



Saarth E-Journal

Saarth E-Journal of Research

E-mail : sarthejournal@gmail.com
www.sarthejournal.com

ISSN NO : 2395-339X
Peer Reviewed
Vol.4 No.18

Impact Factor
Quarterly
Jan-Feb-Mar2019

A STUDY OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S RELATIONSHIP WITH ECO SYSTEM & HIS MYSTIC LOVE FOR NATURE

Dr. Kavita. J. Patel

Abstract:

Human life and work cannot be thought of without an environment. The physical, biological, psychological and social factors in the environment are essential and play an important role in the normal functioning of a human being. It is only when these factors exceed certain limiting values considered normal or admissible that there is an undesired effect on the physical, mental health or basic living of human beings. Virtually, all of us wish to live in a world without trash, dirt, disease, pollution, poverty and degradation of environment. Obviously this is not available to us. How many of us are aware and concerned about our environment? Hence, human life cannot be thought of in isolation. It is always in interface with physical, biological, psychological and social parts in the immediate environment with which all human activity is involved. As a facilitator, as a teacher I strongly believe that education has been recognized as an effective means to impart scientific orientation to environmental management that facilitates on-going-development. Henceforth, educating the young in this field would assume importance. In the first place it would be easy to sensitize and modify personal choices regarding one's relationship with environment. Secondly, it would be useful in protecting the environment or would result in less destruction as environment responsiveness would be imparted through various resources and ways.

By environment I mean not only our immediate surrounding but also a variety of issues connected with human activity, productivity, basic living and its impact on natural resources such as land, water, atmosphere, forests, dams, habitat, health, energy resources, wild life etc. Like other animals man depends on environment and becomes an environmental factor with respect to other members in an ecosystem. Therefore, man must overcome his belief of being dominant over nature. A problem oriented real life situation is important for environment edification. Any initiative taken for environmental training can be defined as a process of learning about the existing situation through which sufficient knowledge can be gained to understand environmental problems and contribute towards solving them. Ecological insight doesn't stop with acquiring information about environment but also helps

acquire attitudes and values conducive to environment protection and understanding of the interdependence of nature and people.

Key Words: nature, flowers, environment, ecosystem, holistic, advocacy

The present paper is a true source of guidance to the people to act as more responsible citizens with an increased level of wisdom. Of the many facets of Rabindranath Tagore's genius, the one of the well known is his aesthetic appreciation of nature's bounty. What is less known is the effort he made to promote Janasiksha and the popularize science through various means, ranging from social intervention through visva-bharati's rural extension activities. Rabindranath Tagore's holistic approach to the totality of human experience upon this earth--- as far as I can understand it from what he wrote and equally, what he did at Santiniketan in terms of educational innovation—led him to an interesting philosophical position. Rabindranath's love for flower and nature is almost proverbial. This fact has been depicted in his writings. The love was so intense that he created beautiful and resonant names in Bengali to some of the flowers which grew in Santiniketan and for which he had special liking.

Tagore's prophetic vision of the ominous environmental trends, was expressed through his writings and speeches, which are relevant today even after more than a century. The effort is to discuss this important and relevant global issue while focusing attention on Tagore's universal message of love and charity through the world of flowers. At the same time it will unfold a glorious facet of Rabindranath Tagore's holistic creativity in relation to the flowers of his surroundings at Santiniketan.

This is an attempt to say with flowers something about science and poetry i.e. relevance as reflected in the life and work of poet-laureate Rabindranath Tagore. Tagore's works, his poetry, songs, dramas, novels, short stories and letters highlight his thoughts and feelings on flowers, his love and care and deep concern for them. In the deepest sense, the poet was a prophet and a great teacher. The focus is on Tagore's message of love and compassion for both animate and inanimate nature of which the flowers are the external manifestations, a strategy symbolic of reintegration of man with the universe. His aesthetics had its own ethics. This was the real thrust and message of a Tagore's love for flowers. Since the clouds of serious hazards hovering over human life, it is relevant to study Tagore again and listen to his message of love and charity that he tried to propagate through his 'Messengers of Beauty'

*Tender and young trees,
Welcome guests you are
To our home yard
Come home to us
In the loving company of men
With your dark green leaves fluttering musically
Come, and bring to our threshold
The joyful clamour of life
Jostling among your twigs and branches.*

(Translation from Bana-Bani)

Rabindranath's love for trees and flowers reached its climax when he experienced a strange feeling of oneness with all forms of life and a perception of the cosmic sense of love and joy in the whole universe. In the preface to Bana-Bani he asserts, "I have a perception of this joy in the flowers, fruits and leaves of trees. This gives me tastes of deliverance. I hear the voice of a pure and uninterrupted intermingling of life with life which pervades the whole universe." In the opening poem the poet addressed the tree as a valiant son of the soil and a pioneer animated creature imparting dynamism to the universe. He mentioned the great role

of trees in beautifying this earth, sustaining life thereon and constantly helping mankind with their varied gifts. The poet concluded the poem with the words

*.....from the realm of man, I come to you, O tree, as a messenger
I speak for him---for man who is animated by your breath
Who rests in your cool loving shade, who wears your flowery garland?
O friend of man, I am a poet charmed by your music and I bring to you with
Humble greetings this verse- offering.....*

(This gratitude took practical shape when the poet introduced tree-planting at Santiniketan on 21st, 1928 as a festival)

Tagore was a romantic poet. The ideals of his innermost life –love and delight--- found their full and natural expression whenever he came into contact with nature, the trees and flowers of his gardens. He affirms this again and again in the twilight hours of his life---

*That O tree is why I come and sit
In front of you
I want my words to grow easy
Under your deep shade.....
Today in the twilight hours
Let all thoughts and sorrow of this life
Gather close to my consciousness, and blaze forth
Like the evening star
The last utterance of this life---
“ I love ”*

The exotic flowering trees adapted to the climate of Santiniketan and found a place in the poems of Rabindranath Tagore. There are some flowers of foreign origin which Tagore made his own by giving them Indian names and adding them to the beauty of Santiniketan. In 1924, Tagore traveled to China, Japan, Colombo, France, Italy and South America and evidences are there about his wide familiarity and intimacy with a large number of foreign flowers.

*Gardens are the link between men
And the world in which they live
For men in every age have felt the need
To reconcile themselves with their surrounding
And have created gardens to satisfy
Their ideals and aspirations.*

Sylvia Crowe

This accepted fact is further substantiated by the volume of Bana-Bani (1931) dedicated to flowers and trees by Tagore in which he emphasized upon the significance of each flower and tree through a process of mystic love and deep communion with universal nature.

In the preface to Bana-Bani Tagore has written

“My mute friends around my house who have drunk deep into the love of sunlight have extended their hands towards the sky. Their call has entered my mind. These trees symbolize the musical instrument of the universal “baul” in their every fibre rings the vibration of a simple tune, rhythm dancing from branch to branch, from leaves to leaves. If we listen to their lyrics with a musing mind we feel within the voice of liberation.”

Love of flowers would then mean that one is drawn by the psychic vibration and consequently by the soul in one's own self.

Alas! The modern man could hardly understand Tagore and his philosophy of love rightly, otherwise the men, so-called modern, would not have been worried as to draw the attention of the world towards the need for conservation of environment. Life on this planet is a huge, complex network of interrelated forms and functions----a network that tends naturally towards equilibrium but that which can easily be deflected into chaos. Cultural, economic and scientific seed of industrial revolution were planted long before the 18th century which changed man's ecological status for all time. In replacing the power of muscles with the power of machine, man transformed his capacity largely to intervene in natural process of every kind. In harnessing his new power to old and new activities in factory and farm, he changed not only the lives of the entire population but also the relationship with every other part of the eco-system.

Gifted with a deep insight the poet formed mental images of a dreadful scenario which is palpable after 100 years, a world with a polluted mind and a polluted perception. The world that was ours is now no more ours.

***....No safe shelter, no royal dinner there.
My heart longs for freedom, fresh air and vigour,
A wide expanse of the bosom
Allow me to snap this tie
For a sweet touch of the vibration of life
Flowing through the universe.***

Last but not least, according to Tagore's philosophy of love, which has its basis in science, that man is but a part of the totality of nature? He is embedded in its overall structure. There is a secret bond of love which binds man with both animate and inanimate nature and with the entire creation. Any act of violence on his part to break this tie or eco-system would only accelerate the process of his slow and agonizing death along with his empire. In this mission of purification of mind Tagore has utilized his flowers as 'the Messengers of the Beautiful'.

Tagore's love, care and concern for flowers is part of a wider issue---man's relationship with the universe. The world-wide anxiety over pollution is symptomatic of an insane anti-nature philosophy of life. To correct and save ourselves we must go back to the primal sources. The love of flowers is a strategy symbolic of the reintegration of man with the endless cosmic world.

In fact, flowers and flowering plants have entered Tagore's volumes of verses in increasing number like Purabi (1925), Bana-Bani (1931), Prantik (1938), Sesh-Lekha (1941), Aakash Pradip (1938), Senjuti (1938). Tagore had been inspired by as many as one hundred and eight flowers/flowering plants for his lyrical compositions. There are some flowers of foreign origin which Tagore made his own by giving them Indian names and adding them to the beauty of Santinketan. I quote from the poem Purabi (Bidesi Phul):

***O Exotic Flower, when I asked
What's your name?
You only nodded your head, so I understood
Why bother about name
Nothing else but your smile
That's your introduction"***

In a paper entitled "Realisation in Love" read at the Harvard University, USA, in 1913 the poet had cited the instance of the flower to explain his concept of beauty and joy. I quote

***"What to the bee in nature is merely colour and scent?
And the marks or spots which show the right tracks to the honey,
Is to the human heart beauty and joy untrammelled by necessity?"***

They bring a love letter to the heart written in many coloured inks”

He said that shape, colours and smell of flowers are essential to attract the bees for fertilization which develop into the seeds and the seeds regenerate into the new plants, ‘Had these facts of science been not operative, the earth would have been turned into a fugitive long.

According to Tagore, this is a practical aspect served by a flower.

“...when the flower knocks at the door of our heart with its outward manifestation of hues and charms it comes as the messenger of the beautiful, the one whose soul is the bliss of love”.

This leads us gradually to our union with our great lover, the repository of everlasting joy, from whom all objects have their birth”.

Even during the his life time he was alarmed by acts of cruelty to nature and emphasised through his message of the forest the importance of forest cover and trees for survival of man, the flora and the fauna. His love for flowers wells out from his songs and poems. It is manifested in every avenue of Santiniketan, the abode of peace---truly a place where the whole world meets in one nest. On an end note

“Treat nature with charity and understanding and nature will repay you with unfailing gifts. Treat nature aggressively with greed and violence and incomprehension, wounded nature will turn and destroy you”

- Aldous Huxley

References:

1. Basak, Kakoli. *Rabindranath Tagore: A humanist*. New Delhi: B.K. Taneja Classical Publishing Company, 1991.
2. Chakrabarti, Santosh. *Studies in Tagore: Critical Essays*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2004.
3. Mukherji S.B. *The Poetry of Tagore*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1977.
4. Naraveni S, Viswanath. *An Introduction to Rabindranath Tagore*. Madras: Macmillan, 1977.
5. Nath, Bhupendra. *Rabindranath Tagore: His Mystic Religious Philosophy*. New Delhi: Neelam Janeja crown Publication, 1985.
6. P. K. Ghosh, G. N. Bhattacharya and S. Mandal: *Tagore and Flowers*. New Delhi: Publication and Information Directorate, 1993.
7. Trikha B, Manorama. “Mystical Experiences in Tagore’s poetry”. Perspectives on Rabindranath Tagore. By T.R. Sharma. New Delhi: Vimal Prakasan Publishers, 1986.

Dr.Kavita J Patel

Head Dept. of English

GLS (Sadguna& B.D) College for Girls, Ahmedabad