poems which combine images of human love and those of pious devotion

Tagore and his India by Amartya Sen published in Mukto-Mona on Sep-30, 2005

(Idealism: The material world is nothing more than an outward manifestation of Ultimate reality)

The material world is mortal and changing. Ultimate reality which consists of ideals and values is eternal and unchanging. This echoes in his poem-

“This frail vessel thou emptiest.....life....Hence the poet believes in truth and rebirth.

The concept of God in the Gitanjali consists of several facts of divinity. He is the giver of the rebirths, the maker of the beauty of nature which is truly perceived by the poets, he is the 'friend' and the 'lord' of the humans, he is inaccessible to us, he is the giver of 'truth' and 'reason' he can be realized through our actions, he resides in the heart of the devotee, he recognizes the simple living, he loves to create and finds enjoyment in doing so he is mystically ultimate he can be caught with keen intuition, he is beautiful, he is invisible, he has been associated with love even in death, he is tongueless but can be felt by us, he has the nature to elude grasp. This song divine by way of the celebrated offering has been invested with high voltage mystical qualities. The poet anticipates the divine merger at the end of the physical existence. He feels that the supreme one had been coming since long. The entire existence of the poet is saturated with the presence of the divine. He is the first of all light and all forms. Death would not be a loss but a gain.

The poet is usually aware of God, It comes with a "Sudden Sight" to the devotee. He is pretty awesome too." The world with eyes bent upon thy feet stand in awe with all its silent stars". It is the mystic's vision, the mystic of the devotional tribe. To such a being the poet offers obedience through the vivid mystic symbols. The desire of the mystic is conveyed to us finally.

“In one salutation to my God, let all my sense spread out and touch this world at thy feet.”

Thus Tagore believes in the spiritual bliss, divine inspiration and reunion of soul with God. He says that the ultimate aim of life is to seek a merging with the divine spirit. That is why the theme of a spiritual quest is so recurrent in Tagore’s poetry. The mystic’s conception of ultimate bliss is union with God, which is also the Indian conception of nirvana. The human soul craves for reunion, as it is a part of God, separated from the infinite seeking for re-union. Tagore believes that the quest for God can be completed only after the divine inspiration. He always wait for His son, man to surrender Him to this totality. The spiritual illumination makes a man realize His presence and truth about Him. He is affectionate as a mother, caring as a father, a compassionate friend and a guide who leads man in his spiritual voyage to the sea of eternity.

“I must launch out by boat”

“Early in the day it was whispered that

We should sail in a boat....Only thou and?”

God and man has a relation of love and devotion rather than fear. The human soul is part of Divine Spirit but it is finite. Its fulfillment therefore has in its fusion with the Infinite. According to Tagore the world of Nature is not an illusion but a medium for achieving oneness with the Infinite. His philosophy reconciles the two opposites of body and spirit and all the related ideas. He advocates a similar co-existence and harmony between illusion and reality, death and life which alternate to form a rhythmic process. Evil and god, imperfection and perfection also are similarly related. Truth and Beauty are only facets of the Infinite. The following lines from the *Gitanjali* contain an expression of Tagore’s mystical belief in the Infinite which is present in the finite and is yet apart from it:

“Where dost thou stand behind them all, my lover, hiding thyself in the shadows?

They push these and pass these by on the duty roads, taking thee for naught. I wait

here weary hours spreading my offerings for thee, while passersby come and take

my flowers one by one, and my basket is nearly empty.

Oh how indeed could I tell them that for thee I wait, and that thou has promised to come. How could I utter for shame that I keep for my dowry this poverty. An, I hug this pride in the secret of my heart.”

Besides being an Idealist to the core, some reflections of naturalistic philosophy are also mirrored in the poems of Gitanjali. Apart from advocating self realization and reunion with God as ultimate aim of life, Tagore has also spread the love for nature, human joy, freedom as well as unity and brotherhood. All these have been discussed as under---

5.4 Naturalism as Reflected in the Gitanjali

Many of the images and symbols of Tagore are taken from the nature itself. Everyday, commonplace objects and phenomena are constantly drawn upon by him to communicate highly abstract religious truths. There is a surprising wealth and abundance of nature imagery and illustration in the Gitanjali alone.

Naturalism as reflected in the various poems of the Gitanjali is referred in the Table 3

Table 5.3 Naturalism as Reflected in the “Gitanjali”

Poem no	lines	Ideas	Page no
LXXIII	“Thy gifts to us mortals fulfil all our needs and yet run back to thee undiminished.”	Life in harmony with nature	49
LIX	“Light, my light, the world filling light, the eye kissing light, heart sweetening light!”	Immortal love, care affection, human joy in the midst of nature	38
XXXV	“Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high; Where knowledge is free; Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls;	Feeling of patriotism in the midst of nature Freedom to the individual from unnecessary bonding.	20
LXXVIII	“Vain is this seeking! Unbroken perfection is over all!”	Optimism	52
XLVII	“The sky is overcast with clouds and	Presence of natural	28

	the rain is ceaseless. I know not what this is that steers within me,-I know not its meaning.”	objects	
X	“And there rest thy feet where live the poorest, and lowliest, and lost.”	God dwells in nature	6

Tagore said nature is the great teacher which is not hostile to man. Nature is kind generous and benevolent like mother. In his view education diverted from nature has brought harm to young children. Man should develop his relation with the nature as his fellowmen.

The beautiful flowers are blooming in the poems of Tagore. The leaves are dancing with the rejoicing spirit of mankind. The warm and affectionate light is scattering everywhere. Nature, God and man, all three have an intimate relationship. Nature is an outer manifestation of God. It is an aspect of Almighty who expresses himself in Nature and its myriad forms. The beauty of Nature dwells in every poem. He is a great river poet and a great poet of the Bengali seasons. The forms, the colours, the sounds, the scents of Nature fascinate him, and he communicates his own joy in the manifold beauties of Nature to his readers. He observes accurately and describes minutely and precisely.

**“Today the summer has come at my window with it sighs and murmurs;
and the bees are plying their minstrelsy at the court of the flowering grove.”**

“The sun rose to the mid sky ad doves cooed in the shade.

Withered leaves danced and whiled in the hot air of noon.”

Vivid and colourful word pictures of nature’s beauty are scattered all up and down his lyrics. His love of nature is all comprehensive and realistic; like Words worth he is not unaware of Nature red in “tooth and claw”. He is a poet both of the pleasant and harsh, ugly moods of Nature. Two of the most graphic pictures of Nature’s terrible mood-one of a land storm and the other of a sea storm-come from his pen. The Nature is also a source of calm and spirituality that is why “The repose of the sun-embroidered green gloom slowly spread over the heart of poet and forgetting everything he “surrendered his mind without struggle to the maze of shadows and

songs.” And this is the Nature who takes him close to the Divine spirit, in whose search all his companions hurried to their way, leaving poet behind with a laugh and scorn.

“At last when I woke from my slumber and opened my eyes, I saw thee standing by me, flooding my sleep with thy smile”.

He is also a great myth maker, and in this respect Shelley alone is his equal. In his poetry, the objects and phenomena of Nature are constantly spoken of as human beings and given human attributes.

“There comes the morning with the golden basket in her right hand bearing the wreath of beauty, silently to crown the earth.”

“Thy sunbeam comes upon this earth of mine with arms outstretched and stands at my door the livelong day...”

To Tagore life is harmony, and the law or principle which governs its rhythms is the principal of love and joy. And the love dwells everywhere as His Omnipresence. Like man, Nature is also one of the myriad notes, His creation, the source of joy and His love for mankind. The river, flower, sun, moon, stars, trees, leaves all symbolize His love for mankind. These are the token of love of God for man. That is why:

(Poem LXXV)

“Thy gifts to us mortals fulfill all our needs and yet run back to thee undiminished.”

The rivers run through villages and wind at the end to wash His feet. The flowers sweeten the air and offer themselves to Him. The world thus gets so many benefits in Nature from God. The morning with the ‘golden basket’ in her right hand, the sunbeams, ‘the golden light’ all is wrapped with His love ‘comes unto the mankind’. Tagore feels His immortal love, care, affection and human joy in the light coming from His heavenly abode.

(Poem LX)

“Light, my light, the world filling light, the eye kissing light, heart sweetening light!”

This light that dances upon the leaves and the joy that engulfs the whole world in laughter is nothing but His love. Nature and God are, in the Vedantic terminology, Prakriti and Purusha, the two aspects of Absolute. Meditation on Nature or an aspect of Nature leads to realization of God. About the Gayatri Tagore said:

“The text of our everyday meditation is the Gayatri, a verse which is considered to be the epitome of all the Vedas. By its help we try to realize the essential unity of world with the conscious soul of man. We learn to-perceive the unity held together by the one eternal spirit whose power creates the earth, the sky, and the stars, and at the same time irradiates our minds with the light of a consciousness that moves and exists in an unbroken continuity with the outer world.” Nature, according to Tagore, is the melody of God. It ennobles man. Man is ultimately bound with nature.

Shri Khanolkar narrates one incident which he calls the turning point in Tagore’s life: One morning he was sitting in the veranda with his face to the east, he beheld an extraordinary sight just before him, the sun was climbing inch by inch, through the topmost sprays of the thickly leaved trees in the free school compound at the further end of the road. Masses of golden light streamed from the foliage. As Tagore gazed wide-eyed, it was as though a curtain was ripped aside to show an altogether different scene. The familiar pattern of the world was transformed and filled with a wondrous radiance. On every hand, his eyes met wave upon wave of beauty and happiness. Was he experiencing in himself the scripture’s “Peace and love of God-in-man which shines after the form of bliss immortal? With that brilliance flooding the entire poet’s heart the layers of grief and despair were stripped away, and waves of delight and loveliness ripple through his innermost being”. This was a turning point in his life the whole attitude to life was changed at once. He left an inner conviction that the world had “risen from a sea of joy, was floating in a sea of joy and would subside again” in sea of joy. From there onwards he was free from any kind of grief. Tagore’s Nature is not just an imaginary country in a fairyland. It is the “embodied joy of the Infinite.” Friendship, love and compassion are life’s necessities. In order to know God we need not turn away from life and world. The bridge by which we can pass from the imperfect to the perfect is love.

God, for Tagore, is the eternal, all pervasive, immanent, inscrutable, inevitable, omnipresent, omnipotent, kind and affectionate spirit. He fills His creation with fresh life. Mankind is like a flute through which He sings His eternal songs. He is the musician of musicians. He is the mother, and He is the father, the Absolute, as Shakti and Shiva are inseparable. God helps everyone. He is the bearer of our burdens. Tagore says:

“Leave all thy burdens on his hands who can bear all, and never look behind in regret.” (IX)

He keeps the company with the companionless amongst the humble folk. The poorest the lowest and the lost are dearer to Him than anyone else.

The rich and the bourgeois are far removed from God because of their artificial living. The is why the Bible says:

“Blessed are the pure for they shall see God.” Again:

“He is above all, through all and in all.”

And Tagore says:

“And there rest thy feet where live the poorest, and lowliest, and lost.” X

God is within man, He dwells in Nature. The worldly pomp and the growing ego becomes a great wall that makes one lose sight of one's true being within. According to Vedanta the root cause of everything that binds a man is ego. The pure, honest and humble heart can achieve his spiritual bliss. He grants perfect freedom to the persons. He loves and continues to love them even if they do not pray to Him or keep Him in their hearts. God is won over easily by love and not by scholarship or austere practices. The king of all kings is the nest in which man's soul develops. He is the one, the ruler, the internal *Atman* of all beings.

“He it is, the innermost one, awakens my being with his deep hidden touches”.

Tagore believes in oneness of man and nature. For this reason he does not keep his own identity apart from that of nature but mingles freely with it and does not even mind losing his own identity in that of nature. Tagore in one of the poems in the Gitanjali, speaks of life as an

invitation to this world festival. He has found a blessing in enjoying the sights and sounds of this festival. He considers his own role at this festival to have been that of playing his role faithfully by being shown the face of God and being allowed to make his solution to his in silence. Tagore merges in nature not only as man but also as poet, for it is Nature which is an inexhaustible source of poetic images for him, on which he draws more frequently than any other poet.

Thus, on analyzing the content of the poems in the Gitanjali, it is quite evident that it is the philosophical thoughts of 'Idealism' that are reflected along with 'Naturalism'.

As far as relevance of Tagore's philosophical thoughts in the present era are concerned, they are still relevant. When the society is drifting blindly towards materialism by illogically following westernization it has become imperative to make people understand the significance of immortal values of truth, beauty and goodness. These days when the people are resenting to cut throat competition, there is increase in violence, incivility, communal attacks the thoughts of Tagore pertaining to harmony, peace and brotherhood can only bring the people on the right track. The mental health of people which is being affected by increased pressure at home and at work place, self realization of one's potential and planning in harmony can help people maintain balance in their lives. Yoga, meditation and belief and faith in the supreme power can help them bring solace in their life. The thoughts of Tagore can help search true happiness which lies within an individual and that is contentment and through virtuous living. His thoughts spread the message of love, care and affection amongst the people. Even the patriotic feeling which he has tried to inculcate in individuals needs to be integrated in the mental scheme of individuals. Thus, he has rightly prophesied the conversion of inborn nature into spiritual nature wherein the individual realizes his potentials and then leads a life in harmony and peace and for this self realization he has propagated that freedom should be given to the individual.

5.5 Conclusion and Implications

After studying the poems of the Gitanjali, it was found that they had shades of Idealistic and Naturalistic philosophy. However, prominently Idealism was reflected in the poems wherein Rabindranath Tagore has expressed that mind, idea, spirit or self is the reality. He has emphasized the reality and worth of individual people, moral values and human freedom. Therefore he has said that the main aim of life is exaltation of personality or self realization and

this can come when the inborn nature is converted into spiritual nature. Politeness, modesty, liberty, justice, honesty, truth and integrity are some of the values he feels are important for any individual.

On the basis of the analysis carried out and mentioned in the previous chapter and above conclusions drawn, many educational implications can also be drawn out from Tagore's philosophical thoughts. The major contribution of Tagore's philosophy can be considered towards the aims of education. Self realization is the main aim of education which is true in the present era also. His philosophical thoughts have laid emphasis on moral education through truth, beauty and goodness. They also promote universal education. His thoughts stimulate the creative energies of the child and also the high ideals of life can be encouraged in the pupils. His thoughts advocate self discipline which leads to full development. Freedom of the child has also been advocated by Tagore. The child according to Tagore should be left free to structure his own plans, activities, observations and experiences. It is on these thoughts that constructivism is being followed in the present education system. Development of individuality, self expression and preservation of racial heritage through education are some of the merits which need to make their permanent place in our education system and for this to happen the development of rationality and intelligence is a pre-requisite. All these components can be integrated into our education system. .

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