

Educational Ideas of Rabindranath Tagore in the Era of Globalization

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The present globalized world has perhaps been best quipped by Noam Chomsky as *Globalitarianism*, that is, a market-totalitarianism in viewing market as the panacea. Buoyed up by the corporate media, this absolute marketism has been bringing along with it a dull and insipid monoculture. Young people these days are growing up with their eyes glued to some TV screen, computer monitor or remaining engrossed in listening to some plug in earphones. The *MTV*-isation of visual images is often confusing the youth to discern between the illusion and reality! But at the same time, never before such a possibility to build a knowledge-based human community appeared so visible like now. And never ever education became so much a global phenomenon. Do Tagore's idealized educational concepts have any relevance in this present global scenario? And if so, how and to what extent?

Let us have a close look at Tagore's concepts on education.

Rabindranath Tagore was not a conventional pedagogist. All his educational ideas mainly developed through his critiques of the then education system and from his own observed experiences while running *Santiniketan* and *Sriniketan* as learning centres. No other creative artist in the world, so far we know, devoted so much of his time, talent and energy in the field of education as Tagore had done. And through his writings, and praxis as well, a well-articulated theory of education emerged.

It will be a cliché to recount that the main aim of the British Raj's education system was to make *brown sahibs* from the Indians to serve the Empire or the British companies as clerks or as petty officials. Macaulay did a tremendous service to the Empire by introducing a tailor-made education-policy at the cost of the pre-British traditional education system rooted to the soil. Tagore refers to this transition in his article "*Shikhhkar Sangikoron*" (*শিক্ষার স্বাস্থ্যকরণ*) in 1936;

*"The report placed by Rammohan Roy's friend Mr. Adam shows there were more than one hundred thousand primary schools (pathshalas) in Bengal and Bihar; each village had arrangement to provide a minimum education to its people. Besides, most of the rich people in those days, as their social responsibility, maintained pathshalas in their own Chandimandaps and the guru would receive his salary and lodging from them. My first encounter with alphabet took place in our own building, with the neighbouring children..... As due to negligence from the state, the water in our canals, fens and rivers have dried up, the indigenous arrangements of literacy for our people have also become moribund."*¹

(রামমোহন রায়ের বন্ধু এডাম সাহেব বাংলাদেশের প্রাথমিক শিক্ষার যে রিপোর্ট প্রকাশ করেন তাতে দেখা যায় বাংলা-বিহারে এক লক্ষের উপর পাঠশালা ছিল; দেখা যায় প্রত্যেক গ্রামেই ছিল জনসাধারণকে অন্তত: ন্যূনতম শিক্ষাদানের ব্যবস্থা। এছাড়া প্রায় তখনকার ধনী মাদ্রেই আপন চণ্ডীমন্ডপে সামাজিক কতর্বোর অঙ্গরূপে পাঠশালা রাখতেন, গুরুমশায় বৃত্তি ও বাসা পেতেন তারই কাছ থেকে। আমার প্রথম অক্ষরপরিচয় আমাদেরই বাড়ির দালানে, প্রতিবেশী পড়োয়াদের

¹ "শিক্ষার স্বাস্থ্যকরণ" রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর, উদ্বৃত্ত, "রবীন্দ্রনাথের শিক্ষাচিন্তা", প্রবোধচন্দ্র সেন, ১৯৩৬, পশ্চিমবঙ্গ রাজ্য পুস্তক পর্ষৎ, চতুর্থ প্রকাশ, ২০০৭, পৃ-১৪৭। Translated into English by the author of this article.

সঙ্গে ।.... দেশের খাল-বিল-নদী-নালায় আজ জল শুকিয়ে এল, তেমনি রাজার অনাদরে আধমরা হয়ে এল সর্বসাধারণের নিরক্ষরতা দূর করার স্বাদেশিক ব্যবস্থা ।)

Tagore further observes “Education was then not only the property of the educated ones, but was a social asset.”² (“বিদ্যা তখন বিদ্যানের সম্পত্তি ছিল না, সে ছিল সমস্ত সমাজের সম্পদ” ।)

Tagore sees the limitation of the British introduced education as;

“What we call education these days began in the cities. Behind it are the requirements of business and job. But this foreign education is like the lights of a moving train. The train compartment is lighted bright, but the miles and miles of space it crosses through, is blotted in darkness. As if only the train from the factory is real and the rest of the agonised country is something unreal.”³

(এ কালে আমরা যাকে এডুকেশন বলি তার আরম্ভ শহরে । তার পিছনে ব্যবসা ও চাকরি চলেছে আনুষঙ্গিক হয়ে । কিন্তু এই বিদেশী শিক্ষাবিধি রেল-কামরার দীপের মতো । কামরাটা উজ্জল, কিন্তু যে যোজন যোজন পথ গাড়ি চলেছে ছুটে সেটা অন্ধকারে লুপ্ত । কারখানার গাড়িটাই যেন সত্য, আর প্রাণবেদনায় পূর্ণ সমস্ত দেশটাই যেন অবাস্তব ।)

The main problem of this so called ‘modern’ education in British India, Tagore identified, was its complete domination by the English language. So a great deal of Tagore’s educational writings were in relation to the language issue. He observed;

“No one is as unfortunate as the Bengali boys”⁴ (“বাঙালির ছেলের মতো এমন হতভাগ্য আর কেহ নাই”) as they have to learn English first, an alien and difficult language, in order to reach out to the gateway of further knowledge. Tagore believed,

“To make any education permanent, in depth and expanded, it is required to melt it in the well known mother-tongue..... Our universities have failed to place their root in our national life.”⁵

(কোনো শিক্ষাকে স্থায়ী করিতে হইলে, গভীর করিতে হইলে, ব্যাপক করিতে হইলে, তাহাকে চিরপরিচিত মাতৃভাষায় বিগলিত করিয়া দিতে হয় ।..... আমাদের বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় আমাদের জাতীয় জীবনের অন্তরে মূল প্রতিষ্ঠা করিতে পারে নাই ।)

In Europe, when Martin Luther had translated the Bible in his native German language, Europe never remained the same and an all encompassing Renaissance took place there. But the Bengal Renaissance of the 18th-19th centuries, on the contrary, remained limited mainly within the upper echelon of the society.

Tagore believed that before entering school, a child should have proficiency enough in mother-tongue, to have the cognition of vocabulary to know and tell the objects of sense impression. Instead of in his mother-tongue, if a child is taught in English or in a foreign language too early, a split occurs in his sense perception and a schism takes place between his school subjects and his everyday practical life. Regarding his own education, Tagore reminisces:

² “শিক্ষার বিকিরণ” রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর, “শিক্ষা” প্যাপিরাস, ঢাকা, ২০১০, পৃ-১৮৩ । Translated into English by the author of this article.

³ “শিক্ষার বিকিরণ”, রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর, “শিক্ষা”, Ibid, P-184 । Translated into English by the author of this article.

⁴ “শিক্ষার হেরফের”, রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর, উদ্ধৃত, “রবীন্দ্রনাথের শিক্ষাচিন্তা”, প্রবোধচন্দ্র সেন, Ibid, P-7 । Translated into English by the author of this article.

⁵ “সাধনা”, রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর, উদ্ধৃত, ‘রবীন্দ্রনাথের শিক্ষাচিন্তা’, প্রবোধচন্দ্র সেন, পৃ-১০-১১ । Translated into English by the author of this article.

“Fortunately I was admitted into a normal school..... So I realized that after learning to write in vernacular, it becomes easy to learn and courageously use other languages.”⁶

(ভাগ্যবলে অখ্যাত নর্মাল স্কুলে ভর্তি হয়েছিলুম ।..... তাই বুঝেছি মাতৃভাষায় রচনার অভ্যাস সহজ হয়ে গেলে তার পরে অন্য ভাষা আয়ত্ত করে সেটাকে সাহসপূর্বক ব্যবহার করতে কলমে বাঁধে না ।)

The situation in the higher studies were even worse:

“University will always remain as the plant of the tub imported from England. The tub can be valuable, may be well decorated, but the tub will always keep that plant alienated from the Indian soil; university will become a thing of fancy, but not of real life.”⁷

(বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় চিরদিনই বিলেতের-আমদানি টবের গাছ হয়ে থাকবে, সে টব মূল্যবান হতে পারে, অলংকৃত হতে পারে, কিন্তু গাছকে সে চিরদিন পৃথক করে রাখবে ভারতবর্ষের মাটি থেকে; বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় দেশের শখের জিনিষ হবে, প্রাণের জিনিষ হবে না ।)

In comparison Tagore observed,

“Oxford-Cambridge do not mean the universities only. They mean the whole of educated England. That is why they are true, not mirages. But our universities have stopped beneath their own concrete walls.”⁸

(অক্সফোর্ড-কেমব্রিজ বলতে শুধু এটুকুই বোঝায় না, তার সঙ্গে সঙ্গে সমস্ত শিক্ষিত ইংল্যান্ডকেই বোঝায় । সেইখানেই তারা সত্য, তারা মরীচিকা নয় । আর আমাদের বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হঠাৎ থেমে গেছে তার আপন পাকা প্রাচীরের তলাটাতেই ।)

Knowing well that his suggestion to include Bengali as the medium of language in university would not be accepted, Tagore instead, proposed a completely independent Bengali University: *“Want to see a lively full childimage of a Bengali university.”⁹* (বাংলা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের একটি সজীব সমগ্র শিশুমূর্তি দেখতে চাই ।) Tagore’s faith in vernacular in education was absolute. He reiterates: *“In education mother-tongue is like mother’s milk, I uttered this universally acknowledged simple truth in many years back; today I will repeat that again.”¹⁰* (“শিক্ষায় মাতৃভাষাই মাতৃদুগ্ধ, জগতে এই সর্বজনস্বীকৃত নিরতিশয় সহজ কথাটা বহুকাল পূর্বে একদিন বলেছিলেম; আজও তার পুনরাবৃত্তি করব ।”)

Tagore did not want to blame this total servitude to English language just as a phenomenon of ‘modernity’. He observed;

“It cannot be blamed as a sign of modernity only. Because, the situation is not same in other civilized countries....In comparison to India, Japan’s association with the Western education is shorter in time, yet it is not a patched up torn wrapper there. Because already having a well extended education the power to think there is spreaded over in the minds of the whole country.”¹¹

⁶ “শিক্ষার স্বাস্থ্যকরণ”, রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর, ১৯৩৬, ‘শিক্ষা’, প্যাপিরাস, পৃ-২০৬ । Translated into English by the author of this article.

⁷ “বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের রূপ”, রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর, ‘শিক্ষা’, Ibid, P-181 । Translated into English by the author of this article.

⁸ “শিক্ষার বিকিরণ”, রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর, ‘শিক্ষা’, Ibid, P-199 । Translated into English by the author of this article.

⁹ “শিক্ষার স্বাস্থ্যকরণ”, রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর, ১৯৩৬, ‘রবীন্দ্রনাথের শিক্ষাচিন্তা’, প্রবোধচন্দ্র সেন, Ibid, পৃ-২৫ । Translated into English by the author of this article.

¹⁰ “শিক্ষার স্বাস্থ্যকরণ” রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর, ১৯৩৬, ‘শিক্ষা’, Ibid, P-201 । Translated into English by the author of this article.

¹¹ “শিক্ষার বিকিরণ” রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর, ‘শিক্ষা’, Ibid, P-185 । Translated into English by the author of this article.

(একে আধুনিকের লক্ষণ বলে নিন্দা করলে চলবে না। কেননা, কোনো সভ্য দেশেরই অবস্থা এরকম নয়।..... জাপানে পাশ্চাত্য বিদ্যার সংস্রব ভারতবর্ষের চেয়ে অল্প কালের কিন্তু সেখানে সেটা তালি দেয়া দেওয়া ছেঁড়া কাঁথা নয়। সেখানে পরিব্যাপ্ত বিদ্যার প্রভাবে সমস্ত দেশের মনে চিন্তা করবার শক্তি অবিচ্ছিন্ন সঞ্চারিত।)

But the realist in Tagore was well aware:

“In our universities the honoured seat of English language cannot be unsettled. Not because its role in our present life is inevitable. But the knowledge of Europe today has received the respect of all. It will be harmful if we deny that because of our national vanity.”¹²

(আমাদের বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ইংরেজি ভাষার সম্মানের আসন বিচলিত হতে পারে না। তার কারণ এ নয় যে, বর্তমান অবস্থায় আমাদের জীবনযাত্রায় তার প্রয়োজনীয়তা অপরিহার্য। আজকের দিনে যুরোপে জ্ঞানবিজ্ঞান সমস্ত মানবলোকের শ্রদ্ধা অধিকার করেছে, স্বাজাত্যের অভিমানে এ কথা অস্বীকার করলে অকল্যাণ।)

So learning English language had its own impetus. But Tagore wanted to change the very method of teaching English. He believed, English grammar or any foreign language grammar, should be taught in the mother-tongue. For the benefit of the students he himself wrote English grammar books “ইংরেজি সোপান” and “ইংরেজি শ্রুতিশিক্ষা” in Bengali.

Tagore was not at all happy with the existing teaching method in the country and was vehemently opposed to the run-of-the-mill conventional schools. His remarks were often caustic:

“What we understand by school is a factory to provide education. Teacher is a part of that factory. At half past ten the factory opens with the ringing of a bell. The machine starts. So does the mouth of the teacher. At four o’clock the factory stops, so does the mouth of the teacher. And the students return home with a few pages of machine-chiselled education. And during examination this education is weighed and given due marks.”¹³

(ইস্কুল বলতে আমরা যাহা বুঝি সে একটা শিক্ষা দিবার কল। মাস্টার এই কারখানার একটা অংশ। সাড়ে দশটার সময় ঘণ্টা বাজাইয়া কারখানা খোলে। কল চলিতে আরম্ভ হয়, মাস্টারের মুখও চলিতে থাকে। চারটের সময় কারখানা বন্ধ হয়, মাস্টার-কলও তখন মুখ বন্ধ করেন, ছাত্ররা দুই-চার পাতা কলে ছাঁটা বিদ্যা লইয়া বাড়ী ফেরে। তারপর পরীক্ষার সময় এই বিদ্যার যাচাই হইয়া তাহার উপর মার্কা পড়িয়া যায়।)

Tagore loathed the practice of learning by rote. In his article “*Shikshar Bahon*” (“শিক্ষার বাহন”) he opined:

“It is also theft to pass examination by rote learning! The boy who clandestinely takes book in examination hall is expelled, but the one who takes it more stealthily, not inside his wrapper but inside his brain, is he sinning any less?”¹⁴

(মুখস্থ করিয়া পাশ করাই তো চৌর্য্যবৃত্তি। যে ছেলে পরীক্ষাশালায় গোপনে বই লইয়া যায় তাকে খেদাইয়া দেওয়া হয়; আর যে ছেলে তার চেয়েও লুকাইয়া লয়, অর্থাৎ চাদরের মধ্যে না লইয়া মগজের মধ্যে লইয়া যায়, সেই-বা কম কী করিল?)

And the text books, prescribed and recommended by the colonial rulers, Tagore commented, were not good enough for any true enlightenment of the people but merely served the political requirements of the rulers.

¹² “ছাত্র সম্রাষণ” রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর, ‘শিক্ষা’, Ibid, P-213। Translated into English by the author of this article.

¹³ “রবীন্দ্র শিক্ষা দর্শন” শান্তনু কায়সার, ‘শিক্ষা’, Ibid, P-3-4। Translated into English by the author of this article.

¹⁴ “শিক্ষার বাহন” রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর, ‘শিক্ষা’, Ibid, P-131। Translated into English by the author of this article.

Tagore observed, “*Since childhood our education is not joyful. We only learn by rote what is necessary.*”¹⁵ (বাল্যকাল হইতে আমাদের শিক্ষার সহিত আনন্দ নাই। কেবল যাহা-কিছু নিত্য আবশ্যিক তাহাই কঠিন করিতেছি।) All his life Tagore wanted to make education a joyful experience for his students, and *Santiniketan*, with all its festivities, has been trying to uphold that dream of his.

Tagore was not fond of the idea of children being raised according to the role model of their parents. It is a curse to impose upon the children the failed dreams of their parents. Each child is unique and his or her talent should be noticed and nourished. And this is the job of a competent teacher.

When Tagore’s young family went to live in Shelidah estate, Rathindranath Tagore wrote, his father “*was determined that we should not go through the grind of the stereotyped school teaching prevalent in our country, his own experiences of the schools in Calcutta having left a bitter impression on his mind. He began to teach us Bengali himself. He would take up a poem or a piece of prose and explain it in great detail, paraphrasing and analysing every sentence, repeating it several times, so that by the end of the lesson the whole thing would not only be vividly impressed on our minds but we would be able to recite it from memory. Gradually some teachers were engaged to teach other subjects. But the teachers had to be taught first. He trained them in his own method of teaching.*”¹⁶

All our national governments now have structured national education system, often inherited from our past colonial rulers. Tagore questioned these so-called ‘national’ ideas in education:

*“If somebody says ‘national’ ideas will be taught, then question will arise, what is meant by national ideas in education? There is no definitive boundary for the term ‘national’ and it is also difficult to make one. According to one’s education, opportunity and prejudices, different people define it in different ways.”*¹⁷

(যদি কেহ বলেন ‘জাতীয়’ ভাব শিক্ষা দেওয়া হইবে তবে প্রশ্ন উঠবে, শিক্ষা সম্বন্ধে জাতীয় ভাব বলিতে কী বুঝায়? ‘জাতীয়’ শব্দটার কোনো সীমানির্দেশ হয় নাই, হওয়াও শক্ত। কোন্টা জাতীয় এবং কোন্টা জাতীয় নহে, শিক্ষা সুবিধা ও সংস্কার অনুসারে ভিন্ন লোকে তাহা ভিন্ন রকমে স্থির করেন।)

The ‘national’ curriculum of any government’s education policy normally tends to incorporate ideas that help to dominate over the minorities and the underclasses. Education becomes just another tool of class or communal domination. So Tagore steadfastly opposed to any uniform ‘national’ curriculum for the students:

*“Whether under self-rule or foreign rule when a particular form of education tries to tie the whole country in some permanent ideas we cannot call it national. It is communal and hence fatal for the nation.”*¹⁸

(স্বজাতীয়ের শাসনেই হউক আর বিজাতীয় শাসনেই হউক যখন কোনো একটা বিশেষ শিক্ষাবিধি সমস্ত দেশকে একটা কোনো ধ্রুব আদর্শে বাঁধিয়া ফেলিতে চায় তখন তাহাকে জাতীয় বলিতে পারিব না তাহা সাম্প্রদায়িক, অতএব জাতির পক্ষে তাহা সাংঘাতিক।)

In many developed states, like in the Scandinavian countries, the state does not impose any uniform national curriculum for the schools. It is the individual institutes who prepare their own

¹⁵ “শিক্ষার হেরফের” রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর, “শিক্ষা”, Ibid, P-10। Translated into English by the author of this article.

¹⁶ “Father as I knew Him”, Rathindranath Tagore, “A Centenary Volume: Rabindranath Tagore”, Sahitya Akademi, Rabindra Bhavan, New Delhi, 1961, P-49-50.

¹⁷ “শিক্ষাসমস্যা” রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর, “শিক্ষা”, Ibid, P-35। Translated into English by the author of this article.

¹⁸ “শিক্ষা বিধি”, রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর, “শিক্ষা”, Ibid, P-100-101। Translated into English by the author of this article.

curriculum for themselves. Tagore, almost a hundred years back, not only thought about such a mode but had even introduced and practiced it in *Santiniketan*.

Tagore, with all earnest, tried to reach to the crux of the problematics of our education and identified the method of education itself as the main hindrance;

“Due to our habit and blind prejudices we cannot think that the education method itself is the cause of our failure. Even while making new university the idea to change the method does not occur to us; we mount it in the same old cast. We yearn for the new but cannot have the confidence. Due to the hangover of the erstwhile education we have even lost the confidence to acknowledge that the method itself is the malady.”¹⁹

(শিক্ষাপ্রণালীটিই যে আমাদের ব্যর্থতার কারণ, অভ্যাসমত অন্ধ মমতার মোহে সেটা আমরা কিছুতেই মনে ভাবিতে পারি না। ঘুরিয়া ফিরিয়া নতুন বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় গড়িবার বেলাতেও প্রণালী বদলের কথা মনেই আসে না; তাই নতুনের ঢালাই করিতেছি সেই পুরাতনের ছাঁচে। নৃতনের জন্যে ইচ্ছা খুবই হইতেছে অথচ ভরসা কিছুই হইতেছে না। কেননা ঐটেই যে রোগ, এত দিনের শিক্ষা-বোঝার চাপে সেই ভরসাটাই যে সমূহে মরিয়াছে।)

One positive by-product of quality education is good literature. Tagore was univocal that the medium of creative writing has to be in mother-tongue. He said:

“It is not easy to practice creative writing. If that practice is further compounded by a foreign language risk remains to cripple it permanently.”²⁰

(রচনার সাধনা অমনিতেই সহজ নয়। সেই সাধনাকে পরভাষার দ্বারা ভারাক্রান্ত করলে চিরকালের মতো তাকে পঙ্গু করার আশঙ্কা থাকে।)

Tagore quoted the examples of two great authors of Bengali literature, Michael Modhusudhan Dutta and Bankimchandra Chattapadhyaya, who though began their literary career in English language but later had found their forte in their mother-tongue. One reason for the paucity of quality literature in Bengali language these days may be the fact that lot of potential and best minds of Bengal today are no longer educated in, or writing, in their Bengali mother-tongue.

In this cyber age of ours we get flooded with information, sometimes a bit overflowed! But information, though an useful tool for knowledge, is not knowledge *per se*. T.S. Eliot rightly pondered:

Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?
Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?

And then asked the most solemn question:

Where is the Life we have lost in living?²¹

So not only the cyber informations, neither the *how-to-ism* books of the West, wisdom in life, should be the real pursuit of knowledge. And for that we need the right teachers.

For Tagore, it was clear that for quality education neither the school building, nor even the teaching method, the teachers have to play the prime role:

¹⁹ “অসন্তোষের কারণ”, রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর, ১৯৩৬, ‘শিক্ষা’, Ibid, P-148। Translated into English by the author of this article.

²⁰ “শিক্ষার স্বাস্থীকরণ”, রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর, ১৯৩৬, ‘শিক্ষা’, Ibid, P-206। Translated into English by the author of this article.

²¹ Choruses from ‘The Rock’, 1934, “The Complete Poems and Plays of T.S. Eliot”, Faber & Faber Limited, 3, Queen Square, London, UK, P-147, 1969.

“In whatever way we move, at the end of the day we reach to this inviolable truth, that education is provided by the teachers and not by any teaching method. Human mind is a moving object and only a moving mind can understand it.”²²

(ঘুরিয়া ফিরিয়া যেমন করিয়াই চলি-না কেন শেষকালে এই অলঙ্ঘ্য সত্যে আসিয়া ঠেকিতেই হয় যে, শিক্ষকের দ্বারা শিক্ষাবিধান হয়, প্রণালীর দ্বারা হয় না। মানুষের মন চলনশীল এবং চলনশীল মনই তাহাকে বুঝিতে পারে।)

Lalon Fakir or the *Bauls* of Bengal do not say ‘*Manush*’ (human). They say ‘*Manabroton*’ (*Gem of a Man*). Every human being has the potentiality to be *Manabroton*, a gem of a man. The onus is on the teachers to unleash that inner potentialities of each human being.

Though presenting an incisive and thorough criticism of the British colonial education system, Tagore the realist, made a distinction between education in English language and the English education. He did not want to throw the baby with the unclean water! He saw no problem with the English education *per se* as that was one of the best ever and we need that education to reach out to the Western civilization. But that does not mean we should let English language sway over our schools, colleges and universities, and more perilously, on our thought process.

It seems, with the advent of computer and cyber communication, English language has won the day. But that should not be at the expense of other languages. Tagore mentioned the need to learn French, German and other rich languages as well. In order to read Goethe in original German, Tagore himself tried to learn German language in quite an advanced age! He firmly believed to preserve the importance of the other languages too. Tagore asserted:

“To light a formal lamp at portico is fine, but only to supply oil to that one, all the lamps of the house should not be extinguished.”²³

(দেউড়ীতে একটা সরকারী প্রদীপ জ্বালানো চলে, কিন্তু একমাত্র তারি তেল জোগাবার খাতিরে ঘরে ঘরে প্রদীপ নেবানো চলে না।)

Regarding education of woman Tagore’s view was ungendered and crystalline:

“Whatever is worthy to know, has to be known by men as well as by women, not necessary to employ the knowledge for some practical works, but for knowledge’s sake.”²⁴

(যাহা-কিছু জানিবার যোগ্য তাহাই বিদ্যা, তাহা পুরুষকেও জানিতে হইবে, মেয়েকেও জানিতে হইবে---শুধু কাজে খাটাইবার জন্যে যে তাহা নয়, জানিবার জন্যই।)

He reiterates:

“I assume if women study even Kant or Hegel they will still love children and men will not be neglected either.”²⁵

(আমার ধারণা এই যে, মেয়েরা যদি বা কান্ট-হেগেলও পড়ে তবু শিশুদের স্নেহ করিবে এবং পুরুষদের নিতান্ত দূর-ছাই করিবে না।)

Tagore’s idea of a good school is a residential one and should be located close to nature:

²² “শিক্ষা বিধি” রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর, ‘শিক্ষা’, Ibid, P-110। Translated into English by the author of this article.

²³ “রবীন্দ্রনাথের শিক্ষাচিন্তা”, প্রবোধচন্দ্র সেন, Ibid, P-42। Translated into English by the author of this article.

²⁴ “স্ত্রীশিক্ষা”, রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর, ‘শিক্ষা’, Ibid, P-119। Translated into English by the author of this article.

²⁵ Ibid, P-119। Translated into English by the author of this article.

“If we want to establish an ideal school it has to be established away from the localities under a vast sky and in open space with trees. There the teachers will live in solitary pursuit of knowledge and students can grow up within those activities.”²⁶

(আদর্শ বিদ্যালয় যদি স্থাপন করিতে হয় তবে লোকালয় হইতে দূরে নির্জনে মুক্ত আকাশ ও উদার প্রান্তরে গাছপালার মধ্যে তাহার ব্যবস্থা করা চাই । সেখানে অধ্যাপকগণ নিভূতে অধ্যয়ন ও অধ্যাপনায় নিযুক্ত থাকিবেন এবং ছাত্রগণ সেই জ্ঞানচর্চার যজ্ঞক্ষেত্রের মধ্যেই বাড়িয়া উঠিতে থাকিবে ।)

He further adds:

“If possible, the school should have some agricultural land. The required food for the school will be gathered from there, the students will help in the agricultural works..... By this way, they will not only make an emotional relationship with nature, but also a working relationship.”²⁷

(যদি সম্ভব হয় তবে এই বিদ্যালয়ের সঙ্গে খানিকটা ফসলের জমি থাকা আবশ্যিক; এই জমি হইতে বিদ্যালয়ের প্রয়োজনীয় আহাৰ্য্য সংগ্রহ হইবে, ছাত্ররা চাষের কাজে সহায়তা করিবে ।..... এইরূপে তাহারা প্রকৃতির সঙ্গে কেবল ভাবের নহে, কাজের সম্বন্ধও পাতাইতে থাকিবে ।)

For the Western mind this *Topobon* concept of education of Tagore may sound anachronistic. Europe had crossed over this kind of concept, close to monasticism, centuries back. But the idea of a residential school, close to nature and agricultural activities, has a remarkable precedence in Europe too, in the form of the Danish folk high schools (*folkehojskole* as the Danes call it) which not only enlightened the students and farmers around but also had an invaluable contribution in the socio-economic development and democratisation of the Danish society at the grassroot level. Tagore himself had visited one such school, the *International People's College (IPC)* at Helsingor, Hamlet's town in 1930, and must have observed a few things there.

To Tagore, education should be practical and life-oriented—“*Education for Life*”. And for that, books are not always that important:

“This superstition should not be allowed to grow among the boys that reading book is the only means of education.”²⁸

(বই পড়াটাই যে শেখা, ছেলের মনে এই অন্ধ সংস্কার যেন জন্মিতে দেওয়া না হয় ।)

In modern pedagogy ‘*participatory learning*’ or ‘*learning through discussion*’ are well practiced concepts. So not only books, spoken words and audio-visual materials can also become important elements of education like books and other printed materials. Like Grundtvig's ‘*Living Word*’, Tagore too knew the importance of the spoken words— how they are delivered, how they are conveyed, which create an immense impact on the young impressionable minds, simply because:

“A word is not just a word of mouth. It has a link with heart.”²⁹

(মুখের কথা তো শুধু কথা নহে, তাহা মুখের কথা; তাহার সঙ্গে প্রাণ আছে ।)

To live well in the present we need to know the past. The myths, the legends, the folktales, the riddles and the rhymes of a particular culture can be deeply influential for the mental growth of a

²⁶ “শিক্ষা সমস্যা”, রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর, ‘শিক্ষা’, Ibid, P-42 । Translated into English by the author of this article.

²⁷ Ibid, P-42. Translated into English by the author of this article.

²⁸ “আবরণ”, রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর, ‘শিক্ষা’, Ibid, P-67 । Translated into English by the author of this article.

²⁹ Ibid, P—62. Translated into English by the author of this article.

child. And these should be conveyed to a child as early in life as possible. Knowledge about the history of one's own country was pivotal in Tagore's educational ideas and he even took the responsibility to teach history in his own school in *Santiniketan*.

In Tagore's scheme of education cultural activities have a significant role:

*"From modern education one thing has dropped out, that is, culture. By ignoring the wealth of heart, we have emphasised more on the material success. But can this success be truly fulfilled without culture?"*³⁰

(আধুনিক শিক্ষা থেকে একটা জিনিষ কেমন করে স্থখলিত হয়ে পড়েছে, সে হচ্ছে সংস্কৃতি। চিত্তের ঐশ্বর্যকে অবজ্ঞা করে আমরা জীবনযাত্রার সিদ্ধি-লাভকেই একমাত্র প্রাধান্য দিয়েছি। কিন্তু সংস্কৃতিকে বাদ দিয়ে এই সিদ্ধিলাভ কি কখনো যথার্থভাবে সম্পূর্ণ হতে পারে?)

The good use of poetry, song, music, painting, drama and dance in *Santiniketan* is well known. Singsong and music remain inalienable elements in Tagore's educational ideas which not only provide aesthetic pleasure to the students but also provide a harmonious rhythm in life, which unfortunately, the hectic modern world often tends to neglect.

We all know how much religion and religious education remain an explosive issue in our part of the world. Tagore's view was:

*"The religious community who once had nourished the education of the country later themselves became the main hindrance against that education. As knowledge increases more and more it tends to cross over the boundary lines imposed by the traditional religious scriptures."*³¹

(একদিন যে ধর্মসম্প্রদায় দেশের বিদ্যাকে পালন করিয়া আসিয়াছে পরে তাহারাই সে বিদ্যাকে বাঁধা দিবার সর্বপ্রধান হেতু হইয়া উঠিল। কারণ, বিদ্যা যতই বাড়িয়া উঠিতে থাকে ততই সে প্রচলিত ধর্মশাস্ত্রের সনাতন সীমাকে চারি দিকেই অতিক্রম করিতে উদ্যত হয়।)

Tagore who had prayed:

*"Oh the Lord of religion
Hurl your lightning to the shackle of religion
Bring the light of enlightenment to this unfortunate land"*³²

(হে ধর্মরাজ
ধর্মকারার প্রাচীরে বজ্র হানো,
এ অভাগা দেশে জ্ঞানের আলোক আনো।)

- could hardly be an exponent of religious education in the schools. *Santiniketan*, though had a Brahma genesis, gradually disassociated itself with any religious affinity and turned into a secular school. Tagore's view seems to be very close to the universally acknowledged present secular Grundtvigian doctrine of education that *"Faith has nothing to do with school."*

Tagore believed in asceticism during student life:

"During education it is better to suffer from some material deficiency. It is necessary to become habituated with less. By providing them easily with all the needs, the minds of

³⁰ "শিক্ষা ও সংস্কৃতি", রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর, 'শিক্ষা', Ibid, P-193 | Translated into English by the author of this article.

³¹ "ধর্মশিক্ষা", রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর, 'শিক্ষা', Ibid, P-91 | Translated into English by the author of this article.

³² "রবীন্দ্রনাথের শিক্ষাচিন্তা", প্রবোধচন্দ্র সেন, Ibid, P-61 | Translated into English by the author of this article.

the students become indulgent and spoiled. It is not that they themselves always want these. We the elderly people impose our wants on them and make them infatuated with materials."³³

(শিক্ষার অবস্থায় উপকরণের কিছু বিরলতা, আয়োজনের কিছু অভাব থাকাই ভালো; অভ্যস্ত হওয়া চাই স্বল্পতায়। অনায়াসে-প্রয়োজন-জোগানোর দ্বারা ছেলেদের মনটাকে আদুরে করে তোলা তাদের নষ্ট করা। সহজেই তারা এত-কিছু চায় তা নয়। আমরাই বয়স্ক লোকের চাওয়াটা কেবলই তাদের উপর চাপিয়ে তাদেরকে বস্তুর নেশায় দীক্ষিত করে তুলি।)

Being himself perhaps the best lyrical poet in the world, Tagore, surprisingly was not in favour of inclusion of too much poetics (“রসসাহিত্য”) in curriculum. He believed this would only make a lopsided development of the individual psyche. Rather he strongly emphasised for science education. He reiterated that science too should be taught in vernacular:

*“The excuse is, it is impossible to teach science in Bengali. This is a lame excuse of cowardliness. Of course it is difficult. That is why firm resolve is required.”*³⁴

(ওজর এই যে, বাংলা ভাষায় বিজ্ঞানশিক্ষা অসম্ভব। ওটা অক্ষমের ভীষণ ওজর। কঠিন বই কি! সেইজন্যই কঠোর সংকল্প চাই।)

Tagore the realist weighed and judged the whole phenomenon of the English education and its impact on our nation— dialectically. He had repeatedly, almost like a *leit-motif*, expressed the need of education in mother-tongue, but at the same time, highly valued the English education since that was our window to the Western civilization. Tagore was very well aware of the enlightenment that English education had brought to Bengal. He rather coveted that education to spread out deep inside the country. His motto was: “জ্ঞানবিজ্ঞান যেখানকার হউক, ভাষা মাতার হওয়া চাই।” (*From wherever the knowledge may come from, the language should be mother-tongue*).³⁵

Tagore’s idea of enlightenment was all comprehensive:

*“The knowledge and ideas which the Muslims brought in from outside have immersed in different layers in the Indian mind, which are now explicit in our language, behaviour, art, literature and in music. Lately the European education, as if by breaking all dams, have flooded the country.....So in our educational institutes, like the study of Vedic, Mythical, Buddhist, Jain, Islamic and Parsi, the Western education also have to be included.”*³⁶

(বাহির হইতে মুসলমান যে জ্ঞান ও ভাবের ধারা এখানে বহন করিয়া আনিয়াছে সেই ধারা ভারতের চিত্তকে স্তরে স্তরে অভিষিক্ত করিয়াছে, তাহা আমাদের ভাষায় আচারে শিল্পে সাহিত্যে সংগীতে নানা আকারে প্রকাশমান। অবশেষে সম্প্রতি যুরোপীয় বিদ্যার বন্যা সকল বাঁধ ভাঙ্গিয়া দেশকে প্রাবিত করিয়াছে।....অতএব, আমাদের বিদ্যায়তনে বৈদিক, পৌরাণিক, বৌদ্ধ, জৈন, মুসলমান ও পার্সি বিদ্যার সমবেত চর্চায় আনুষঙ্গিকভাবে যুরোপীয় বিদ্যাকে স্থান দিতে হইবে।)

In a gist, Tagore’s vision of education was, it should be in vernacular, should be secular, joyful, non-gendered, history-oriented, rooted in culture, creative and close to nature which will teach us to live in close harmony with nature and among ourselves. And all these will have to take place in an atmosphere, where the role of teachers remain paramount.

Regarding Tagore’s critique of the conventional school system one can rightfully ask whether he himself could succeed in implementing all his ideas in his own school?

³³ “আশ্রমের শিক্ষা”, রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর, ‘শিক্ষা’, Ibid, P-210। Translated into English by the author of this article.

³⁴ “রবীন্দ্রনাথের শিক্ষাচিন্তা”, প্রবোধচন্দ্র সেন, Ibid, P-16। Translated into English by the author of this article.

³⁵ Ibid, P—17। Translated into English by the author of this article.

³⁶ “বিদ্যা সমবায়”, রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর, Ibid, P-153। Translated into English by the author of this article.

The answer, unfortunately, will not be in the affirmative. It is true that Tagore did not always succeed to practice his own visions of education in *Santiniketan* because of the other stakeholders. But that does not rule out the rationale of his criticisms of the existing educational systems. One can also observe, how over the decades, and even during his own life time, *Santiniketan* had to waver from its own pristine ideas of a *Tapobon*-style Brahmacharya *bidyalaya* to its modern state. Through the process Tagore must have learned a few things too!

Tagore, almost in the line of a Grundtvig or a Paulo Freire, sincerely wanted to reach beyond the Caucasian chalk circle of the elite and the middle class education. He made his intentions clear from his early stage of life by reaching out to the teeming millions of the poor villagers around Shelidah, Potisar, Shahjadpur and most effectively, in Surul.

The pioneering experiments of rural development and mass education that Tagore had began in his East Bengal estates, later buoyed with the synergy of Elmhirst, took a professional shape in the *Institute of Rural Reconstruction* at *Sriniketan* in 1922, where we find education to become pivotal in Tagore's idea of a regenerated rural life. By involving the students in the agricultural activities in *Sriniketan* Tagore wanted to intensify the bond between the students and the impoverished rural population around.

“*Siksha-Satra*”, the miniature school of *Sriniketan*, seems to represent more of Tagore's ideas of teaching than the present day *Santiniketan*, which, with the passage of time, had to accommodate national curriculum and middle class aspirations. Tagore himself commented:

*“Sriniketan should be able to provide for its pupils an atmosphere of rational thinking and behaviour which alone can save them from stupid bigotry and moral cowardliness. I myself attach much more significance to the educational possibilities of Siksha-Satra than to the school and college at Santiniketan which are everyday becoming more and more like so many schools and colleges in this country..... It would indeed give me great joy if Sriniketan could at least make use of its opportunities to realise my dream.”*³⁷

May be *Sriniketan* did not live up to the expectation and succeeded as much as Tagore had dreamed of it. But it was a model, and the success of any model depends, not how big it grows up but how much it has been replicated. When in different rural development programs of the government and the non-government organisations in India and abroad, we see how much experiences from the *Sriniketan* model are being incorporated, we know that Tagore's vision was not off the mark altogether.

Tagore was a firm-believer that knowledge should be universal. He never accepted national boundaries in knowledge, and we are witnessing today, how globalization is making the whole concept of the boundaries of the nation-states redundant. The interactive knowledge among different peoples, and an ever increasing cross-culture, are some of the best positive aspects of globalization, and Tagore with his ideas of a universal brotherhood, would be more than happy to accept that. He believed;

“The seed of plant though has flown to our fields from abroad but its germinated life belongs to this soil. When the soil accepts, even if the crop is alien, it does not remain foreign any more. There are examples of that in many fruits and flowers of our country.

³⁷ Letter 83, 19th December, 1937, quoted by Sanatkumar Saha, “শ্রীনিকেতন-কর্মসাপনা”, “কালি ও কলম”, পৌষ, ১৪১৭. “*The Tagore-Elmhirst Correspondence*”, P-115, edited by Krishna Dutta and Andrew Robinson, *The Tagore Centre*, London, UK, 1991.

The successful outcome of English education exists in Bengali form in many homes of Bengal.”³⁸

(শস্যের বীজ যদি-বা বিদেশ থেকে উড়ে এসে আমাদের ক্ষেত্রে পড়ে থাকে তবু তার অঙ্কুরিত প্রাণ এখনকার মাটিরই। মাটি যাকে গ্রহণ করতে পারে সে ফসল বিদেশী হলেও আর বিদেশী থাকে না। আমাদের দেশের বহু ফলে ফুলে তার পরিচয় আছে। ইংরেজী শিক্ষার সার্থকতা আমাদের সাহিত্যে বঙ্গীয় দেহ নিয়ে বিচরণ করছে বাংলার ঘরে ঘরে।)

Tagore who said “*I love India but my India is an idea and not a geographical expression. Therefore I am not a patriot. I shall seek my compatriots all over the world?*”³⁹ never believed in the Kiplingian notion that the twain, the East and the West, shall never meet! Even when the *Swadeshi* movement was running high in Bengal, and Tagore deeply plunged himself in it, he never had any iota of doubt that we still had lot to learn from the West, even from England. Tagore reckoned that it was mainly in the field of education which could be the most suitable meeting place between the East and the West. He pondered:

“Where we Indians can easily relate with the English in real life? Not in trade, not in the imperial affairs. The best place is in the sector of education.”⁴⁰

(ইংরেজের সঙ্গে ভারতবাসীর জীবনের সম্বন্ধ কোথায় সহজে ঘটিতে পারে? বাণিজ্যের ক্ষেত্রে নয়, রাজকীয় ক্ষেত্রে নয়। তার সর্বোৎকৃষ্ট স্থান বিদ্যাদানের ক্ষেত্রে।)

But the inherent profit-motif of the Western dynamics was not unnoticed by Tagore. He was aware that the driving thirst of the West was greed:

“Imperialism’s idea of unity is like the boa-constrictor’s idea. Swallowing is propagated as unity.”⁴¹

(ইম্পেরিয়ালিজম হচ্ছে অজগর সাপের ঐক্যনীতি; গিলে খাওয়াকেই সে এক করা বলে প্রচার করে।)

Regarding greed and material development, Tagore made a nuanced difference between Europe and USA and his comment on America was almost prophetic:

“America for many years has been indulging in material achievements. The nature of that achievement was crude, its greed was of special size. The size kept on expanding. For that the completeness of social man had to give away to the achievements of the material man. Today that giant material man, in the middle of his achievements, by breaking the wheels of his complex and very expensive vehicle, has slanted in the dust.”⁴²

(আমেরিকা দীর্ঘকাল থেকে বৈষয়িক সিদ্ধির নেশায় মেতে ছিল। সেই সিদ্ধির আয়তন ছিল অতি স্থূল, তার লোভ ছিল একান্ত মাপের। এর ব্যাপ্তি ক্রমশ বেড়েই চলেছিল। তার ফলে সামাজিক মানুষের যে পূর্ণতা সেটা চাপা পড়ে গিয়ে বৈষয়িক মানুষের কৃতিত্ব সব ছাড়িয়ে উঠেছিল। আজ হঠাৎ সেই অতিকায় বৈষয়িক মানুষটি আপন সিদ্ধিপথের মাঝখানে অনেক দামের জটিল যানবাহনের চাকা ভেঙ্গে, কল বিগড়িয়ে, ধুলায় কাত হয়ে পড়েছে।)

Globalization and connectivity in the cyber space came hand in hand. These two together have brought the diverse nations and peoples of the world in such a close proximity which we never had witnessed before. It is true that the present day youth are not fond of books like their

³⁸ “ছাত্র সম্ভাষণ”, রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর, ‘শিক্ষা’, Ibid, P-215। Translated into English by the author of this article.

³⁹ “*Most Dear to All Muses*”, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnen, “*A Centenary Volume: Rabindranath Tagore*”, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, Rabindra Bhavan, 1961, P-xxii.

⁴⁰ “ছাত্রশাসনতন্ত্র”, রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর, ‘শিক্ষা’, Ibid, P-143। Translated into English by the author of this article.

⁴¹ “শিক্ষার মিলন”, রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর, ‘শিক্ষা’, Ibid, P-166। Translated into English by the author of this article.

⁴² “শিক্ষা ও সংস্কৃতি”, রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর, ‘শিক্ষা’, Ibid, P-191। Translated into English by the author of this article.

previous generations. But the Facebook generation receive lot of knowledge from the internet world and and get influenced by some positive writings of the bloggers and twitters. And may even become socially active in their cyber inteactions. So books no longer remain, and should also not be, the sole medium of educaiton or source of social values.

But one dismal impact of globalisation on education remains in the fact that it is turning education fast into a commodity. Education-business has become a booming business these days and lot of educational institutions now run like the corporate offices with international business links. This is a total anathema to Tagore's ideas. He would be immensely pained to see that knowledge being turned into a mere saleable item with a price tag on it.

Besides, internet and cyber technologies are also spreading an insipid monolingualism, as computer language is not only becoming the formal communication language among us, even sentences, half-sentences and expressions of computer, are imposing an identical language all over the globe. Even the type fonts are same now! The world would rather be a boring place if we all eat the same McDonald food or wear the same Levi jeans and write in the same type fonts! The threat of monoliterarism seems to be a real one now!

Tagore, on the contrary, always remained a firm believer in the unity in diversity. He believed:

“Real unity will be established on real diversities. Those who desire to usher in new age have to practice the diversities in order to be united. They have to keep in mind that through this endeavour the liberation of not any particular individual nation will take place, but the whole mankind will be liberated.”⁴³

(সত্যকার স্বাতন্ত্র্যের উপর সত্যকার ঐক্যের প্রতিষ্ঠা হবে। যারা নবযুগের সাধক ঐক্যের সাধনার জন্যেই তাদের স্বাতন্ত্র্যের সাধনা করতে হবে আর তাদের মনে রাখতে হবে, এই সাধনায় জাতিবিশেষের মুক্তি নয়, নিখিল মানবের মুক্তি।)

Tagore's *Weltanschauung* was essentially a profound believe in the oneness of mankind. As we have mentioned earlier Tagore was not fond of the idea that state should formulate the national educational curriculum, as willy-nilly, the ideas that dominate the curriculum often represent the ideas of the ruling class. But one good thing about cyber technology is it has sabotaged the control of the state machinery in different spheres of our lives, including state's control on knowledge. Wikileaks is no accident but an inevitability of technology, and knowledge and informations are no longer anybody's prerogative. Even regimes are collapsing in many parts of the undemocratic world as young people have begun to communicate with each others in the virtual cyber space. It is a brave new world we are living in now! And for Tagore, one of whose main motto of life was to seek better understanding among the nations and peoples in a free world, nothing could be more coveted.

“I am not really interested in the details of Chinese politics nor of their antiquities nor of their ancient history. Kalidas Nag is our historian and a student of Levy, Kshitimohon Sen is a Sanskritist and an authority on Buddhism, Nandalal Bose is an artist who has already studied Chinese sculpture and painting, let them study the past... But you and I, Elmhirst, will try to meet their students, their literary men, their actors, painters, poets, musicians and playwrights. We must try to find out what the men and women, who will build the new China, are feeling and thinking.”⁴⁴

⁴³ “শিক্ষার মিলন”, রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর, “শিক্ষা”, Ibid, P-167 | Translated into English by the author of this article.

⁴⁴ “Personal Memories of Tagore”, Leonard Elmhirst, “A Centenary Volume: Rabindranath Tagore”, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 1961, P-19.

Tagore told this to Elmhirst in 1924, prior to their visit to China. The clock has turned full circle, and almost a hundred years later now, what Tagore had said can still serve as the guideline for any new visitor to the numerically, and economically as well, the most important country of the present world. Everyone in the present globalised world is now keen to know, and learn— the Chinese mind!

Not only his pronounced ideas on education— written or spoken, Tagore's life itself can be profoundly educative too. Who can provide a better role model of a perfect artist and a perfect man to be emulated by the young people, for centuries to come, as Rabindranath Tagore?

Education of the future generation is too precious a thing to be left to the state or to the market forces alone. But the power of global economy is a sector where our subjective wishes will not cause much change. The juggernaut of the market laws will run its course in any case. But education remains a soft power, where right investment and appropriate intervention, can bring in some positive results. And if we have learned anything from Tagore, that is, we should never give up!

The history of civilization is actually the history of education. And Tagore's voice was the voice of a civilization—from Nalanda to *Santiniketan*, as if a golden thread for the quest of knowledge, spreaded out over a millennium.

The monoculture of philistinism, a resultant of globalization, targets only one aspect of our human nature—greed. But human beings are much more than just buyers or sellers in the market. Human beings are sensitive, rational creatures and the only species who can dream, and can even make those dreams into reality. But dreams are expensive. Resourcewise, and what is more important today—timewise. It may take generations for us to grasp Tagore's educational ideas comprehensively in all its manifolds, let alone implement all those in praxis. But it is an endeavour worthy to take, and a sacrifice, worthy to make.

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