

Using Educational Thoughts as a Policy of Decolonization



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Abstract

Rabindranath Tagore was a prominent thinker in his time. He was not only a great poet but also a great educationalist. He did not write any educational treatise. His experiment at Santiniketon was the root of his educational thoughts. He was inspired by the Vedanta and Upanishad philosophy. That is why; we can find it in his educational thoughts. He emphasized to involve with one's immediate surroundings seeking knowledge. He believed that mother tongue should be the medium of education. He did not believe in any cultural superiority. He believed that only rural development could make the whole country developed. That is why he proposed rural based education to rural reconstruction. He focused one's inner perfection. He also pointed out the importance of self-realization which should be the aim of education. He depicted how a school created the prison in the name of education. He was also criticized Macaulay's "Minute on Education". He showed how western educational policy used as a policy of neo-colonialism. He prescribed a new discourse to overcome it.

Introduction

Rabindranath Tagore is one of the most striking names of Bangla literature. He is a romantic spirit that came to break down the silence of Bangla language. He was also one of the most important names who brought an educational renaissance in India. He assimilated his creative impulses to build an aesthetic educational policy. He was not happy in British educational practice in India. He struggled his whole childhood but did not harmonize with western educational practice. He was in fact much concerned about the changing time brought about by the western modernity occurring at the time of his childhood. He understood that western educational policy would not carry its utility. That is why Tagore wanted to build an aesthetic vision for the people and for the sake of humanity. And for that reason, Tagore built very different types of the educational institution named Santiniketan. He was interested in building a society that would be more liberal. He wanted to connect people to arts. On the other hand, he didn't think western educational practice in India was helpful to build an aesthetic vision. He did not deny the importance of western education but he wanted to mix it with eastern. He didn't make any anti-western discourse but he was critical of procedure of western educational plan in India. It is assumed that he wanted a new discourse for two possible reasons. Firstly, he used education as a policy of decolonization. We can connect Foucault's idea of prison in Tagore's "Tota Kahini" and "Chuty" and as a reader one can find it as a critique of western educational policy. He showed in his writing how the western educational plan could control mind and body. In "Tota Kahini", a parrot is imprisoned in the name of education. On the other hand, in "Chuty", Fatik was the human form of that parrot, which could not bear the weight of western education. "Fatik" and "parrot" were the symbol of the students of India who would be imprisoned in the name of "western modernity" throughout the western educational system in India. Macaulay's

“educated class” was the new form of colonialism. Secondly, Tagore lost his faith on „western modernity“, where the western notion of prosperity could be the reason of the collapsing world. Thus, he felt the fragmentation and tension of modernity. He prescribed the salvation throughout his educational thoughts. An aesthetic vision could be a source of inspiration to lead a life in the fragmented world. Tagore’s educational ideology would give the space to find the aesthetic vision. It is, of course, true that modernity changed the world in the name of prosperity which was not real all the time and *Red Oleander* is one of the finest examples of that. Yaksha town was the symbol of the modern world. The landscape of Yaksha town was similar with Dickens’ “coke town” and Eliot’s “unreal city”. Thus, Tagore depicted the real scenario in a symbolic way in the name of Yaksha Town. Tagore could not find any solution from the fragmentation. Tagore felt that an aesthetic vision would be a possible solution which could be a source of inspiration. Western educational plan in India did not give that scope to build an aesthetic vision. It showed how prosperity dehumanized and mechanized people in the name of civilization. In the situation, an aesthetic vision would help people. Therefore, the aim of the thesis is to speculate on how Tagore used his educational thoughts as a policy of developing an aesthetic vision and also how he used it as a policy of decolonization.

Chapter Two: Critique of Western Education

2.1 A Reading of “Tota Kahini” as a Satire of Macaulay’s Educational Plan

Thomas Babington Macaulay was a legal member of the council of India. He wrote, “Minute on Education” in “1835 for Lord William Bentinck, Governor-General of British India” (Cutts 824), where he made his “advocacy of English language education” (824). The main aim of his paper was to find which language was “the best worth knowing” (Macaulay 373) for Indian students. He found English as the best worth knowing language. He proposed English as a medium of education. On the other hand, Rabindranath Tagore believed in “mother tongue as a medium of the education”. He wrote many essays, short stories and poems on his educational thoughts and “Tota Kahini” (The Parrot's Tale) was one of the renowned texts. Tagore was a critique of the western educational plan and as a reader one can find a connection between both “Minute on Education” and “Tota Kahini”. Therefore, the aim of this part of the chapter is to show how Rabindranath Tagore’s “Tota Kahini” as a satire of Macaulay’s “Minute on Education”.

In “Minute on Education”, Macaulay wanted “intellectual improvement” (Macaulay 373) for the people of the then India. He made his advocacy of English language education. He had “read translations of the most celebrated Arabic and Sanskrit works” (373) but he had “never found one among them [native Indian] who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature” (373) of India. He thought that native language was “useless” (372) and “exploded” (372).

On the other hand, Rabindranath Tagore criticized this western educational plan and wrote “Tota Kahini” as a satire of this. In the story was about an “illiterate bird” (Tagore 10), who “sang songs” but did not read “the scriptures” and “never cared for custom and convention”

(10). Seeing this the king said, “such a bird is of no use; it eats fruits in the Orchard, and the fruit market runs at a loss!”(Tagore 10).

The parrot was the symbol of the students of India. To show Macaulay's illiterate native Indian, Tagore depicted “the illiterate bird”. The songs of bird were the symbol of “Indian education” which had no “market value”. Macaulay wanted to withdraw Sanskrit and Arabic, which reflects the King's thought. The king also wanted to withdraw bird's songs because of market value.

Macaulay believed that English tongue “would be the most useful to” (Macaulay 374) Indian. He illustrated his point to say, “The literature of English” is more "valuable"(374). He claimed that Russia was civilized by the “language of western Europe”; therefore, India also needed the western language, where he emphasized the study of literature. He said

But to encourage the study of a literature admitted to be of small intrinsic value [emphasized mine] only because that literature includes the most serious errors on the most important subjects, is a course hardly reconcilable with reason, with morality [emphasized mine], or even with that very neutrality which ought, as we all agree, to be sacredly pre-served (375).

In the "Tota Kahini", the king thought to give some education for the uncivilized bird. He called his ministers to give “the bird some useful education” (Tagore 10). On the other hand, Macaulay found English literature as a useful education. It could help the native to build English morality and value. Rabindranath Tagore had no objection about literature but he had a question on English value and morality which was proposed by Macaulay. He emphasized on the “freedom of thought” and “imagination “in his “Shikker Shonsker” as an aim of the education. He believed that there was no nation who would be creative without freedom of thoughts and

imagination. They would lose their power of self-realization and would turn themselves into parrot without the power of self-realization. Macaulay's educational plan did not give the scope of self-realization. It only focused to make educate bird which was described in "Tota kahini". The nephew of the king built the cage for the sake of education and Macaulay built a boundary of education in the appellation of effectiveness. Therefore, the nephew of the King did same as Macaulay did. He took the responsibility to educate the bird. He discussed with other scholars and "arrived at the conclusion that the nest the bird builds with twinges and straws is [was] too small to hold much learning" (Tagore 10). Therefore, it was important to build a "good cage". He did lots of arrangement to educate the bird. The king was happy to see the arrangements. But he forgot to see the bird because "the process was so much larger than the bird itself, that the bird was not seen, rather, it was fair enough not to see the bird" (15). In this way, Tagore has pointed out how Macaulay had forgotten about the people but thought about the process which was "much larger than the people".

The parrot was unable to think in the language of scriptures. Throughout Macaulay's educational plan, Indian students would memorize the value of English like the parrot. No one can learn the values and moralities by only reading books. Throughout social structure and experience, we can get our morals and values. "Social unconscious" is also responsible towards creating these values and moralities. In addition, "Social unconscious" is a psychological term which includes social behaviors, customs, myths etc. create some notion which is responsible for creating specific value and moral. But in India, the social unconscious was different from Britain. The only memorization could help them to get the British social unconscious. Throughout Macaulay's educational plan, students of India had very little space for "freedom of thought" and "imagination". Without knowing the "social unconscious" of England, the students

of India were getting English value and moral. Rabindranath Tagore was critical of these English values. Indian students created their English value and morality throughout those experiences which were unusual for them. This conflict created isolation. The parrot of the cage was in same isolation throughout the nephew's arrangement. He did it for the sake of education. In the way, he established his control over the parrot. It can be called a new form of colonialism.

On the other hand, this education was responsible for creating cultural imperialism. Some group of people would try to copy British value like a parrot. But they were not able to produce any creative thing. Parrot lost its freedom of thought throughout memorizing the scriptures. It forgot how to sing a song. The cage created an alien circumstance. On the other hand, Macaulay's educational plan also created these alien circumstances for Indian students. Memorization of western value throughout the literature was also an alienated experience for Indian students. In Edward Kamau Braithwaite's "Nation Language", he also talked about this alien experience that created the problem in the Caribbean literature. He said,

We are more conscious (in terms of sensibility) of the falling of snow for instance-the hurricanes which take place every year. In other words, we haven't got the syllables, the syllabic intelligence, to describe the hurricanes, which is our experience, where we can describe the imported alien experience of the snowfall (Braithwaite 310).

Therefore, if Indian students imported English value without knowing the experience, they would turn themselves into a parrot. Tagore did not call it education. In "Rabindranath Tagore, a Visionary: His idea on Education and Rural Reconstruction", Ahlam Islam was talking about Tagore's principles of education. He said,

According to Rabindranath Tagore, the education provides a sense of one's identity as a total man and to bring education in harmony with life. It is self-realization was the goal of education. The prevalent social condition required the process of education that was based on self-realization in order to establish a well-balanced relation with others belonging to different social strata. In order to reach this basic identity of human being, one needs to undertake processes towards this stage of an only be assisted through education (474).

Macaulay believed in the superiority of English language. He said that English was superior because of “the Poetry of Milton”, “the Metaphysics of Lock” and “the Physics of Newton” (Macaulay 372). Therefore, English was “better knowing than Sanscrit or Arabic” (376). Finally, he wanted to create a class who would be “Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect” (376). This class would help them to educate other native. He said,

To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees get vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass if the population (376).

Tagore criticized this idea of creating the class. In “Tota Kahini”, the policeman, the royal relatives and the nephew of the King were the symbols of the English speaking class. They were not helpful for the native. They were in hegemony by the ruling class. The policeman said that the bird was very “indiscipline” (Tagore 15). The Royal relatives claimed that the bird of the country was not only “undisciplined” but also they were “ungrateful” (15). No one noticed the death body of the bird. Everyone was a critique of the uncivilized bird. The nephew declared

that the education of the bird was complete. They found a death body of parrot as an educated parrot. “The bird was brought. Along with the bird came the Police chief, the sentry, the horseman. The king pressed on the bird, it did not open its mouth, and it did not make any sound. Only dry paper from the books rustled in its belly” (Tagore 16).

The nephew of the King was responsible for the death of the parrot. Similarly, the new class with English value would do the same. They were not able to understand the importance of parrot's songs. They were a „blind follower“ of ruling class. On the other hand, parrot did not understand the meaning of Scripture. Therefore, the scriptures were depicted as a “dry paper from the books”. However, the poetry of Milton which was superior to the English seemed to be a “dry paper from books” for Indian students. Staying in India, it is not possible for them to connect with the English experience.

Finally, we can say, all of this evidence proves that Rabindranath Tagore was a critique of the western educational plan. As a reader, we can see how “Tota Kahini” is a satire of Macaulay's educational plan. In *Discipline and Punish*, Michel Foucault gave the idea of prison, which was present in “Tota Kahini”. Authority wants to control body and mind to balance their power. The parrot was controlled by the king in the name of education. On the other hand, Macaulay’s educational plan would also build the same prison but in a different manner in the name of education. Throughout his educational plan, Britain would establish their control over India. His idea of the class created division among native. The nephew of the King did not understand what would be considered as a useful education for the parrot. He made the wrong decision because of his lack of organic thought. I want to finish this part of the chapter to quote from The Post-Colonial Studies Reader, where authors showed on what was the importance of British education in the colony. They wanted to establish their educational plan to demonstration

the universality of their values. They also called other uncivilized and Macaulay also claimed this. On the other hand, Rabindranath Tagore was critical of Macaulay's plan.

Education becomes a technology of colonial subjectification in two other important and intrinsically interwoven ways; it establishes the locally English or British as normative through critical claims to 'universality' of the values embodied in English literary texts, and it represents the colonized to themselves as inherently inferior beings – „wild“; „barbarous“; „uncivilised“. (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 371)

2.2 Fatik and Result of Western Education

„Chuty“ is the short story written by Rabindranath Tagore. The story is about a boy named Fatik. He went Calcutta with his uncle for the educational purpose. He had a hard time in the city. He was charitable on his village life because the city did not give the chance to celebrate his childhood. The bricks of the city were only being piled up aiming towards the hunger of prosperity. It seemed to him that, the city did not give him natural space to take a complete breath. He felt a deep trouble when he lost his books. Teacher punished him not to prepare his lesson. The portrayed of the teacher in “Chuty” is not random. Rabindranath Tagore himself faced the same kind of teaching. We can find evidence from his essay named “Normal School”. In the very beginning of the essay, he imagined a form of schooling in his childhood where he was teacher and “portcullis” was his discipline. He decided who were good and who were not. Then he started to punish those students (portcullis) who were not good in studying. In the story, Tagore showed the real scenario of the society, where the teacher did same which Tagore did in his childish play. Therefore, Fatik belonged to those who were not good in studying and faced punishment. In “New Trouble for Old Gods”, the Goddess of arts Saraswati wanted to resign. She was not able to behave rudely with the children for education. She wanted to give her position on the death god Yama. Yama refused her and said that the teacher of the earth was enough to perform his job because they were enough rude like him (Yama). Therefore, in “Chuty”, the teachers were no one but Yama’s proposed group who had a better „rude heart“ than Yama to educate the children. Therefore, the aim of this part of the chapter is to find the negative impacts of the wrong educational practice.

Moreover, Rabindranath Tagore pointed out an issue that why students like Fatik was not interested in studying. In “Normal school”, he showed how a wrong curriculum could destroy

student's interest in studying. The authority of Normal School provided a group song for children. In addition, the song was in the English language. They thought that it could refresh student's mind. But the irony was Rabindranath Tagore did not understand the lyrics of the song. He studied lots of years in that school and sang the song every day. The researcher assumes this story had some connection with Fatik. The curriculum of the school was not suitable for Fatik. In both cases, Fatik and Tagore were oppressed by the teacher and both were not good in studying. Here, I have also added Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's experience. He is a Nigerian writer. His schooling was worst than Fatik and Tagore. He was forced to speak in English. Doing otherwise would make him face huge insult and punishment. Fatik was the symbolic representation of all the colonial students. Fatik lost his freedom when he had come to the city to get admitted in a new school. He could not match with the transition. The restrictions of city life were unbearable for him. He could not connect him with his new school where his cousins also did not like him. The educational institution did not do anything to make him feel comfortable. On the other hand, the fear of punishment was also present. His body and mind were restricted to the environment of his school. Teachers played the death god Yhama's role, where he felt as a prisoner. Therefore, he wanted to get rescued from the city. That is why he was crying for recess. The name of the story is "Chuty" which also means "recess". Here we can find the idea Michel Foucault's prison. Prisoner's activities were restricted by the law. Here Fatik was in the same restriction. His school did the same. They created catenaries to bind their students. In the satiation, punishment played a huge role. Tagore mentioned it in his essay named "Shikkha Somossa". He said that the portrayal of school was more like "mental hospital" or "prison". It seems that Tagore wanted to say, a school in his time, did not nurse children but forced to do according to school law. Fatik wanted to recess from this prison but he did it throughout his

death. In the “Tota kahini”, the death of parrot was similar with the death of Fatik. The restriction and punishment of the school destroyed the desire of being free. Both got their recess from their death.

In the way, Rabindranath Tagore showed how education as an institution had huge importance in one’s life, where the wrong curriculum would be a reason for great losses. Macaulay’s proposal would not work properly. The people “blood in India test in British” would not able to carry the utility of the proposal. Sara Surely found “fallacy of utilitarianism” in Macaulay’s proposal in her *The Rhetoric of English India*. Macaulay’s proposed middle class did the same. In here the nephew (Tota kahini) and the teacher (Chuty) were not able to understand what was good for parrot and Fatik. “The utilitarian, James mill, for instance, where voicing his opinion in the matter of instruction Indian students attending government supported colleges in India, maintained that the primary objection to such instruction should always be “useful knowledge” as opposed to “Hindu knowledge”(825).

Tagore showed us how these “useful knowledge” was not useful at all in India. It was the mechanism of neo-colonialism. In chapter one, we discuss how Tagore was a critique of Macaulay’s minute. In this chapter, we understand the reflection of his minute. The death of Fatik and parrot showed that Macaulay’s “useful knowledge” lost its utility in India.

Chapter Three: Tagorian Discourse on Education

3.1 Mother Tongue as the Medium of Education

Meanwhile, in every colony, one doubt was present. Which language should be the medium of education? A language debate of Africa was a good example. Someone wanted to take the colonial language and someone did not. The utility of the language was a central concern to choose the language. Most of the colony took occident language. On the other hand, Tagore was different among them. He believed that education could not be universalized unless mother tongue was the medium. Therefore, the aim of this part of the chapter is to find on what was the importance of mother tongue as the medium of education in the light of Tagore's view.

Rabindranath Tagore was a critique of foreign language as a medium of education. In his essay named "Shikkhar Hirfir", he discussed this issue. The semantic system of English was different from Bangle when children faced huge problem to understand English. They were starting memorizing rather than understanding English. On the other hand, primary level teachers were not that much educated who introduced English customs properly. In that time, a student got in dilemma to understand his/her reading. When anyone studies any poems/short stories/novels, imagination is an essential element to recognize the texts. How a student from India could visualize a view of snow falling when they never had the opportunity to observe it anytime. The social cultural and environmental different is the reason behind creating different imagination. Therefore, the processes of an imagination of Indian students were diverse from English students.

Rabindranath Tagore believed that if we imposed Indian students' English imagination, they would lose their natural way of thinking and power of imagination. In the way, they would not build up their creative mind, it would lose forever. Then Tagore introduced translation

problem. He gave an example-“horse is a noble animal” (Tagore 667), where he could not find the proper translation of it. He could not find any suitable Bangla word which could translate the word “noble”. In addition, the word “noble” means “mahat” which is not proper to refer horse. It is more suitable for human. Tagore was confused to find out the translation of “noble” for a horse. In the way, Tagore showed the limitation of translation of language. Therefore, for children, the idea of translation did not work well and the book which was for England was not suitable for Indian students. On the other hand, the idea of utility hampered their happy reading mood. Students of India did not find any pleasure to read those books.

Tagore believed that we should take our education on our native language. Then we would learn any foreign language. “Tagore himself was introduced to English when he was 12 years old and had already made good progress in Bengali” (Acharya 602) “in fact; he was in favor of introducing mother highest level of education. He even would teach English through mother tongue and wrote a primer called “Ingraji Sopan” for this purpose. (602) Islam and Pandey said, “Tagore emphasized on the use of a national Language as the Venice of education at all stages of education. He wanted Indian universities to integrate themselves with society and make an effort to educate people living in the courtly side” (487).in the “Sheikkharh Shonsker”, Tagore told about Irish educational system. He was very effective until England changed it. In the new educational system, Irish students lost the connection between their tradition and education. Tagore found that as a downfall of Ireland. He also found a connection between Ireland and India. He suspected that if India did the same as Ireland did, India also would lose their tradition and history and, made own self a “parrot”. In his “A Tale of Parrot”, Tagore showed how the king tried to impose a language on a parrot, and the result was very pathetic. Finally, the parrot was death. The death was symbolic. As a reader, we found the death as a spiritual death which

Tagore mentioned for Ireland. English education policy imposed the English language throughout market value. They said that English was more valuable rather than any native language but English was the language of the rule. Macaulay focused it clearly on his “Minute on Education”. On the other hand, Tagore did not appreciate it and said ,

” I cannot congratulate a society or a nation that calmly excludes play from the curriculum of the majority of its children’s education and gives in its stead a vested interest to the teachers in the market value of the pupil’s labor”.(Salamatullan 136.)

Tagore was a critique of English educational policy. He found it as a policy of colonialism. To overcome it, students of India should take their education in their native language.

3.2 Back in Past and Nature Based Education

Rabindranath Tagore did not appreciate materialist education. He was frustrated with a materialistic approach to educational policy. He was a critique of those people who thought about educational tools rather than education. He was against radical decoration. He wanted to go nature. He found Topoban education system was more applicable rather than an existing system. The aim of this part of the chapter is to show how Tagore had emphasized nature-based education and went back in Topoban system.

In Topoban Education system, a teacher was the essential part of the education. This system believed that no one could acquire knowledge without an instructor (Guru). We can connect it with Ruth Kempson's presupposition. She said in her book named *Presupposition and Delimitation*, "in one of two ways-either as a relation between a statement (parallel to entailment synonymy, etc.) or as a property of the speaker's belief in uttering a sentence"(35). It was important to recognize speaker's belief and understanding to value the meaning of the statement. That means only statement cannot bring the whole meaning but the speaker is also the part of it. The idea of presupposition has also emphasized both speaker and statement. This idea has a close relation with the idea of Topoban education system. Topoban education preferred the speaker to find out the meaning. In that system, Guru (teacher) was the main body of the knowledge where they did not use a book because they believed in teacher-student relation rather than book-student relation. Students took knowledge according to their capability and teachers provided the meaning of that knowledge. Therefore, the idea of Topoban schooling is more like an ideal school where "the training of the body, the mind, and the soul would not depend on any school syllabus determined in advance, but on the ability of the teacher to improvise, to play "upon a child's personality in the way in which a musician improvises upon his musical

instrument.”(Aromson 385). Thus, with the nourishment of nature, students could find the way of “self-realization” throughout Tapashya in the Topobon. Rabindranath Tagore said,

...education can be imparted only by a teacher and not wholly by a method. Man can learn better from a man. Just as a water tank can be filled only with water and fire can be kindled with fire, life can be inspired by life... in our social organization we are searching for a Guru (teacher) who will give pace to life, in our educational system we are searching for a Guru who will emancipate our mind from the prison of ignorance, however, it may be, we want a human being in every sheer of our life. The mere pill of a method instead shall not bring us salvation (Tagore-pioneer in education 76).

Rabindranath Tagore believed that bookish attitude of students “kill the natural instincts” (Islam Pandey 477) of creative skill. He was against the book-centered education when he emphasized the importance of the good teacher. He did not deny the importance of books when he wrote many easy to confirm on how a book was significant for us. The easy named “Library” is the finest example of it. But, first, he emphasized the knowing of own surrounding which would help to understand the true meaning of knowledge. He thought that nature was the basis of all knowledge, so, students should know the nature to understand the knowledge. The bookish attitude was the grounds behind creating the detachment of nature. That is why he was against of bookish learning. He said,

Books have come between our mind and life. They deprive us of our natural faculty of getting knowledge directly from nature and life and have generated within us the habit of knowing everything through the book we touch the world not with our mind, but with our books. They dehumanize and make us

unsocial...let the students gather knowledge and materials from different regions of the country, from direct sources and from their own independent effort (Islam Pandey 477)

Education should be bloomed into man to man not a book to man. The only book cannot give the full meaning but with the speaker, statements can complete its meaning. Problems occur when we read the only translation for our educational purpose. Without the help of the speaker, the statement loses its some contain. It becomes more difficult for those who have not any idea about the statement. Therefore, an expert can help them to understand the meaning. That is why Topobon preferred Guru (teacher). In Topobon system, nature was another important part. K.c. Mukherjea said in his "Tagore- pioneer in education", "Tagore"s views on the nature of mental growth of the child are of particular significance, not for further thought and experiment by later teachers in India"(72) Tagore wanted an environment that can nourish students mind. Poromesh Acharya also discusses it in his "Educational Idea of Tagore and Gandhi: A Comparative Study", "Tagore envisaged that children should be allowed to grow in an atmosphere of freedom in the lap of uncorrupted nature. Tagore also like Rousseau and Gandhi believed that village was more suitable than the town for the purpose of education" (603) Tagore found true education in Topobon throughout Tapashya with the union of nature. Nature played a vital role in education. It gives the space of thinking of self-realizing. That is why Tagore established his educational institute named Santiniketan in the lap of nature, where he wanted to give the idea of freedom for the students, which could help them to nourish their mind properly. Promesh Acharya quoted Tagore"s words in his article where Tagore said,

I established my institution in a beautiful spot far away from the town where the children had the greatest possible freedom under the shade of ancient trees, and

the field around alone to the verge of horizon... from the beginning, I tried to create an atmosphere which I considered to be more important than the class teaching .(603).

Tagore thought that discovery of nature would help his students to seek knowledge. Tagore nature was not “merely the hills and mountains, the valleys and two forests and two mountain streams” (Mukherjee 71) but he focused on “symbols of a living presence which was for him both intensely real and spiritual” (71). Mukherjee quoted Tagore’s speech in his article where Tagore said

Some shadow-haunted living reminiscence in me seemed to ache for the prenatal cradle and playground it once shared with primal life in the illimitable image of land water and air. The thin shrill cry of the high of a dazed Indian noon sent to a solitary boy the signal of a dim distant kinship. The few coconut palms growing by the boundary wall of our house, like some war captives from an older army of invaders of this earth, spoke to me of the eternal companionship which the great brotherhood of trees has ever offered to man. They made my heart willful with the invitation of the forest (71)

The portrayal of traditional school was not very colorful for Tagore. He found it as a machine made learning. We can find his experience of bad schooling in his essay named “Normal school”. He thought that school emphasized the utility of knowledge which made them more like a factory rather than school. Tagore said,

At half past ten, in the morning the factory opens with the ringing of a bell, and then as the teachers start talking, the machines start working. The teachers stop

talking at four in the afternoon when the factory close and the pupils then go home carrying with them a few pages of machine made learning (677)

All of that reason, Tagore wanted to back Topobon education in the lap of nature. He believed that a person who had information with a stick was not the portrayal of a teacher. A great teacher could give something more than information. He could help his students to nourish their mind and made them able to bring knowledge. His main duties were an inspiring student rather than giving information. Tagore said, “If the inspiration dies out, and the information only accumulates, then truth loses its infinity” (70). Tagore emphasized teacher-student relation. He said,

It should be an open house, in which students and teachers are at one. They must live their complete life together, dominated by a common aspiration for truth and a need for sharing all the delights of culture. In former days the great master-craftsmen had students in their workshops where they co-operated in shaping things to perfection (70)

On the other hand, nature would help students to seek knowledge. Tagore said, “Nature and human spirit wedded together would constitute our worship “(267). Tagore found nature as a source of inspiration; he thought that an individual could grow his/her mind in the lap of nature with the help of its beauty. Alex Aaronson quoted in his article named “Tagore”s educational ideas”, Tagore say, “we may become powerful by knowledge, but we attain fullness by sympathy” (387). Alex pointed out word “sympathy” and told that “Tagore meant by sympathy the capacity of an individual to adjust himself successfully to his environment, be it that of nature or society, to reach a degree of integration which would ultimately lead to a unified personality” (387).

Tagore was also a critique of materialist education. He thought, nowadays people used their most of the energy on educational tools rather than education. He believed that educational tools like chairs and tables were not the essential part of education. Over thinking to maintain of educational tools was the waste of time. He also suggested not making children materialize. He said, “The child who is decked with price’s robes and who has jeweled chains round his neck loses all pleasure in his play; his dress hampers him at every step. In fact that it may be frayed, or stained with dust he keeps him/her from the world, and is afraid even to move “(694-95).

Tagore wanted to back the past to restore Topobon system, where everyone would become a part of nature. He found “sympathy” in nature. He thought an individual could make him/her universal throughout a part of nature. He wanted to grow teacher-student relation rather than book-student relation. He found a huge problem in materialism. Therefore, he proposed nature-based education.

3.3 Achalayatan and Other Vision

When the mind is without fear and the head is held high
 Where knowledge is free,
 Where the world has not been broken into fragments by narrow domestic walls,
 Where world come out from the depth of truth,
 Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection
 Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of
 dead habit,
 Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever widening thought and action
 Into that heaven of freedom, my father, let this world awake (Tagore 267).

Yes, Tagore wanted to break the narrow domestic wall and wanted to become universal. In his educational philosophy, we can find how an individual can turn him/her as universal. He did not stay in a narrow domestic wall. He did not support the aggressive mood of nationalism. His *Home and World* is the perfect example of it. Tagore took back his support from non-cooperation movement. Tagore waived his knighthood for Amritsar massacre. Uma Das Gupta quoted Tagore's speech from "Letters to a Friend: Rabindranath to C.F. Andrewa", where Tagore said, "there is such a thing as a moral standard of judgment when India suffers injustice, it is right that we should against it; and the responsibility is ours to right the wrong, not as Indians but as human beings"(30). In Tagore's educational philosophy, he emphasized humanism. Therefore, the aim of this part of the chapter is to find on Tagore's idea of liberal thinking which was used to break down the narrow domestic wall.

Humanism was one of the most significant parts of Tagore's educational philosophy. He wrote many essays on it, where "Manuser Dharma" and "Manab Stta" are the finest examples.

Vedanta philosophy was the basis of his humanism. Salamattullah said,

Tagore is, in reality, an exponent of the Vedanta philosophy which teaches that the whole universe is pervaded by one and the same spirit and as such the feeling of separateness, of being different, is an illusion caused by ignorance. It alone begets conflicts. Real wisdom seeks to realize all as one, comprehending one in the many and the many in the one... This consciousness is achieved through love which is the only uniting force in the world. Love is also the only positive force behind all creation and continuity of life. Its absence forebodes destruction (134)

Tagore wanted to unify everyone into one. In Vedanta philosophy, God was called Parramatta (superior soul) where all other living and non-living beings were part of it. This was called Atma. Therefore, every Atma had connected among them with Parramatta. In the way, everyone was unified. Tagore believed that the purpose of creation was "creating a feeling" called "love". In his poem "Ami", Tagore told about a day when God destroyed everything and recreated human again. That time, God tried to teach human to say "you are beautiful" (II). Tagore believed that the mission of God was to create a feeling of love in human mind. That was why God taught a human to say "I love you" (II). "Love for everyone" will not create until human race destroys their narrow nationalist boundary. That is why Tagore took back his support for "non-cooperation movement" which was turned into a violence mood of nationalism. He found love as a medium of connection. In his educational policy, he emphasized it build up in the human mind in the lap of nature. He believed in internationalism. For his students, he wanted to build up respect for all mankind "irrespective of caste, colour, creed or country" (Salamatullah 137.)

Achalayatan, the greatest play, is a perfect example, where he wanted to break down the domestic wall of a nation and became himself universal. Achalayatan was the name of a city which was restricted with the wall. The people of Ayatan did not go outside. It was not allowed to communicate with the people of the outside of the Ayatan. There were two kinds of people live in outside of the Ayatan named “Shonpanshu” and “Darvok”. Darvok accepted the superiority of Ayatanwhere. Shonpanshu did not accept it. Ayatan prohibited setting up any connection with those two groups of people. The people of Ayatan celebrated their cultural, educational and social superiority. Dadatagore, once, who built the Ayatan, destroyed it with the help of Shonpanshu. In the play, Tagore showed us the importance of boundary-less world. He was against to build a narrow wall. He depicted “Achalayatan” as an educational temple. The name of Chancellor was Adinpunna. He wanted to come out from the narrow boundary but he did not. On the other hand vice-chancellor was moderate-minded. Mohapanchak was the conductor of conservatism. He was the symbol of conservative mind in the name of rules and regulations. He made Achalayatan more like a prison rather than an educational temple. All the students were the slave of those rules. On the other hand, Panchak was a brother of Mohapanchak who was the symbol of freedom. He did not want to obey any rules. He wanted to break down every obstacle. He wanted to know everything. He was curious about his surroundings. He went to Shanpanshu’s village He wanted to know how they lived. He knew about punishment not to follow the rules of Achalayatan but he didn’t care. He was the symbol of the free mind that was universal. Another important character was Dadatagore. Once he built the Achalayatan, but he destroyed it with the help of Shanpanshu. Sorochois Sarker wrote in his article named “Rabindranath’s thought on society and Religion in Achalayatan”, where he found the image of Rabindranath in Dadatagore. Once, Tagore was fascinated on western modernity.

He was wondered in the beauty of western thoughts. But in the last part of his life, he lost his fascination on it. He felt to break it for the sake of universalism. (471). we can find the same thought in Tagore's "Crisis of Civilization."

Dadatagore introduced boundary-less world. He wanted to eliminate all obstacles. In "Post Office"(Dakghor), we can find another Dadatagore who also wanted to introduce nature. Doctor prescribed not to go outside because that would harmfully for Amal. Amal had desired to go outside but no one allowed him to go. Dadatagore came and gave the opportunity to know the nature. He opened all windows and doors. Tagore's another renowned character Gora was also named after Dadatagore. Some Muslim people called him Dadatagore. All of these Dadatagore came from different narrative but carried the same message. They wanted to break the obstacle. They wanted to connect people with nature. They opened all the windows and doors. They did not stay in a narrow domestic wall. They broke the domestic wall and made them universal.

Tagore believed in Manuser Dharma (The religion of humanity). In addition, the term religion was not used to refer the orthodox vision of the human. Abdus Selim quoted Hashers words about Tagore, where he said "Since to render dharma as religion not any significantly narrows its meaning but also leads us immediately down a chain of western associations that may not of western associations that may not have been paramount for Tagore at all (553). He added, "Tagore Strived to remind his listeners that the world was bigger, more complex and therefore more precious than any single social custom ritual ideology or jingoistic slogan" (553), when Tagore said ,"Open your doors and look abroad" (553). Tagore wanted to break the narrow nationalist vision where as a reader, we can find, Tagore compiled these narrow belief with prison In "Tota kahini" and "Chuty", Tagore showed how an individual struggle with imposed

prison. In Achalayatem, he showed how a nation could suffer from their narrow belief which was depicted as a prison.

Finally, we can say, as an educational temple, Achalayatam did not offer the scope of salvation. It imposed people to be felt like prison did. It gave punishment to open the door. It killed people's spirit. It was against the unification. Tagore wanted to break down these educational temples. He did not believe any restriction and superiority of knowledge.

Chapter Three: Importance of New Discourse:

Cultural Independence

Were Tagore's educational thoughts anti-discourse of western educational policy? Why Tagore wanted to restore Topoban? Answers to these questions are very important to understand Tagore's educational philosophy. Of course, Tagore was a critique of western educational policy. But his educational thoughts were not anti-discourse of western. He wanted to create a new discourse in the light of Vedanta philosophy. He was highly impressed by the Upanishad thoughts. He understood that no nation could not establish them without knowing own history and tradition. He mentioned Ireland to give an example in his "Shikkhar Shonsker". He didn't want to get the same result as Ireland got. That is why he wanted a new discourse. The aim of this chapter is to find the importance of new discourse.

First of all, the short summary of "Dengea Piprar Montobbo" is needed to understand the importance of a new discourse. This is a short story, but it is included in Tagore's collection of easy. The story was about giant ant, who wanted to civilize small ant. They (giant ant) thought that they were superior. That is why they had right to do what they wanted. They claimed food from small ant. They also wanted more food for their relative also. They had right to get all of their opportunity because they were superior. They wanted to make small ant educated. They thought that small ant hadn't any creativity. Therefore, they needed giant ant for the sake of their prosperity (Tagore 395). As a reader, we can relate the story. Giant ant was no one but an image of England. Small uncultured ant was India. This short story showed us clearly what the importance of a new discourse was. It was difficult for a small ant to carry the weight of presence of giant ant. Actually, the presence of giant ant did not give any extra opportunity for small ant. Finally, the giant ant said that if all of the resources of small ant would finish, they

would have waived them. As a reader, we can connect it with colonial India. It is assumed, Tagore wanted to say, England would do the same which was pronounced by the giant ant. India did not get any extra opportunity for the presence of British. He understood that colonial education could not make people enlighten rather than gave an opportunity to get a job. He did not interest in imposed culture. The higher education is not only provided job opportunity or “merely give information but makes our life in harmony with all existence” (Islam Pandey 473). Tagore did not get the “harmony with all existence” in western educational policy. The presence of the giant ant was similar with the presence of colonizer. If small ant wanted to overcome with it, they would need their own thoughts. Similarly, India needed their own thoughts to make them modern. Tagore mentioned it as a “humiliation” to get other educational plans. He said in his “An Eastern University”,

Modern India, through her very education, has been made to suffer this humiliation. Once she herself provided her children with a culture which was the product of her own ages of thought and creation. But it has been thrust aside, and we are made to tread the mill of passing examinations, not for learning anything, but for notifying that we are qualified for employments under organizations conducted in English. Our education community is not a cultured community, but a community of qualified candidates. (69)

In Edward Said’s *Culture and Imperialism*, the chapter named “Yeats and Decolonization” was showed how colonizer changed everything for their benefits. They changed the landscape to make them comfortable. They wanted to overcome “uncanny trap”. Said especially focused on the changing of the landscape, where Yeats wanted to restore old Ireland. On the other hand, Tagore was worried about not only for landscape but also for the evaluation

of imagination. English policy of education would modify people's imagination which would be comfortable for them. Yeats believed in gyre where he thought that the "Western modernity" collapsed at a certain point when it cannot carry its weight. In *Red Oleander*, Tagore also mentioned the same issue. The King said, "Overgrown power crushes itself in weirdly by its own weight" (Tagore 29). Tagore was afraid of western modernity. As a reader, we find his many creative writing on it, where he was worried about mechanized civilization. In *Red Oleander* the picture of the Yaksha town was the symbol of modern mechanized civilization. The nation of prospering was the manipulating tool which was actually none but an instrument of the modern materialistic system. It created a new form of savagery in the name of modernity. It was a tool of dehumanizing which we also find in Eliot's *Waste Land* in a different way but the concern was same. In the town, everyone was detached from each other. The King hid in the "net". The professor said to Nandini that his "ghostly royalty, made hazy by this net is fearfully potent with its inhuman power to frighten people" (Tagore 21).

The King was alienated with his subject. He refused the invitation to come out when Nandini sang an autumn song. He said, "I have no time" (24). The King wanted to come out but an unknown reason, he did not. He was in between with his desire and duty. He did not refuse his so-called duty. But he refused his life. When the King came out, it was too late to be happy. The desire of prosperity was the reason behind refusing the invitation of the autumn song. Similarly, western educational policy focused on "desire of prosperity" and "utility of education" where they could not understand the beauty of the autumn song. Tagore was always critical of the idea of „utility“. He claimed that the idea of utility was not applicable for the education. It would be a reason for great losses. In "A Reading of Tota kahini" as a satire of Macaulay's Educational Plan, we discuss how Tagore was against it. He didn't find any good result on it. That is why he

wanted to replace “aesthetic vision” with “utility of education”. He found aesthetic vision as a salvation of modern fragmentation. Fatik had not died if he found happiness in his reading.

Therefore, the new discourse was important for replacing “utility of education” with “aesthetic vision”. Abdus Selim mentioned Hatcher’s speech on his article, where Hatcher said,

... Tagore delivered, in an address at Santiniketan, a stinging indictment of western civilization, entitled „Sabhyatar Sankat“, and is the crisis of civilization. Here at the very end of his life, he spoke despairingly of humanity’s lost heritage, symbolized in part by what he called the „mud and filth“ generated by the British empire in India. „And yet“, Tagore simultaneously proclaimed, „I shall not commit the grievous sin of losing faith in Man.“ Once again we encounter the challenging ambiguity; humanity is dead, the long live humanity! (553).

Education for rural reconstruction was another important part of his educational thoughts. He believed that the development of the rural area was the process which could develop the country. Without rural reconstruction, it would not possible. Macaulay’s Educational plan was city-centered. He wanted educated class who would understand English. On the other hand, Tagore showed the disadvantage of creating these educated class. He found the establishment of the India throughout rural development. Islam and Pandey said,

Rabindranath Tagore’s Institute for Rural Reconstruction based at Sriniketan was pioneering in its time and the culmination of his long period of endeavor to redeem the neglected Indian village and bridge the gap between the city and the village. He recruited a stellar team of agronomists, rural health workers and village-level teachers-notably Leonard Elmhirst from England and his own son, Rabindranath Tagore-

who initiated many of the most successful elements basic to rural development work. Tagore comments, “If we could free even one village from the shackles of helplessness and ignorance, an ideal for the whole India would be established. Let a few villages be rebuilt in this way (479).

Tagore wanted a new discourse to come out from the western practice of education. Western practice of education offered western culture. Macaulay’s “Minute on Education” was an example of it. On the other hand, Tagore wanted to nourish own culture. Western education (western culture and literature) offered success but Tagore offered “inner perfection” throughout the own culture. Tagore said, “Man’s intellect has a natural pride in its own aristocracy, which is the pride of its culture. Culture only acknowledges the excellence whose criticism is in its inner perfection, not in any external success” (Tagore 69)

Tagore believed that India borrowed western thoughts to educate Indian students. He mentioned it as a “misfortune”. He questioned how one could grow other thoughts in his/her mind. Indian students got puzzled to grow western thoughts in their mind. Tagore said,

‘The training we get in our school has the constant implication in it that it is not for us to produce but to borrow. And we are casting about to borrow our educational plans from European institution. The trampled plants of Indian corn are dreaming of recouping their harvest from the neighboring wheat fields. To change the figure, we forget that, for proficiency in walking, it is better to train the muscles of our own legs than to strut upon wooden ones of foreign make, although they clatter and cause more surprise at our skill in using them than if they were living and real. (69)

Finally, we can say, Tagore wanted a new discourse for “inner perfection” and “rural reconstruction”. Tagore found foreign education as a way of cultural imperialism. Cultural imperialism is a new form of colonialism. Tagore used his educational plan as a way of decolonization. He thought that borrowing other educational plans would not helpful to get proper knowledge. That is why the new discourse was important.

Chapter Five:

5.1 Conclusion

Tagore was not a traditional educationalist. His experience imposed him on building up a new educational policy. He described a school as a “mental hospital” or “prison”. He wanted to break down this prison. He observed how colonial education was turned itself into “much larger than the people”. He found education as a tool of self-realization. On the other hand, he did not find it in the western educational system. It wanted to make Indian “parrot”. In the “Tota Kahini”, Tagore showed how “much larger education than the people” killed the parrot. Tagore emphasized the importance of aesthetic vision. Western educational policy in India would not give the notion of aesthetic vision. The gap between English imagination and Indian imagination was the reason behind this dilemma. Tagore found colonial education as a way of getting a job. But only getting a job was not the aim of education. Tagore was a critique of this approach. On the other hand, he showed how Macaulay’s educational plan was not appropriate for India. Tagore believed that Macaulay’s “educated class” would be the reason behind creating division. This group was not a part of India where they were not the part of Britain also. This educated class was representative of king’s nephew. They continued the role of the colonizer. They did not connect them with native. They did not understand the voice of native. The king’s nephew did not understand what was worthy for the parrot. The teacher of Fatik was not understood what made Fatik comfortable. They only focused on utility. Thus, their presence was similar with the presence of colonizer. The presence of the giant ant was not worthy for small ant. Similarly, the presences of this class create the same conflict which was made by the giant ant.

On the other hand, Tagore mentioned Ireland as an example. Ireland lost her glory because of losing her tradition. Tagore believed that every nation should build own educational

plan. It would help them to build up own identity. Tagore did not want to borrow English identity. He questioned how an individual would create English value without knowing English “Social Unconscious”. Tagore found it as a way of killing one’s creative skill. Tagore also called it “misfortune” to borrow other educational plans. That is why Tagore was interested in building up a new educational policy. In his educational policy, he prescribed “mother tongue as a medium of education.” He was fascinated with traditional Indian educational policy. That is why he introduced “Topobon educational system”. In the lap of nature, he formed a school named “Santiniketan”.

Tagore wanted reconstruction of village throughout education. Islam and Pandey quoted Tagore’s proclamation, where he said, “first to educate the villager in self-reliance and to bring back to the villages; secondly to implement the concept of „life in its completeness” with „music and readings and financial independence” (481). He emphasized arts to be a part of education. Finally, we can say, Tagorian educational thoughts were made for giving the scope of self-realization. He wanted to break the “body and mind” control theory on education. He found western education as a policy of neo-colonialism. Throughout the new discourse, he wanted to overcome it.

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