



RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT AND PRACTICES PREVAILING IN PATHA-BHAVANA, SANTINIKETAN: A SITUATION ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

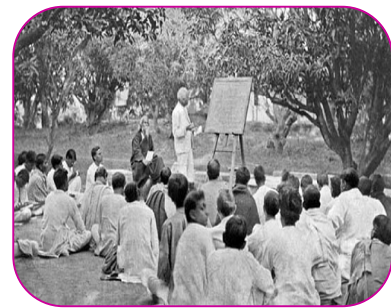
According to the need and demand of time, some great educators in India had applied their thought on education and further to put their thought into practice they had established schools based on their vision of education. Rabindranath Tagore is one of them who have created Bramhacharya Ashrama at Santiniketan presently known as Patha-Bhavana. The unique practices prevailing in Patha-Bhavana, gives an idea about Tagore's way of transforming his educational thought into reality. The article points out the educational thought that influenced Tagore in creation of Bramhacharya Ashram. This article also upholds the current status of those ongoing educational practices of Patha-Bhavana, how far those practices encapsulate the original educational thought of Tagore and whether Patha-Bhavana truly represents the practical application as per what Tagore dreamt of.

KEYWORDS: Rabindranath Tagore , Patha-Bhavana , Bramhacharya Ashram.

INTRODUCTION

Schools may differ in various aspects like their aims and objectives, teaching approach adopted, the total atmosphere for teaching-learning process, the manner in which the school day is organized and the mode of assessment. These variations are indeed the outcome of the differing ideologies practiced by schools. The present day education system is purely an instruction of information enterprise, supported by a subject and time bound curriculum, which neither relates to the needs or abilities of the learner nor takes into consideration the way children learn successfully. Instead of being child-oriented it is subject-oriented. The schools focus on competition with others, mastery of subject matter for getting better marks or grades than on learning in cooperation with and from one another for personal growth. This is not exclusive to Indian phenomenon, rather all over the world education is largely reductionist, materialist, ego enforcing, and devoid of the joys of the spirit (Comelissen, 2003 as cited in Sibia, 2006:8). Eventually India has a glorious past of traditional Gurukul system of education since the Vedic Period. In continuation of that legacy, time and again many ashram schools were established in different time to serve different purposes. Some of the schools are based on the ideologies of educational thinkers, some on religion and some other on certain specific purposes. Thus the educational ideas of Indian thinkers provide a base to build a perspective for a new system of education.

Ramakrishna Mission is one of the ashrama schools in India. Religion forms the background of all activities of the ashrama. The main source of inspiration is the teaching of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. Swami Vivekananda envisioned education as life-building, man-making and character-making instrument. This is the ideal of education which he



tried to put into effect in Ramakrishna missions. These institutions endeavour to attend all round growth and development so that the learners may become strong and healthy citizens of the country rooted in sound moral principles, learn to respect the higher values of life and become conscious of their obligation to the society and the people. The Ramakrishna Math and the Ramakrishna Mission have 152 centres in India and many branches spread all over the world.

The schools based on the ideologies of Sri Aurobindo focuses on integral education that addresses the totality of the being as formulated by Sri Aurobindo. Sri Aurobindo's educational thought lays emphasis on holistic development of the children and education paced according to the needs and capacities of the child (Sibia, 2006:1). The schools seek to educate not only the body, the emotions and the intellect but also work towards making these instruments function in light of its divine essence, the psychic being. A profound spiritual vision and understanding of these Ashram Schools is that education is the process of awakening and evoking the true being, the psychic presence within, and through that process, bringing about a progressive unfolding of the whole person.

The theme of the education and training of disadvantaged groups becomes urgent due to growing deprivation and social exclusion. Tribal Ashram schools have been viewed as effective institutions to meet the educational needs of the tribals living in interior, most backward and scattered habitations where opening up of normal schools is not viable. One of the major thrusts of Ashram school is imparting skills in crafts & vocations, apart from providing general education (Sujatha, 1990:4). Ekalavya Model Residential School (EMRS) is a scheme for model residential school for Indian tribals (Scheduled Tribes, ST) set up in States/UTs by the Tribal Ministry, Government of India. The objective of EMRS is to provide quality education to Scheduled Tribes (ST) students in remote areas, not only to enable them to avail reservation in high and professional educational courses and jobs in government and public and private sectors but also to have access to the opportunities in education at par with the non- ST population.

Students walk slowly to school and runs away from school when it is over. But Rabindranath Tagore dreamt of the reverse about his ashram. The educational philosophy of Tagore is different from that of the contemporary thinkers which bears some unique features of its own. To transform his philosophy into practice he has applied his innovative educational thought by his own hand in his experimental institution, Bramhacharya Ashrama at Santiniketan. Tagore (Tagore, Visva-Bharati Bulletin, No.-30, p. 27 as cited in Neogy, 2010) wrote, "Its (Ashram Vidyalaya) system of holding open-air classes, teaching of languages by direct method and handicrafts, development of civic responsibilities by training in self-government have been accepted and introduced in all progressive schools worth the name". Tagore was beyond any prescribed hardcore Curriculum. Tagore considered freedom as an integral part of human development. Tagore (Bhattacharya, 2013:86) says, "Education has learning only when it is imparted through the path of freedom". He wanted to include the learning experiences that foster flexibility, freedom and fullness among the students. Tagore envisioned learning that will not be text-based rather will be based on real life experiences. According to him (Tagore, 1961: 469), "True education is to realize at every step how our training and knowledge have organic connection with our surroundings". Joy, freedom, mutual trust and co-operation are the basic principles of his Ashrama.

What influenced Tagore to open Bramhacharya Ashrama in Santiniketan?

Tagore's aversion from conventional schools, its sterile syllabi and its method of teaching which was mechanical, soulless and uninspiring, induced him to formulate a new system of education rooted in the ancient tradition and culture of the country. This school at Santiniketan is the answer of his childhood grievance as expressed by Tagore (Tagore, 1961: 60-61), "The rooms were cruelly dismal with their walls on ground like police man, the houses were more like a pigeonholed box than a human habitation with no decoration, no picture, not a touch of colour, not an attempt to attract the child's mind". While recalling his first encounter with the schooling system, he (Neogy, 2010) said: "Nature has methods of its own in these matters, but my school masters had theirs which were quite different".

Tagore wanted to break the isolation of school from home and the society. His idea was to bridge the gap between school and home on one hand and school and society on the other. He wanted to present through his school a section of the life in the society with its realities so that the pupils might understand the practical utility of learning through experiences. He (Neogy, 2010) said, "We rob the child of his earth to teach him Geography, of language to teach him Grammar. His hunger is for epic, but he is supplied with chronicles of facts and dates." He wanted the boys and girls to be fearless, free and open-minded, self-reliant, and full of the spirit of inquiry and self-critical, with their roots deep in the soil of India but reaching out to the world in understanding, neighbourliness, cooperation and material and spiritual progress (Kabir, 1955). Tagore (Tagore, 1917:116) believed that, "The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence". This is the humanistic aim of education in Tagore's philosophy. Actually humanism leads one to the Spiritualism. He believes that the ultimate aim of education is self-realization that can be achieved by an inner harmony between man, nature and God. Child should be free to adopt his own way learning which will lead to all round development: development of imagination, creative free thinking, constant curiosity and alertness of the mind. Tagore held that the entire universe is one family. Mission and vision of this Ashram in Santiniketan is to study the mind of man in its realization of different aspects of truth from diverse points of view through study of the different cultures of the East on the basis of their underlying unity, to approach the West from the standpoint of such a unity of the life and thought of the East, to seek to realize in a common fellowship of study the meeting of the East and the West. About the nature and objective of his institution, Tagore (Tagore, 1917:116) had clarified, "It must be an ashram where men have gathered for the highest end of life, in the peace of nature; where life is not merely meditative, but fully away in its activities". The major objective of establishing Patha-Bhavana was to enrich the intellectual and cultural life of Santiniketan.

About Patha-Bhavana:

In 1901, Tagore established 'Brahmacharya Ashrama' in Santiniketan which started functioning with no more than five students: Rathindranath Tagore, Sudhir Chandra Nan, Prem Kumar Gupta, Gour Govindo Gupta and Ashoke Kumar Gupta. The teachers then were Rebachand, Jagodananda Rai and Brahmabandhab Upadhyay along with Rabindranath Tagore himself. Later it was called the Visva-Bharati Purba Bibhaga. From 1925 this school came to be

known as Patha-Bhavana. The institution is situated in front of Singha Sadan and north of Gour Prangan. This Ashram Vidyalaya is the natural outcome of Tagore's educational thought.

Presently, Patha-Bhavana is partly a residential co-educational school for elementary, secondary and higher secondary education. It is a partly residential and co-educational school for the students of 'Sishu Bibhaga' (Class-II to Class-IV), 'Madhya Bibhaga' (Class-V to Class-VII) to 'Adya Bibhaga' (Class-VIII to Class-X). But from 2010, Class-XI and Class-XII which were under 'Uttar Siksha Sadana' and from 2013 Class-I, which was under Mrinalini Ananda Pathsalas has been under Patha-Bhavana. The structure and compositions of Patha-Bhavana is given in Table-1:

Table-1: Classes of Patha-Bhavana under Each Bibhaga

Bibhaga	Class
Sishu Bibhaga	I to V
Madhya Bibhaga	VI to VIII
Adya Bibhaga	IX to XII

Patha-Bhavana is the laboratory where the fundamental tenets of Tagore's educational philosophy and doctrines of education are translated into practice. The institution is supposed to uphold Tagore's vision of going beyond the text-based learning and rote learning, to add to the completeness of an individual through holistic development. The school is likely to manifest learning in natural environment with the heart in

closeness to nature without any superficial barriers between teachers and students. The practices prevailing in Patha-Bhavana are as follows:

1. Baitalik (Morning Assembly):

Baitalik is an integral practice that represents Tapovan culture during Vedic period. All the activities in Patha-Bhavana start with Baitalik. Since the time of Tagore, Baitalik holds early in the morning at GourPrangan in the open air. The students, non-teaching staffs and the teachers gather at GourPrangan at 6.30 am. The students stand in arrays according to their class. Selected students having good vocal and the teachers stand before them, separately. Among the students with good vocal, senior students get priority. Prayer starts with the ringing of large 'Ghanta' (bell) from GhantaGhar at SinghaSadana situated at GourPrangan. First, an Upanisadic mantra, 'Om PitahNohasi' as prescribed in the Dinalipi (Diary) is chanted by the entire attendant with dedication. After that, one Rabindrasangeetis performed by them. The songs are selected previously by the students with approval of the concerned teachers. Different songs are selected so that it does not become monotonous. It is believed that the prayer in Baitalik supplies positive mental energy to all the Ashramiks that motivates the engagement in the proceedings during the whole day. Through attending and participating in Baitalik students become disciplined in an informal way. The activities performed in Baitalik help in inculcation of values among the students. Baitalik boosts up the entire day ahead that makes the platform, the atmosphere for students to learn, teachers to teach and others to perform their duties. However, every Ashramiki.e. teachers, students and also the non-teaching staffs are supposed to attend it. But today the scenario is totally different. A small part of students and teachers do not attend Baitalik. Some teachers come after Baitalik and enter directly the class. The non-teaching staffs seem so reluctant to attend Baitalik. Is it still continuing with the same spirit? If teachers remain absent then how the students will be motivated by those teachers to join Baitalik?

2. Upasana (Weekly Prayer):

On 20th August, 1828 Raja Ram Mohan Roy established 'Brahma Samaj'. The very day was Wednesday. Tagore was a follower of Bramha Dharma. So, to recall the day of establishment of BramhaSamaj, Upasana at KanchMandir has become a scheduled programme. The UpasanaGriha (prayer hall called as KanchMandir) is made from Belgian Glasses (Kanch) that is why it is named so. The 'KarmiMandali' assigns the responsibility of organizing 'Upasana' to each department of Visva-Bharati, rotationally. All the students and teachers, who attend Upasana, dress in white. They sit on the 'Sataranchi' (carpet) spread over the floor, some sit outside the room on the steps, whenever the attendance is high. On normal days the 'Upasana' is called 'ChotoMandir' where crowd is comparatively very less, but in special occasions e.g. BarshoBaran during Nababarsha (Bengali New Year), RabindraJayanti (Birth Anniversary of Tagore), BarshoShesh (Bengali Year Ending), Christmas, Maghotsava, Vasantosava (holi), the crowd becomes large; it is then called 'BoroMandir'. Then many sit on the ground outside the Mandir. The whole activity of 'Upasana' during 'ChotoMandir' continues for nearly 30 minutes and during 'BoroMandir', it continues for not more than one and half hours.

Generally the 'Upasana' holds in the morning. But during RabindraJayanti (25th of Baisakh) and Christmas (25th December), activities of 'Upasana' held at the evening also. Generally, all the activities start at 6.45 AM (in the summer) and at 7.15 AM (in the winter). The bell hanging from the roof of KanchMandir, starts ringing from 2-3 minutes before the routine time indicating that each moment is passing on. In this way the bell calls the Ashramiks to the prayer. The activities of 'Upasana' start with pure silence that works as a natural balm in that purely spiritual settings that brings inner peace. Then the upanisadic mantra, 'Om PitahNohasi' is chanted with devotion by all the people in the Mandir. Each Wednesday there is a particular theme (like 'Ananda', Freedom, Devotion, 'Mukti', Sacrifice.) on which the 'Acharya' (The 'Acharya' is a teacher on behalf of the department on which the responsibility of 'Upasana' is assigned.) reads out either some writings of his/her own or writings of great persons or translated version of any other writing or reading pieces on Bramha Dharma. Inside the 'UpasanaGriha' there are three asanas for three special

people. The asana at the left is patronized by the 'Acharya', while the other asana is kept vacant during 'ChotoMandir' but occupied by another teacher during 'BoroMandir'. The asana in the middle is kept vacant in all the occasion, considering the holy presence of Gurudeva in that place. This practice becomes a tool to develop spirituality among the students. The students, who are going to participate in singing Rabindrasangeet during UpasanaatKanchMandir, prepare themselves prior to Wednesdays through rehearsal after the routine classes.

Upasana is a natural outcome of the Tapovan culture and also the culture of BrahmacharyaAshrama. Although Tagore never imposed compulsion, all the teachers and the students are supposed to attend Upasana regularly. But it is surprising that only a handful number of teachers and students attend Upasana in a regular basis. There are plenty students who have never attended Upasana even once in his entire student life till now. The teachers and students seem too reluctant to attend Upasana. They are happy to enjoy the Wednesdays as holidays. It is also disappointing that there is no mechanism till now to engage them in such holy practice! Should any measures be taken in this purpose?

3. Open Air Class:

Tagore's idea was that of learning in a natural environment, in the open, and under the trees. Based on his experiences, Tagore (O'Connell, 2012) argued that education should seek to develop sensitivity in the child through the direct experience of nature when her/his consciousness is at its freshest level. He recognized early childhood as the most critical time for developing empathy and the ability to connect with one's surroundings.

Open Air Class is one of the unique features of Patha-Bhavana. The regular classes hold in open environment in different settings: at GhantaTala, under the blue sky, under the shade of the trees mostly in AmraKunja, BokulBithi and Sal Bithilike Open Bedi, under the Chata and sometimes in traditional classrooms inside the concrete walls (mainly, Class-IX to Class-XII). The school premises are surrounded by plenty of evergreen trees like Sal, Bokul, Chatim, Mango, Ashoke etc. which makes the place so enjoyable that students love to go to school every day. Open air classes provide with healthy learning environment that leads to good mental health. The class environment in the lap of nature carries spiritual essence of ancient Tapovan culture. Students mingle with nature and learn about various plants and trees from their surroundings.

Teachers sit on a concrete slab whereas the students sit on the 'Asana' that they carry individually with them every day, keeping their shoes off. They spread their 'Asanas' over the ground. There remains no distance between the teachers and the students. They sit in U-shape so that the teacher is able to interact to each of them with ease and can see their faces. The students are learnt that the dirt is not dirty. Students are not afraid of rain, of wind, of sun rather during the class they are allowed to enjoy the rain, the sunlight in the winter and the nature surroundings the school to realize the essence of the rain and the sun in winter in particular and nature in general.

Some of the Open Bedis are equipped with black boards. In the other cases, students carry the black board from the office and set it on a wooden stand. If required, teachers are bound to take the students to the concrete building to use the technology in the classroom. Students feel hard in attending class during scorching heat or heavy rain or trembling winter in the open. To overcome such hardship, the students are taken to the Chata or inside the concrete building classrooms. Such flexibility in terms of flipping of classrooms and open air class helps the students in making good adjustment with the nature without compromising with learning. Do such way out takes Patha-Bhavana beyond Tagore's thought of open air class? Is Patha-Bhavana deviating from Tagore's vision in the context of learning environment? Moreover, one thing that irritates the learners and teachers is the passing of visitors through the roads beside the Open Bedis and beside the trees during the class hour. They also take photos. Although most of the students are habituated with such interruptions, some feel seriously inattentive and embarrassing. Should the visitors be allowed to travel at least during class hours?

4. Movement of Class:

Normally in the traditional school system, classrooms for different classes are fixed and the teachers move to take classes. But in Patha-Bhavana the situation is reverse. The classes in Patha-Bhavana are not fixed; there is no specific place for a specific class. Here teachers remain fixed whereas students move from teachers to teachers according to the routine periods. Keeping this in mind five minutes interval is allotted between two subsequent classes in their regular class routine. Apparently it seems that during in-between classes in case of traditional school system, loss of opportunity time is only on the part of the teacher whereas in case of Patha-Bhavana the loss is multiplied by the number of students that make it quite large. Again, it seems that students may create chaos during movement that may further hamper other classes. But Tagore (Tagore, 1961, p. 102) perceived as, "Children must dance, they must be restless, when they think and the body becomes restless and ripples with a variety of movement that helps to keep their muscles in harmony with the mind". Movement, which we can also recognize in his demand for the mobile school, is important because it not only facilitates learning many things through direct observation but also keeps our awakened mental faculties constantly alert and receptive through contact with ever-varying scenes and objects (Jalan, 1976).

Indeed, change in class setting reduces mental stress, induces motivation and generates interest among the students to enjoy learning and prepares young minds for the next class. This practice is the symbolic of burden-free and natural learning through freedom and dynamic mind. Movement of the students helps in their physical development breaking the inertia in sitting in a single place, facilitates stress relaxation that contributes to the level of concentration, so the classes become non-monotonous. Such a practice inculcates time management among the students as they ends one class in time and then attends the next class in proper time. So the students do not feel stagnant and become active which make them ready to receive. This practice also enables students to enjoy their learning. In reality students feel uncomfortable sitting on the ground. They feel better sitting on benches and desks. It is also to consider, will prolonged sitting over years affect their body posture?

5. Student-Teacher Relationship:

Tagore did not too much emphasis on process and methods than on the teachers. His demands over teachers were very high. According to him, besides having the qualities of imagination and sympathy a good teacher needs to be a student first. As Tagore (Tagore, 1926: 186-187) says: "A most important truth, which we are apt to forget, is that a teacher can never truly teach unless he is still learning himself. A lamp can never light another lamp unless it continues to burn its own flame". He put the responsibility of educating the students in a joyful manner upon the guru. He (Tagore, 1908:311) said, "I consider the person to person relationship between the guru and shishya as the prime means of imparting knowledge." In Modern Review he (Tagore, 1931: 621-623 as cited in Kattackal, 1972) wrote, "... only those are fit for such work (teaching), who have a natural feeling of respect for the young in age and in wisdom and who have no hesitation in accepting their students as their friends".

The educational practice that makes Patha-Bhavana different from other institutions is the Student-teacher relationship prevailing in the school. One interesting fact is that the students in Patha-Bhavana call their male teacher as Dada (brother) and female teacher as Didi (sister). Teachers treat the students as their own child. They call their students by name. They know about the strengths and weaknesses of each student and they treat them accordingly. The warmth and ease of relationship facilitates teaching to be effective. This practice potentially removes the invisible barriers between the students and the teachers. Teacher develops a feeling of safety and security, love and affection among students that they take him/her as their guardian and feel secured, motivated and inspired. Due to such easy relationship students do not hesitate to share their experience, needs or problems whether academic or personal both for pleasant and unpleasant situations with the teachers. They do not feel ashamed of any mistake or non-comprehension and they interact with the teachers by asking questions without any hesitation. They express themselves freely before their teachers. The teachers inspire the students by providing an atmosphere of fearlessness. The

teachers believe that mistakes are a part of learning and if any mistake committed by any student is accepted normally by the teachers without creating any kind of mental pressure on them. It is believed that committing mistake is also a part of learning. Such reactions provide them motivation for correction and improvement.

Teachers in Patha-Bhavana create positive, conducive and fearless learning environment that is favourable for identifying and nurturing students' hidden potential. They try to draw out best from the students by rearing curiosity among them. Although Tagore (Tagore, 1926: 197) envisioned about the ashrama, "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 of sharing all the delights of culture", presently, no single teacher stays residentially. So clearly there is a mismatch between the thought of Tagore and practice in Patha-Bhavana. Now the question arises that should the teachers be managed to stay along with students residentially?

The degree of autocracy and dominance as compared to Guru-Shishya relationship during early days of Bramhacharya Ashram has phenomenally reduced at present and have transformed into an informal relationship. But, does this easy relationship influence marking? Does acquaintance with teacher show any undue benefits to the students? Does the ease of relationship loosen the authority and control over the students?

6. Teaching-Learning Process:

Tagore (Tagore as cited in Kabir, 1961:67) wrote- 'From childhood to adolescence and again from adolescence to manhood, we are coolies of the goddess of learning, carrying loads of words on our folded backs'. The main objective of Patha-Bhavana is whatever the students learn, should learn joyfully. Tagore wanted the children at Santiniketan should be inquisitive, creative, and engaged in experimentation with learning. They should have a searching mind for all the things around them and thus, after examining them they should collect and preserve they feel important. He envisioned (Sahu, 2007:77) that, "Education can be imparted only by a teacher and never by a method". Of course, a teacher must be a person, who could inspire and instruct pupils. He alone can substitute educational methods, and bridge the gap between himself and his pupils with love and knowledge.

In Patha-Bhavana discipline is never imposed. The main interesting feature of the teaching-learning process is the proximity and affection provided by the teachers. As the classes are not so big with respect to the number of students, teachers have the scope to provide individual care keeping in view the exact need and demand of the students. Every teacher knows every student individually. Thus, it becomes quite easy to provide individual care to each of them. The teachers keep the student active and engaged in the learning through the methods of learning by doing, and experiencing and observing natural phenomena. The medium of instruction in Patha-Bhavana is Bengali. Up to Class-X the medium of instruction is only Bengali, but for Class-XI-XII, the students are allowed to carry on in English medium.

Teachers take the learning outside the classroom depending upon the nature of content. They are taken to the laboratory for hands on experience in learning. During science class all the students are allowed to learn from the nature called 'Nature Walk'. Beside these educational outings, picnic and educational study tours are also arranged. Science exhibitions are organized by the students in the name of 'VijyanMela' (Science Fair). In this exhibition various models, pictures and diagrams related to Science, Geography and History are displayed. Teachers also participate in such exhibition. Teachers consult different textbooks and also go beyond prescribed the syllabus for better comprehension of the subject they taught, if required. They also inspire the students to consult reference books, science magazines and to use internet. They promote lateral thinking and extrapolative writing among the students. The teachers believe that sometimes teachers are responsible for the students failure but not for all the unsuccessful students. According to them students may not do well due to the inability of any teacher who cannot motivate his/her students who eventually lose interest in the subject.

Examinations and tests which Tagore completely abhorred as being antithetical to real learning occur regularly at Patha-Bhavana. It is becoming more and more like a traditional school. Teachers seemed to accept examinations as part of the normal routine that describes the institution as an examination-oriented school. Some of them still follow conventional pedagogic methods, use traditional and monotonous way of teaching. Teachers are concerned about completing the syllabus before examination. The institution is becoming mechanical as it is emphasizing on the prescribed syllabus and traditional examinations. Hence, Patha-Bhavana is becoming examination-oriented school. Students are rarely taken out in the nature in order to learn through observation, through experience and feeling. Most of the teachers teach in traditional way. So, how teacher can himself/herself be method in this situation? Can they substitute the methods by their own? Are they able to meet the expectations of Tagore regarding the image and quality of a teacher? Whether Patha-Bhavana is transforming merely into the institute to complete the syllabus and preparing students for certificates in school examinations? Then, how can Patha-Bhavana be a place where confluence of Tagore's thought and practice may take place?

7. Vocational Education:

The speciality of the institution is reflected through introduction of practical skills in education and the students resonate with those. Here in Patha-Bhavana, the vocational areas are referred as 'Core Areas' in the curriculum. There is a large scope of acquiring mastery over any field of these areas: Drawing and Painting, Artistic Handicrafts, Modeling, Weaving, Wood Work, Metal Work, Dance (Kathakali Dance and Manipuri Dance), Vocal Music, Tabla (Instrumental), Esraj (Instrumental) and Physical Education. Students are free to choose any one vocational area out of the stated above. There are no compulsions on them to choose any specific area. Students are free to choose any area of their own choice. There are teachers in each different core areas to support, guide and groom the students in order to acquire mastery over the concerned skills and activities in a chosen area. The activities practiced in core area immensely help in developing professional attitude and practical skills, dignity to labour among the students. Engagement in such activities refreshes the students whose feelings are trapped or suffocated in the webs of curriculum and also makes the students feel the joy of creation, freedom of will and freedom of expression. This induces joy in learning, develops self-confidence, self-sufficiency among students and satisfies their aesthetic needs that may further influence their academic performance.

Patha-Bhavana offers a wide range of vocational activities to the students. As the students select their Core Subject according to their own choice, they learn those with interest, love, passion and joy. These activities are practiced to develop a professional attitude and dignity to labour within the students. The students feel the joy of creation, which induces self-confidence among them. This practice is well-maintained and well-organized in Patha-Bhavana. The students intensely get involved in the preparation of Socially Useful Productive materials in a chosen vocational area. They also participate in marketing their products in their stalls during NandanMela holds in Kala Bhavana during 1st and 2nd December each year which is celebrated to commemorate the birth anniversary of Nandalal Bose.

8. Ashram Sammilani:

Ashram Sammilani is another unique practice that distinguishes Patha-Bhavana from the traditional schools. Ashram Sammilani was founded by the Poet himself in 1912. Ashram Sammilani refers to the Students' Council. It has seven wings or sections (Bibhagas): SahityaBibhaga, SwasthaBibhaga, PariveshBibhaga, KriraBibhaga, SebaBibhaga, AharyaBibhaga and SakhaSangha. Ashram Sammilani enables students take part in multifarious activities through different Bibhagas. Those activities expose them to the real social world, they acquire about the world outside the school. Each Bibhaga is governed, directed and monitored by two students: one male student called ChhatraSampadak and one female student called ChhatraSampadika, with the help of concerned teacher in each Bibhaga and also with the accompany of Chhatra Sanchalaka / Chhatra Sanchalika. Both Chhatra Sampadak / Chhatra Sampadika and Sanchalak / Sanchalika are selected by election with opinion of all the students in Patha-Bhavana. In this case the teacher

should have the experience of teaching at least for two years in Patha-Bhavana. Each representative will be assisted by an assistant. Only in case of SahityaBibhaga, there are three different teachers assigned for SishuBibhaga, Madhya Bibhaga and AdyaBibhaga. The selection process of all the members is repeated each year. No teacher can retain the post of ChhatraSanchalaka/ChhatraSanchalika for more than two successive years. The functions of each Bibhaga are given in Table-2:

Table-2: Functions of different Bibhagas in Ashram Sammilani

Sl. No.	Bibhagas	Functions
1	SahityaBibhaga	To arrange the SahityaSabha decorating the stage, collecting the materials for magazine writing and publishing i.e. to make proper arrangements with prior notice. To supervise all the activities in 'SahityaSabha' seperately for SishuBibhaga, Madhya Bibhaga and AdyaBibhaga as well as 'MilitoSahityaSabha' with all the Bibhagas together and also to publish the Wall Magazine and Bi-annual Mazagines.
2	SebaBibhaga	To collect the money/food/cloths from the nearby economically healthy villages. To donate the collected items to the poor families of the pre-decided villages.
3	KriraBibhaga	To keep attendance of the students in the Ashram Math and to motivate them to participate in sports and games. To arrange annual sports, competitive games and tournaments of Patha-Bhavana in collaboration with Visva-Bharati KriraBibhaga. To arrange for the equipment for different sports and games.
4	SwasthaBibhaga	To arrange for discussions, exhibitions etc. in order to grow awareness of health among the students. Arranging and celebrating Gandhi Punnyah (10 th March), involving all the students. Arranging for First Aid, whenever necessary.
5	ParibeshBibhaga	To keep the Ashram premises and the hostels clean. To motivate the students in gardening. They take care of trees and other plants and also protect them. To report and to take initiative when any requirement of repairing of buildings or furniture arises. To take care of the environment of the Ashram and campus beautification. To arrange discussions on issues of Environmental Awareness.
6	Sakha –Sangha	To formulate rules and regulations for the library. To make a list of the books, journals and magazines in the library. To prepare for buying new books, according to students need. To keep eye on issuing and return of books by the students in regular basis. To motivate the students to read the contemporary magazines. Organizes Film Show and Exhibition (January) Organizes Discussion on Annual Excursion (February) Arranging and celebrating International Language Day (21 st February) Organizing Quiz Competition, Short Speech Competition (March/May) Monitoring Regular Library Activities.

7	AaharjyoBibhaga	<p>To monitor the quality and also the wastage of food.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. To keep clean and healthy environment in the kitchen. 3. To report to the concerned teacher in case of any problem. 4. To organize BanaVojana (Annual Picnic) 5. To celebrate PithaParban (January) 6. To arrange HobishaanyaduingMaharshiSmarana (20th January) 7. To arrange Veg Lunch in Gandhi Punnyah (10th March)
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The activities of 'Ashram Sammilani' are framed in a well-planned manner. Those practices help in developing self-government, self-dependence and leadership and management qualities among the students. It is an important aspect of his educational ideas that aims at developing self-reliance, self-discipline and self-restraint, leadership, management and cooperation among students, develops care for people, expand knowledge about socio-economic life of the surrounding world and also develops human values.

Many of the students are still not aware of different activities of 'Ashram Sammilani'. Frequency of village visit in order to community outreach and community engagement has cut down. Day scholar students are not interested in such activities as these are not related to academic evaluation. They seriously lack in motivation and inspiration in order to attend those activities. Hence, objectives of 'Ashram Sammilani' are partially fulfilled. The real challenge is how to motivate all the students for their all-round development of personality?

9. Sahitya Sabha:

SahityaSabha (Literary discussion) is another unique practice in Patha-Bhavana. It is a well set mechanism to identify the hidden potentials of the students in artistic and literary skills. This prepares the platform to nurture and to shape the literal creations of the students. SahityaSabha first started in 1904. Tagore (Neogy, 2010) emphasized on the need to cultivate the minds of the students and he believed SahityaSabha to be an appropriate place to open up their minds.

SahityaSabha holds every Tuesday in the afternoon session from 2 PM onwards. Its organization and monitoring is guided by the ChatraSampadaks/ChatraSampadikas from SahityaBibhaga from SishuBibhaga, Madhya Bibhaga and AdyaBibhaga with the help of ChatraSanchalaka/ChatraSanchalika (concerned teachers). They collect writings from each student. They organize the activities to be performed in proper sequence. Students from each Bibhaga write their own and submit those to the ChatraSampadaks/ChatraSampadikas which are further submitted to the concerned teacher. Then the teacher selects the writings those to be performed in SahityaSabha. The students prepare themselves through rehearsal arranged by the teachers, well before performing in SahityaSabha. The students perform recitation of poems, reading out short stories, essays, reports on contemporary facts written by their own. Beside these they perform dance, Rabindrasangeet, playing various musical instruments such as Tabla, Guitar, Sitar, Mouth Organ etc. The teachers sincerely observe all the performances and activities to provide valuable suggestions to them so that they can rectify themselves and excel in future. All the activities of SahityaSabha end with president's lecture and overall comment and recommendations.

The students' writings those are performed in SahityaSabha are further published in the magazines from Patha-Bhavana. The magazines are not computer typed documents rather those are actually written by the students with their own hands. Some of the magazines are published for SishuBibhaga, Madhya Bibhaga and AdyaBibhaga, separately. Some of the magazines include writing of all students in general. The names of the magazines are enlisted in Table-3.

Table-3: Showing names of the magazines published from Patha-Bhavana.

Bibhaga	Name of the Magazine(s)
SishuBibhaga	'Panchami'
Madhya Bibhaga	'Prabhat'
AdyaBibhaga	'Shanti'
General (Open to students from all Bibhaga and to all the teachers)	AmaderLekha Shristi Prakriti Path AmaderChithi

Students participating in SahityaSabhacome in contact with different types of writings and wide range of activities that are performed before them by their juniors, classmates and the seniors. They acquire self-confidence while receiving praise from the teachers. The performance on the stage before a large number of people develops leadership quality through removing the stage fear. This provides the space for the freedom of expression, freedom to think on the part of the students. In this setting the artistic, aesthetic and creative abilities of the students are nurtured.

Only a small percentage of the studentsparticipate in SahityaSabha. Though all the teachers do not attend SahityaSabha regularly, the teachers who attend the same sincerely observe all the performances and activities and provide valuable suggestions to them so that they can rectify themselves. As the writings to be performed are selected by the concerned teachers, all the students do not get the opportunity to perform in SahityaSabha. Then how far SahityaSabha becomes a useful tool for nurturing literary and artistic skills of students those do not attend SahityaSabha?

10. Universal Education Centre:

As one of the earliest educators to think in terms of the global village, Rabindranath Tagore's educational model has a unique sensitivity and aptness education within multi-racial, multi-lingual and multi-cultural situations.It patronizes the gamete of knowledge and the spiritual love of nature from the initial stage of learning.

Tagore envisioned Patha-Bhavana as a Centre of International Culture or a World University. The institution has its motto the Vedic text "Yatravisvambhavtyekanidam" (Where the world makes a home in a single nest).Tagore was fully aware that there are natural differences in human races which needed to be respected and preserved. He (Neogy, 2010) realized the necessity of a wider educational venture where the best and enlightened minds of the East and the West could meet and interact with each other on the basis of common fellowship of learning and humanitarian activity eventually paving the way for world harmony.

Patha-Bhavana as the epitome of globalization should continue its cultural heritageof centre for international culture and education and should welcome the students cutting across the globe.Tagore dreamt and opened the institution for the whole world. But record shows, in 2016 there were only 10 students from outside India who have taken admission to Patha-Bhavana. They are specifically belonging from Bangladesh, Korea and Spain. In the year 2017, only two female students from Bangladesh have taken admission here. Indeed these numbers do not vary too much since the previous years. The details are given in Table 4.1, Table 4.2 and Table 4.3:

Table 4.1: Student-Strength in Patha-Bhavana in 2017

Class	Sections	Sub-total
I	3	76
II	3	99
III	3	71
IV	2	47

V	4	95
VI	3	67
VII	3	64
VIII	3	102
IX	3	78
X	4	85
XI	4	82
XII	5	118
		Grand Total = 984

Table 4.2: Strength of Students in Patha-Bhavana from outside India (2016)

Country	Male Students	Female Students	Total
Bangladesh	1	7	10
Korea	1	0	
Spain	1	0	

Table 4.3: Strength of Students in Patha-Bhavana from outside India (2017)

Country	Male Students	Female Students	Total
Bangladesh	1	1	2

Clearly, the number of students from outside India taking admission is very less in comparison to the total strength of Patha-Bhavana. The total strength of Patha-Bhavana is too small in comparison to that of the local secondary school. Moreover, the student-strength of Patha-Bhavana has not improved for a long period of time. Should student strength of Patha-Bhavana be increased? Majority of the students are from and around Bolpur, a few from outside West Bengal and very few from outside India. Is Patha-Bhavana able to represent even the entire West Bengal? Is Bengali as medium of instruction becoming a barrier to attract students from outside India to Patha-Bhavana? Then, how PB represents the Universal education centre? How can the East meet the West? How it becomes a global village? How it becomes the place 'where the world makes a home in a single nest'?

The process of admission in different classes is opened to all. For the purpose of open admission, the admission is test taken in class II, V and XI. The students are selected according to the merit list based on a Common Admission Test. One surprising fact also prevails in Patha-Bhavana that the staff members enjoy some extra facility in the form of special quota during admission of their children. Should there be any provision for special quota during admission for the staff members?

CONCLUSION:

Although, the cardinal principles and the ultimate goals, priorities and objectives are still set fixed, many things have changed since Tagore's times. The Tapovan culture in Patha-Bhavana is customized according to the need of the people and according to the need of time also. In the context of the modern world, the institution is partly able to give a practical demonstration of the ideas which Tagore considered to be vitally important in the education of the pupils. The residential character of the school has dramatically been reduced and Patha-Bhavana becomes a partly residential school. Many students are there as day scholars. No teacher lives with their students today. This means that teachers do not spend the kind of time learning with the children. The practices like Baitalik, Upasana, SahityaSabha and Ashram Sammilani are partly successful due to low participation of the students and the teachers. There is a serious need to motivate them to attend those valuable practices. Syllabus has started taking place an important seat as

teachers are focused on how best they can complete the Syllabus in time. Then how teachers can substitute methods! Patha-Bhavana is transforming into an institution for preparing the students for school certificate examination instead of preparing them as a complete man as per Tagore's thought. Moreover, the student strength of Patha-Bhavana is very less even compared to a local high school and the students are more or less from a single district, Birbhum in West Bengal. So, do the present practices in Patha-Bhavana are in proper synchronization with Tagore's original thought on education?

In this 21st century era students along with parents are focusing on academic competition and hence the institutions are becoming examination-oriented centre. We should not forget our indigenous goal of education. So, there should be a better balance between modern rush and our ultimate goal of education.

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