CHAPTER VI

TAGORE'S EDUCATIONAL IDEAS AND THEIR RELEVANCE TO THE VIEWS OF EDUCATIONAL COMMISSIONS AND CURRENT EDUCATIONAL TRENDS

After the attainment of independence on the 15th August, 1947, the Govt. of India had set up different Education Commissions and Committees for suggesting ways and means for the improvement of the educational system of India. Of the various commissions and committees we shall refer only to three main commissions, namely University Education Commission headed by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Secondary Education Commission led by Dr. A.L. Mudaliar and the Kothari Commission which was concerned with all branches of education beginning from Elementary Education right up to University stage. We also refer to the National Committee for Women's Education that was headed by Sm. Durgabai Deshmukh.

In this chapter we propose to trace the marks of relevance of Tagore's educational ideas to the views of the Educational Commissions set up in India before and
after independence as well as to find out Tagore's influence, if any, upon these Commissions of wide reputation. At the end we shall also devote a few pages to ascertaining the marks of relevance to current trends and tendencies in education.

Tagore started his educational experiments just at the beginning of the twentieth century, i.e. in 1901. Since then in India some commissions and committees that were set up by the British Govt. had also suggested some measures for improvement of education in India, but no outstanding attempt was made for the planning of a national system of education for India on official line. Unofficially Tagore started a plan for a national education at Santiniketan and Gandhiji also put forward a scheme of national education as early as 1937. It was developed later on into the Wardha Scheme of Basic Education. A perceptible change was brought about in the political and educational spheres of India by the Govt. of India Act, 1935. By this Act the anomalous position that was created by the Act of 1919 was considerably removed and all educational activities are divided into two categories - central and provincial. During this time, specially between 1937 and 1944 the scheme of Basic Education was getting support of the
the ruling power and the National Congress but Tagore had been experimenting in his own way taking no help either from the Government or the National Congress. Sometimes before this period Tagore inaugurated his Visva Bharati which was financed and endowed by him in 1922. It had made a great progress by this time. Gandhiji had also visited it several times and was quite happy to see such experiment on national lines. He tried to assist Tagore by various means. The main philosophy that was lying under the Basic education, 'learning through activity', gained its support from the idea at work at Visva-Bharati. The post-war plan of Educational Development of 1944 which is popularly known as the Sargent Plan is the first official attempt that planned a national system of education for India. It was in this sense a much better report than the report of the Saddlar Commission that was appointed in 1917 and the Simon Commission of 1927 and the Hurtag Committee. No doubt, these commissions and committees that were appointed from time to time after the transfer of Control on education for National Ministry in 1919. But no comprehensive report was made on national line by these bodies. It was the Sargent Plan that made some important recommendations in the preindependence period and these recommendations have a good deal of relevance to the educational ideas of
Tagore, the practice of which he had started much earlier.

Tagore's ideas have relevance to the recommendations of the Sargent Plan that the activity programme should not be taken to have the self-paying activity. The Plan did not endorse Gandhiji's view in this point though they recommended the Junior and Senior Basic pattern of Primary Education. Tagore's programme at Sriniketan was wholly craft centric as the Basic education envisaged but it was not meant for self-paying.

The Plan recommended the idea of diversification of courses at the secondary stage and inclusion of Art and Music as an integral part of general education and introduction of agriculture in the curriculum for the boys of the rural areas and the applied sciences and industrial and commercial subjects at this stage. These are all the ideas that were actively put into practice by Tagore long before.

The recommendations of the Plan on University education are commendable in the sense that it suggested to make education national and to make students capable for which they had their capacity. It made the University education available for the majority of the pupil. Tagore's University was fully based on the national system. Not that
it was a step further, it was international in character.

The Sargent Plan also made recommendations for the introduction and improvement of Technical and Vocational Education and made provision for Adult Education. Tagore's programme did not lack in these factors.

We have referred to the report of the Sargent Plan as it contained many recommendations that were adapted and enlarged by the national govt. of the India after Independence. The Commissions and Committees that were set up in the post independent India owe much to the recommendations of this Plan.

Now let us see the marks of relevance that exist between the recommendations of Radhakrishnan Commission and Tagore's ideas. It is a University Education Commission as it was concerned with the problems of University Education in India. It was set up in 1948 under the Chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan by the Govt. of India. The report that was submitted by the Commission in 1949 was of great significance because it was a great document for the development of University Education in India on national lines. Of the various recommendations made by the Commissions those that have relevance to Tagore's ideas are to be mentioned here.
The first point of relevance is found on its emphasis on making the theoretical knowledge closely associated with the practical work. It was what Tagore stressed much in his institution. Because Tagore was guided by the philosophy that our Centre of culture should not only be the centre of the intellectual life of India but the centre of her economic life also. The second point of relevance is discernable from the fact that the commission laid great importance on physical education and social service along with the general and technical education. This is what was exactly thought by Tagore and done by him much before the Commission made such suggestions. The philosophy that worked behind this endeavour is that the Universities will be such an institution which "must group round it all the neighbouring villages and vitally unite them with itself in all its economic endeavours. Their housing accommodation, sanitation, the improvement of their moral and intellectual life - these should form the object of social side of its activity."

The Commission also laid great importance on the need of providing a rich extra-mural life for the students which would largely shape their character and develop their qualities for leadership. This was exactly what was introduced by Tagore in his Visva-Bharati through various daily
programmes and outings and excursions.

Another point of relevance is to be found in its recommendation as to giving an important place to religious education as a part of the common heritage of humanity, of course, it was secular in nature. It recommended a silent prayer at the starting of the day's work and teaching of the central problem of the philosophy of religion. We have referred that in Tagore's programmes the daily activities were started with the prayer and ended with the same. He, however, wanted to develop the spiritual aspect not by teaching of religion but by living in the world of nature and extension of love.

The most striking point of relevance exists as to the medium of instruction. Though the commission pleaded for retention of English for certain purposes it recommended strongly for replacement of English by Indian languages and introduction of regional languages as medium of instruction. Needless to mention that Tagore was the greatest champion of the use of the mother tongue. It was he who for the first time thought and spoke everywhere through his mother tongue. The last point of relevance is easily noticed from its recommendation of establishment of rural universities and extension of the work of rural reconstruction through them.
Tagore was the pioneer in thinking on this line and it was he who said for the first time that "our education should be in full touch with our complete life, economic, intellectual, aesthetic, social and spiritual and our educational institutions should be in the very heart of our society, connected with it by the living bonds of varied co-operations." 

Then we can undoubtedly say that it was Tagore's philosophy of education and his experiment in the field has a great influence on the current Indian Educational thinking and planning, having a great relevance to the current educational thoughts.

In compliance with the recommendation of Radhakrishnan Commission a Secondary Education Commission was set up by the Govt. of India under the Chairmanship of Dr. A. L. Mudaliar in 1952 in order to suggest ways and means for the improvement of Secondary Education on all-India basis. The Commission after examining the condition of the Secondary Education on a comprehensive basis submitted its report in 1953. It is a great document for the reorganisation of Secondary Education on a comprehensive basis submitted its report in 1953. It is a great
document for the reorganisation of Secondary Education as Radhakrishnan Commission was for the University Education.

The principal recommendation that the Commission made had a wonderful relevance to Tagore's ideas and work. In keeping pace with the modern trend in education all over the world it recommended the lengthening of the school leaving age and duration of course. It also recommended for diversification and inclusion of social studies and craft. On these points we find great relevance of Tagore's ideas and activities that he started at Sriniketan specially at Siksha-Satra which was practically an experiment on the basis of diversification of courses and training on useful crafts like carpentry, weaving, blacksmithy etc. Its emphasis was on the integrated course. The courses of the Primary Sections and those of the Secondary were fully integrated. It was done with a view to giving the pupils an integrated view of things and in order that the students would not face any difficulty coming from one course to the other.

Its recommendation for vocational guidance had also great relevance to Tagore's ideas. Its recommendations for adoption of dynamic methods of teaching, introduction of audio-visual aids, improvement of the condition of teachers and their professional training, etc. bear a great mark of
relevance to Tagore's thoughts and acts at Visva-Bharati.

The National Committee for Women's Education that was set up in 1958 under the Chairmanship of Sm. Durgabai Deshmukh had made some important recommendations for the improvement of women's education in India. It mainly stressed on the spread of women's education and introduction of some special subjects that might be useful for the Society and extending equal opportunity for education and employment.

Tagore was the first person who very boldly took up the cause of education in his institution and the challenge of providing equal rights and opportunities for the girls and women for getting education and employment. It was he who for the first time opened the door for participation of women in the social and cultural spheres of the country. In an age when the superstition and privacy had reigned high it was Tagore who brought the young ladies to the light of the day and made them speak at the stage - the stage of the world. Because he was guided by the idea that by paralysing the one half of the society the other half can never stand steadily in the competition of the age. So he said, "Women cannot be pushed back for good into the newer region of the decorative by man's aggressiveness of
power. ....... She must restore the lost social balance by putting the full weight of the women into the creation of the human world.\textsuperscript{3}

Thus it is very explicit that what Tagore thought of education including women's education and did at \textit{Visva-Bharati} have great relevance to current educational thoughts of India and abroad. Tagore's achievement at \textit{Visva-Bharati} regarding women's education may be best understood from a few lines from Dr. H. B. Mukherjee's book. These are as follows: "The education of the girls at \textit{Visva-Bharati}, therefore, was as fully conceived as that of the boys, the physical, intellectual, vocational, cultural, and house aspects of their personality receiving as full an attention as those of the latter, while the special factors associated with their study duly received the importance that they deserved."\textsuperscript{4}

By a simple visit to Tagore's institutions anybody can easily come to understand what philosophy Tagore had carried throughout his life or what he thought and did even without going through the pages of his writings or any account of his institutions. The multifarious activities that had been undertaken there by him very clearly express his ideas in education that bear a great relevance to modern...
thoughts and give a wise guidance for the future generation. It is the exhibition of the view of life and education that he cherished in heart of hearts. It is through this concrete form of an institution that his abstract ideal of complete life or 'whole man' was realized. It contains within itself the seeds of various suggestions and recommendations of commissions of the past and the present and gives a good guideline to the ages to come. Its development marks the development of Tagore's ideas and philosophy of life and education. Dr. H. B. Mukherjee's observation may be quoted in this connection, "Visva-Bharati ...... was mainly an outcome of Tagore's restlessness for expanding the scope of the aims and objectives of his ashrama school, in order to accommodate the dynamic evolution of his thoughts, specially in the context of the changing world conditions during the First World War. The historic processes of the modern world, tending to a unification of the globe and of mankind, be felt, should find place and partial fulfilment at his own institution. He, therefore, set forth to transform his school first into a new centre of Indian culture, thereafter, extending the scope to include Asia and the whole world. On the other hand, his constant concern for the welfare of the common people, on which depended the prosperity of a nation, led him to turn his energies vigorously
towards the problem of mass education and the reconstruction of the village life. All these objectives, however, were to him only elements in the total picture of a complete life as he viewed it, and which was the ultimate idea that he had set before himself and his institution. It is, therefore, this ideal of a complete life that Visva Bharati endeavoured to realize through its manifold activities.\(^5\)

Then we can say that the ideal of complete man that Tagore held in view had found for its realization and practice to take up manifold function that were being devised at Visva-Bharati. We find that Tagore's ideas have a great relevance to the modern trends in life and education. In the opinion of Dr. H. B. Mukherjee, Tagore wanted to accommodate the modern trend of unification of the Globe and of mankind after the First World war in the activities of his institution. No doubt, a change of attitude for international peace and coexistence had gained ground after the World War I. But the ground was not so much solid as it had been after the world War II. Tagore died in 1941 before the conclusion of the World War II and as such he did not get the chance of seeing the post war development of the ideas of international understanding and peace and the principle of coexistence by setting up an institution like the U.N.O. Tagore like Tennyson wanted
to establish 'the federation of the World' and 'the Parliament of men'. This idea was behind the activities of Visva Bharati.

The latest Education Commission of 1964-66 set up by the Ministry of Education, Government of India, which is popularly known as the Kothari Commission, contains a good many points of resemblance. We have taken up this Commission for comparison as it contains all the important points of all the previous Educational Commissions and the views of many outstanding Indian and foreign experts in education of the modern time. This Commission aims at the National Development through education and as such the Commission opines that in order to achieve national development and to fulfil national objectives the most important and urgent reform needed in education is to transform it to endeavour to relate it to the life, needs and aspirations of the people and thereby make it a powerful instrument of social, economic and cultural transformation necessary for the realization of the national goals. For this purpose, education should be developed so as to increase productivity, achieve social and national integration, accelerate the process of modernisation and cultivate social, moral and spiritual values.
In order to relate education to productivity, emphasis should be given, according to the view of the Commission, on Science Education, Work Experience and Vocationalisation of Education. The Commission defines work-experience "as participation in productive work in school, in the home, in a workshop, in a farm, in a factory or in any other productive situation." The Commission attached much importance to the inclusion of work-experience as an integral part of all education as "in the curriculum of most contemporary school systems, particularly in the Socialist Countries of Europe, a place is found for what is variously called 'manual work' or 'work experience'. In our country, a revolutionary experiment was launched by Mahatma Gandhi in the form of Basic Education. The concept of work-experience is essentially similar."

The Commission does not refer here to Tagore. But did we not find that Tagore's experiment at Sriniketan contained the concept of work-experience? It was Tagore who like Gandhiji, even before him, wanted that students would do manual labour along with the cultivation of knowledge. His following observation has a striking resemblance to the opinion of the Commission. Regarding Science Education and Work-experience Tagore very clearly observed
"Our Centre of Culture should not only be the Centre of the Intellectual Life of India, but the Centre of her Economic Life also. It must co-operate with the villages round it, cultivate land, breed cattle, spin cloths, press oil from oil-seeds, it must produce all the necessaries, dividing the best means, using the best materials and calling Science to its aid."

He also observed, "Educational Institutions, in order to obtain their fulness of truth, must have close association with this economic life. The highest mission of education is to help us to realise the inner principle of the unity of all knowledge and all the activities of our social and spiritual being. Civilization will fall to pieces if it never again realises the spirit of mutual help and common sharing of benefits in the elemental necessaries of life. The idea of such economic co-operation should be made the basis of our University."

Tagore held the view, it has been stated elsewhere, that Science education and work-experience should also be made the basis of our University. It should start from the school. In other words, the Science-based Socio-economic education should be the aim of every Educational Enterprise — School, College and University. Tagore wanted something more than this. What is that thing? That is the mingling
of Science and Spirituality. This is not a figment of imagination of the poet.

Directing our attention to the ideals of tonoganas or forest schools Tagore observed that these were "our natural universities" and were not shut off from the daily life of the people. Master and students gathered fruit and fuel, and took their cattle out to graze, supporting themselves by the work of their own hands. Spiritual education was a part of the spiritual life itself which comprehended all life.  

The Commission also admits that the concept of the mingling of science and spirituality is of special significance for Indian Education. Explaining the need of science as a basic component of education and culture the Commission observes - "Although it is largely occupied with the understanding of Nature at present, its development is tending more and more to help man to understand himself and his place in the Universe. In the developments that we envisage in the future, we hope that the pursuit of mere material affluence and power would be subordinated to that of higher values and the fulfilment of the individual."

It is true that the blind study of spirituality as it was done in the traditional society in early days may degenerate
into dogmatism and superstition. So the study of science and development of scientific outlook are essential. Because it helps us to dispel the religious bigotry and spiritual obscurity and to find out the real truth. In the words of Commission, "Science strengthens the commitment of man to free enquiry and to the quest for truth as his highest duty and obligation. It loosens the bonds of dogmatism and acts as a powerful dispeller of fear and superstition, fatalism and passive resignation. By its emphasis on reason and free enquiry, it even helps to lessen ideological tensions which often arise because of adherence to dogma and fanaticism." So the Commission recommends that "Science Education must become an integral part of School Education; and ultimately some study of Science should become a part of all Courses in the Humanities and Social Sciences at the University Stage."  

Then the Commission recommends, "Another programme which can bring education into closer relationship with productivity is to give strong vocational bias to Secondary Education and to increase the emphasis on agricultural and technological education at the University Stage." In this connection the Commission suggests that the trend of school education should have a "fruitful mingling of general and vocational education - general education containing
some elements of pre-vocational and technical education and vocational education in its turn, having an element of general education. In the kind of society in which we will be living increasingly in the coming years, a complete separation between the two will be not only undesirable but impossible. It also recommends and opines that a considerable expansion of professional education should also be made at the University Stage, especially in Agricultural and Technological fields.

Explaining the vocational aim of Tagore's System of Education Dr. H.B. Mukherjee observes that according to Tagore "An Educational Institution must be economically as well as intellectually productive. It should aim at making its pupils economically self-reliant through necessary vocational training. It should also endeavour to improve the economic life of the society through Scientific Researches. This aspect of the Commission was successfully introduced at Sriniketan through its multifarious activities."

He continues, "Tagore's conception of realistic curriculum perhaps, attained its fullest expression in the Siksha-Sastra experiment... he introduced there an integrated and co-related pattern of activity which is very
similar to the Project Curriculum developed and made famous by Kilpatrick ...... At Siksha-shatra the child came from the very first, in the words of Elmhirst, "as an apprentice in handicraft as well as housecraft," and after a certain stage all subjects in the Course of Study like Geology, Physics, Chemistry etc. were introduced with specific practical ends in view and co-ordinated around some important practical problems at hand like work in garden plot, village sanitary service, etc.  

He, at the same time, does not forget to point out that "vocational education is necessary, but this end is only partial and limited in scope and as such, must be supplemented by other higher aims.

"Tagore takes a somewhat similar position regarding the aim of practical efficiency as it is commonly understood, that is to say, success in the affairs of the work-a-day world, including the attainment of material prosperity and skill in the field of business and technology ...... practical efficiency or success in Tagore's estimation, occupied only a partial place in the entire scheme of life and education, and should never be allowed to thrive at the cost of what he regarded as higher values ...... while Tagore clearly admitted the importance of
efficiency and success in the practical fields of life as an essential part of a complete education, equally clearly did he deny its claim to be an end in itself, irrespective of the many other values of deeper significance. Tagore was of opinion that education cannot be complete without culture. The Commission of 1964-66 makes the same observation when it clearly states that the vocational aim should be made subordinate to the higher values.

Another point of emphasis given by the Kothari Commission was on the achievement of social and national integration through education. By social and national integration the Commission means the promotion of social and national consciousness through pursuance of certain important steps. But the Commission does not mean by it that there shall be a contradiction between the promotion of national consciousness and the development of international understanding. The promotion of Social and National Consciousness, on the other hand, paves the way of development of International understanding. The Commission opines that as the deepening of National Consciousness is essential through (1) the understanding and re-evaluation of our cultural heritage and (2) the creation of a strong driving faith in the future towards which we
aspire, so also the development of International understanding for the 'One World' towards which we are moving is indispensable. So the Commission observes: "Our studies in the humanities and social sciences should be so oriented that, while helping students to become good and active citizens of their own country, they will also enable them to acquire a knowledge and understanding of the essential features of the outside world, particularly of our neighbouring and Afro-Asian countries. Indian culture has had a strong understanding and valuing, on the whole with an open mind the contributions of different countries and races to human civilization." It again clearly points out, "The programme of Social and National Integration which will minimise the internal barriers and suspension which exist today will not only be a national gain, but may even make an impact on International relations and International situation as a whole."  

The Commission suggested that of the two programmes of Social and National Integration (1) the first would be promoted by well-organized teaching of the Languages and literatures, Philosophy, Religions and History of India and by introducing the students to Indian Architecture, Sculpture, Painting, Music, Dance and Drama. In addition, it would be desirable to promote greater knowledge, understanding
and appreciation of the different parts of India by including their study in the curricula, by the exchange of teachers wherever possible, by the development of fraternal relations between Educational Institutions in different parts of the country and the organisation of Holiday Camps and Summer Schools on an Inter-State Basis designed to break down Regional or Linguistic Barriers."^{21}

"The second would involve an attempt as a part of the Courses in Citizenship to bring home to the students the Principles of the Constitution, the great human values referred to in its Preamble the nature of the Democratic Socialist Society which we desire to create and the Five Year Plan of National development."^{22}

Now we clearly find that Tagore laid great emphasis on these two above mentioned aspects as important factors for the development of an integrated personality. Because his aim of education was the development of the whole man. We have discussed the importance of these two aspects in the foregoing chapters. Here we will cite only some important observations of Tagore which have closest resemblance in this regard. Tagore was of opinion that Communalism, Provincialism, Regionalism, Linguism etc. divide the Nation into many hostile camps and stand in the way of National
integration and solidarity. He, therefore, suggested that artificial political unity would be by no means of real solution. What is needed is to attain emotional integration by coming together in the field of learning and by coming in contact with one another through what was best in the cultural heritage of each. But this would never be forced from outside or secured through political bargaining. The lasting solution of the problem lay, Tagore concluded, in the cultivation of the mind by all the communities through the spread of the proper kind of education among the people.

Social integration is similarly obstructed owing to severe social demarcation of castes and creeds and stratification of classes or classification of 'high and low' and 'haves' and 'have-nots'. Tagore, therefore, suggested that the society must be based on the ideals of equality, liberty and justice and the social atmosphere must be sweetened by good-will, cordiality and co-operation. The distinction between the poor and the rich and that of the higher castes and the lower castes must cease to exist among the people for the common cause of general social welfare. He, therefore, denounced the exploitation and suppression of the masses by the powerful and the rich in every walk of life and the contempt and cruelty meted out to the lower castes.
Tagore's compassion for the untouchables and the criticism of the untouchability were in no sense less forceful than those of Mahatma Gandhi. His idea found forceful expression in the well-known dance drama named "Chandalika" and again in the famous poem entitled "Durbar Darsh", where he clearly pointed out that any weak link in the social structure would affect the structure as a whole and that the backward elements would drag down the prosperous elements to their own level. For eradicating these social evils as well as for remedying the prevailing social problems of his days, he suggested that the first and foremost step should be to learn to regard all men and women with an eye of equality and respect and to invite the co-operation of all sections of people to run the social machinery in a smoothing and desirable way and to achieve social integration which is an indispensable factor for National Integration.

We have pointed out elsewhere that Tagore's main criticism against the prevailing curriculum was that it was thoroughly unrealistic as well as anti-nationalistic. In his epoch-making essay entitled "Topsy Turvydom in education" or 'Siksa Harphar' Tagore very forcefully exclaimed that the existing Text Books and the prescribed
courses of study in schools and colleges did not reflect the needs and aspirations of the people and were not related to the every day life of the pupils of the domestic and social life of the pupils. So Tagore greatly emphasized on the need of relating the curriculum to the every day life so that it might enable the pupils to know and understand their own people amidst whom they are born and their own country where they have to live. That is to say, the curriculum must be thoroughly realistic taking the economic aspect of life in full account. His conception of realistic curriculum attained its fullest expression in his experiment at Sriniketan where the study of Geology, Physics, Chemistry etc. was co-ordinated with practical work in gardening, sanitary service and the like.

His curriculum at the same time is Nationalistic as he attached great importance to the study of his own country and its people, its geography and history and its culture and tradition. Tagore held the view that India could never carry her message to the world so long as she did not know her own mind and consolidate her own cultural heritage. He, therefore, stressed much for studying the various streams of culture that had flown through the Indian soil from the earliest to the modern time. He
regretted not to find a single University where any Indian or foreign student can study the best learning of India or truly realise its contribution or character. But Tagore's educational philosophy was not limited in the nationalistic conception.

His conception of curriculum was again internationalistic in character. His establishment of Visva-Bharati, referred to elsewhere, was inspired by this ideal. Here he not only emphasized on the study of the language and the literature, the history and the geography, art and architecture, culture and tradition of his own country, but also he emphasized on the study of those things and subjects of the world as a whole. He was not only satisfied in studying these things in libraries and museums. He, on the other hand, wanted personal contact with the foreign scholars for better understanding of their religion and culture in a more effective manner. For the real infusion of cosmopolitan spirit and the creation of genuine atmosphere he availed himself of the service of a good number of foreign scholars like Pearson, Andrews and others in his institutions. The Kothari Commission again suggested that for the effective social and national integration the following steps, such as, the common school system, social and national service, an appropriate language
policy, adoption of mother tongue as medium of education, etc. should be taken up without any delay. There shall exist no contradiction between the promotion of national consciousness and the development of international understanding. Moreover, inculcation of democratic values should also form the important part of educational programmes.

Needless to reiterate, that Tagore spoke dauntlessly of all these points long before the achievement of independence and put into practice in his own institution though these were not fully appreciated by the people at that time. A few lines from the report of Sadlar Commission regarding the medium of language is worth noting here. It follows thus, "It is Sri Rabindranath's strong conviction that while English should be skilfully and thoroughly taught as Second language, the Chief medium of instruction in schools (and even in colleges up to the stage of the University Degree) should be the mother tongue ...... He holds that the essential things in the culture of the west should be conveyed to the whole Bengali people by means of a widely diffused education but that this can only be done through a wider use of vernacular in schools." That is why, in his own school at Bolpur Tagore gave the central place to
studies which can best be pursued in the mother tongue. Tagore aimed at the real unity and not at dead uniformity and he wanted to do it through harmonization of various linguistic and cultural groups. It was his firm conviction that unless the mother tongue became the medium of education and culture the creative urges and thoughts of our people could not find full and free expression. This has been candidly confessed by all the great leaders and thinkers of our country before and after the achievement of independence.

The next point of relevance is the idea of modernization which involves fundamental social and cultural changes. The Commission defines the term in the following way - "The most distinctive feature of a modern society in contrast with traditional one is in its adoption of a Science-based technology. It is this which has helped such societies to increase their production so spectacularly. It may be pointed out, however, that Science-based technology has other important implication for social and cultural life and it involves fundamental social and cultural changes which are broadly described as 'modernization'.

From the above discussion it is quite evident that
Tagore's philosophy of curriculum is marked by the philosophy of synthesis and balance. Thus Tagore's reorganization of curriculum through introduction of extra-curricular activities and absorption of these activities as co-curricular activities may be regarded as progressive curriculum which the present Commissions and Committees of education recommend for adoption and thus Tagore's idea practically anticipated modern thinking on the theory of curriculum construction. Especially, the principles of curriculum suggested by the Kothari Commission have been greatly influenced by Tagore's ideas of curriculum construction. Let us see how the basic concepts of curriculum of the Commission have been influenced by Tagore's ideas.

The Commission of 1964-66 concludes thus, "Our overall concept is that general education requires strengthening in the areas of science, work experience and moral and spiritual values and a new orientation in some other areas." We have seen that the Commission recommends inclusion of work experience, social service and education of moral and spiritual values in all the stages beginning from the Primary School right up to the University stage in addition to the study of science and humanities.
It also emphasizes the inclusion of creative activities.

As much-needed corrective to the extremely academic and bookish character of present-day school education the Commission recommends different programmes of work experience for inclusion in the school curriculum suited to the age of pupils. It observes, "Work experience should be forward looking in keeping with the character of the new social order. It will take the simple handwork in lower primary classes, and of craft in the upper primary classes. At the lower secondary stage, it will be in the form of work-shop training and at the higher secondary stage work experience will be provided in the school workshop, farm or commercial and industrial establishments."

In the opinion of the Commission, work experience is an integral part of all education general or vocational. It is one of the four basic elements of good and purposeful education. It says, "In our opinion, all good and purposeful education should consist of at least four basic elements:

- 'literacy' or a study of languages, humanities and social sciences,
- 'numeracy' or a study of mathematics and natural sciences;
- work-experience; and
- social service. 27

The first and second elements are being very weakly followed in the present educational system but the third and fourth elements are totally absent and so the Commission lays great emphasis on the last two elements as the third element is very important for relating education to productivity and the fourth for social and national integration. The inclusion of work-experience is essential mainly because of its practical value and manual work.

The present system of education creates a deplorable gulf between the educated and the uneducated classes and between the intelligentsia and the masses. In order to eradicate this difference and to build up a well-knit and united nation the Commission recommends that some form of social and national service should be made obligatory for all students and should form an integral part of education at all stages. It also says that the programme of social service should run concurrently with academic studies in schools and colleges. The programme should begin from the upper primary stage and continue up to the university so that the right attitudes are developed from the early age. It also suggests two main forms in which such service can
be organized. Firstly, by encouraging and enabling students to participate in community living in school or college campus, and secondly, by providing opportunities of participating in programmes of community development and national service.

Community living in school or college campus is very much important as it fosters esprit de corps as well as a sense of dignity of labour. The Commission writes - "Various opportunities for such work exist in the class room, on the campus of the schools and colleges in the hostels and on the playgrounds. For instance, instead of utilizing servants and hired labour for educational institutions and their hostels, it is possible to have much of the work done by students, but primarily to save money, but to provide valuable experience." It also says that such programmes are followed in Japan and were followed in the past in Ashramas and Academies in India. If these are followed with some modernization in the schools and colleges of today, these would yield good educational results.

Participation in the programmes of Community Development in addition to institutional programmes is also very important, as it can help to create positive attitudes towards social service and develop closer ties between
the educated and the rest of the people. It also helps in building up a sense of social purpose and self-confidence. Tagore's programmes at Sriniketan were based on the same principles. So the commission echoes the ideas of Tagore.

Then we have to see what the Commission says about the moral and spiritual values in education. The Commission holds the view that for the purpose of reform of education and relating education to the life, needs and aspiration of the people, education should be related to productivity. It should strengthen social and national integration, hasten the process of modernization and strive to build character by cultivating social, moral and spiritual values.

It also holds the view that the most distinctive feature of the modern society is in its adoption of a science-based technology. But it does not mean that modernization will stand in the way of inculcation of moral and spiritual values. It, therefore, observes that a national system of education related to the life, needs and aspirations of the people, cannot afford to be ignored. It thus recommends that conscious and organized attempts be made for imparting education in social, moral and spiritual values with the help, wherever possible, of ethical teachings.
of great religions. It points out then that the absence of provision for education in social, moral and spiritual values is a serious defect in the present school curriculum. So the Commission suggests two methods - Indirect and Direct, for the inculcation of values. The Commission states thus regarding Indirect Methods:

"We attach great importance to the role of indirect influence in building up good character. The School atmosphere, the personality and behaviour of the Teachers, the facilities provided in the school, will have a large say in developing a sense of values." The Commission also says that "the School assembly, the curricular and co-curricular activities, the celebration of religious festivals of all religions, work-experiences team games and sports, subject clubs, social service programmes all these can help in inculcating the values of co-operation and mutual regard, honesty, and integrity, discipline and social responsibility. These values have a special significance in Indian Society today, when young men and women are passing through a crisis of character."

As regards Direct Instruction of Moral values the Commission agreeing with the recommendation of Sri Prakash Committee states that one or two periods a week should be set aside in the School time table for the purpose. It
writes thus - "In addition to this indirect approach for inculcating moral and spiritual values, we consider that specific provision for direct moral instruction in the School programmes is highly desirable." Activities at Santiniketan, daily prayer and meditation aimed at fostering all these traits in the children. So Tagore thought of these things much earlier that the Commission.

Besides the inclusion of subject areas of languages, science and mathematics, social studies work experience, social service and moral and spiritual values which are essential for a new orientation in the school curriculum, the Commission has also put emphasis on the inclusion of physical education, art education and co-curricular activities, has considered them as much essential as the former subjects.

The Commission also lays great importance to the inclusion of physical education in the curriculum. It holds the view that such education not only stresses physical fitness but also it aims at educational value. So the Commission remarks, "It must be not only to physical fitness but also to physical efficiency, mental alertness and the development of certain qualities like perseverance, team spirit, leadership, obedience to rules, moderation in victory and balance in defeat."
The Commission includes art education and co-curricular activities in the area of creative activities. It thus opines that any new orientation in the field of education neglecting creating activities cannot be successful. So the Commission recommends that the Government of India should appoint a Committee of experts to survey the present situation of art education and explore all possibilities for its extension and systematic development.

With regard to co-curricular activities the Commission is of opinion that distinction between the curricular and extra-curricular work should cease to exist and activities like school camp, games and sports, debates and dramas are best means of creative self-expression. So every school should organize a variety of such programmes so that every child in it may be able to take up something suited to his tastes and interests. We have mentioned earlier that Tagore appreciated the value of creative activities and so he made no distinction between the curricular and extra-curricular activities. In this respect Tagore's impact on the Commission becomes prominent.

Lastly, the Commission refers to the question of differentiation of curriculum for boys and girls and opines that there should be no differentiation on the basis of sex.
in the democratic and socialistic pattern of societies. But with due regard to the individual capacities, aptitudes and interests certain special subjects such as home science, music and fine arts may be introduced for girls. They also should be taught mathematics and science as these are very much important in this age. In this respect also the Commission owes much to Tagore's ideas on female education.

The Commission at the end of their discussion on School curriculum clearly admits that their plan of reorientation is consistent with the fundamental principles of Basic education demanded by Mahatma Gandhi. The fundamental principles of Basic education, according to the Commission are - (1) Productive activities in education; (2) Correlation of the Curriculum with the productivity and the physical and social environment and (3) the intimate contact between the school and local community.

The Commission asserts that their suggestion for inclusion of work-experience and social service as an integral part of general education comprises within itself all the fundamental principles of Basic education. The Commission, however, observes that only a particular stage should not be designated as Basic education. So it writes
thus: "In our view, the essential principles of basic education are so important that they should guide and shape the educational system at all levels. This is the essence of our proposals, and in view of this, we are not in favour of designating any one stage of education as basic education."34 This is what practically Tagore did. We have mentioned in the earlier chapters that Tagore's programmes extended, up to the University stage while Gandhi's schemes stopped at the primary stage. Tagore's aim was for 'the whole man.'

Regarding the study of languages Tagore's lifelong advocacy for the study of the mother tongue has a great relevance to the recommendation of the Commission of 1964-66 which places first priority to the mother tongue or regional language. The Commission recommends that a modified or graduated three language formula should include:

"(1) The mother tongue or the regional language,
(2) the official language of the union or the associate official language of the union so long as it exists, and
(3) a modern Indian or foreign language not covered under (1) and (2) and other than that used as the medium of instruction."35
We have referred to elsewhere that Tagore was the ardent champion of mother tongue. He compared it to mother's milk. But while Tagore attached the first and foremost importance to the study of mother tongue, he was fully conscious of the importance of the English language, not only as a language of business or commercial language but also as the international language or link language for the study of world culture. He specially felt its importance in the modern age of science and technology.

As the Commission recommends the study of English to begin from Class V so also Tagore recommended to start the teaching of English from early years in small doses. To quote his own words, "Let the English language be taught from childhood but as a supplement to Bengali and in small doses." 36

We have said already that though Tagore laid special stress on English for world contact he did not neglect other foreign languages. On the other hand, he made provision for the study of Latin, German, French etc. at Visva-Bharati. Again as early as 1918 Tagore started institutions for the study of Hindi and Urdu as modern Indian languages. He also attached great importance to the study of Sanskrit as he was specially interested in Sanskrit literature.
Thus we find that Tagore thought of the study of languages in the first decade of the twentieth century in a most comprehensive way when the most of his countrymen were in favour of the study of English as the Linguafranca of the country. The Commission in the last half of the century thinks almost in the line of Tagore. It echoes the ideas of Tagore in respect of the study of languages placing the study of mother language at the top of all.

As regards the teaching of Science and Mathematics, the Commission says that these subjects are to be taught on compulsory basis even from the first year of schools considering the importance of these subjects in the modern age of Science and Technology. Tagore also felt the need of teaching these subjects even from the early years through mother tongue. Dr. H. B. Mukherjee writes, "Tagore's emphasis on the study of science at a time when it was hardly included in the courses of study in Indian schools, and, if at all included, given a perfunctory importance, testifies to his farsightedness." Then he writes: "Tagore's plea for the widespread of scientific knowledge among the common people, made as early as the eighteen nineties, is being materially realized now through the efforts of the All India Science Teachers' Association to establish Science Clubs in the
Secondary Schools of the country and those of the Government of India to start "Vigyan Mandirs" even in the interior villages for disseminating Scientific information among the people. Tagore's advocacy of teaching Science through the mother tongue is also finding support from eminent educationists.

We may on this point add that Tagore's advocacy in this regard is not only finding support but also effective measures are being adopted for translating the important books of Science and Technology in National languages by the Indian Universities of to-day with the financial aids from the Government of India.

Dr. Mukherjee then observes that Tagore's pleading for scientific knowledge to be used for the benefit of the vast masses has also been frequently re-echoed by Nehru and others before gatherings of Scientists.

It is needless to point out that Tagore thought and practised about the study of science and their application for the benefit of humanity at large in Pre-Independent India. The people of Post-Independent India thinks of the same seriously and tries to attach greatest importance to it. Hence Tagore's ideas in this respect have not only relevance to current thoughts but they also influence them.
to a considerable degree.

The Commission includes the study of languages, humanities and social sciences under the head 'Literacy' and Mathematics and Natural Sciences under 'Numeracy'. Social Science comprises History, Geography, Economics and Sociology and again Natural Science comprises Physics, Chemistry, Biology etc. The Commission, therefore, recommends the study of all these subjects under certain groups, e.g., Humanities, Science, Commerce, Technology etc. It also suggests the Work-experience and Social Service for inclusion as integral part of education. In Tagore's Educational Institutions all these subjects were studied with much care and attention. So Dr. H.B. Mukherjee writes, "We find that at the Santiniketan School and later on at Visva Bharati, not only did the teaching of the various familiar academic subjects like History, Science, Nature Study, Geography, Literature etc. include a variety of relevant practical activities like drama, excursion, gardening, regional study, laboratory work, drawing, original composition, collection of museum and herbarium etc. but a multitude of so called extra-curricular activities."^40

We see, therefore, that long before the Kothori Commission Tagore clearly and boldly pointed out the problems
of teaching method, and by breaking the traditions with much courage he brought an innovation in the method of teaching and learning. His method, as we have seen, was characterized by the spirit of freedom and joy, dynamism and elasticity. So it may be said without any hesitation that Tagore's educational ideas had a great impact upon the educational thinkers and planners of the latter time.

Current Educational Trends:

We have so long tried to find out the marks of relevance of Tagore's educational philosophy and educational ideas to the thoughts and ideas of the great educators of the West and India and to those of the Educational Commissions of wide reputation that were set up in India before and after the attainment of Independence. Now we want to conclude the chapter on relevance by referring in brief to the modern trends and tendencies in education all over the world, specially to the trends that are prevalent in highly developed countries like England, France, America and Russia.

A marked change in the theories of education is perceptible after the Second World War. Regarding this
change I.L. Kandel observes, "The Second half of the twentieth century opened with grave misgivings but not without hope about the ultimate peaceful settlement of the world to which the United Nations and its various agencies are dedicated. The cold war which exhausts the resources of nations in preparation for a shooting war also diverts the necessary means for the advancement of social welfare and education. The uncertainty and instability which affect all aspects of social, political, economic and cultural life throughout the world are reflected in the tempo of educational progress."

The Second world war was concluded in 1944 and the bitter effects that were produced by the War warned the people of the world to stop the causes that might lead to the outbreak of the Third World War. The U.N.O. was established with a view to taking some measures that might refrain the big powers from destroying the peace of the world. In the words of Kandel, it was during the war years that "minds twisted to the planning of institutions that would eliminate war as a method of settling conflicts between nations that would make international cooperation the way to world progress and that would promote the cause of education throughout the world. At the same time plans for reconstruction of education systems were widely
discussed, particularly with a view to distributing the privileges of education more equally on the basis of individual ability rather than on that of economic or social status. Then it is clear that after the World War II a perceptible change in the nature of providing equal opportunity for individual development, irrespective of economic and social status was the most important trend in education. Of course, it is a fact that due attention was not paid to the reconstruction of education as the countries had to meet the demands of those factors that are considered to be more urgent and immediate. At the same time it is true that a new pattern of education was emerging in different countries after the World War II or from the second half of the twentieth century. The pattern was almost the same everywhere, the difference is only in the fact that it is being shaped according to the culture of each nation. The aims and meanings of democracy were getting great importance after the war. Education after the war, therefore, has two important trends, namely, eradication of illiteracy and liquidation of poverty. This means equality before the eye of law. Equal opportunity must be given to all for the individual development and welfare of the nation as well. Kandel says that there are
two current outstanding issues in education. In his words - "The two outstanding issues are the prolongation of school attendance and the provision of equal educational opportunities for all." 43

In other words, the change of attitude was concentrated on the individual development of the individual child in relation with the development of the society. This is a marked change from the nineteenth century to the twentieth century. This is due to attaching more importance to the ideals of democracy. Kandel points out the nature of this change thus: "Nothing better illustrates the change from the nineteenth to the twentieth century than the change in the attitude to the child, ....... The emphasis shifted from the memorization, drill and note learning, in which the child was assumed to be a passive recipient, to activities spontaneous interests, the study of the environment, and creativity. The emphasis, in other words, shifted in teaching from the subject to the child, ......." 44

This attitude of change in aims naturally necessitates a change in trend to a new method of curriculum making and of instruction. Because the content of curriculum was unrelated to the life and time in which
the child lived and the method of instruction was influenced by the importance attached to examination and therefore, it encouraged recognition rather than active participation by the pupils.

"Two significant trends are seen in the advanced countries of the world in educational development. The first is the trend to prolong the duration of education, and the second is the trend to put more content in the same period of schooling."45

In other words, we can say that the modern trend in education is child-centric as the child is placed in the centre of the modern educational reconstruction.

As the modern education is paedocentric, the curriculum and instruction should be meant for meeting the interests and aptitudes of children. The purpose of modern education is not merely loading the minds of the pupils with a fund of useful information but giving them some such materials that might naturally develop their body, mind and soul. We have referred to elsewhere that 'the highest education', according to Tagore, 'is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence.'46 So he...
regretted that "the greatest of education for which we came prepared is neglected, and we are made to lose our world to find a bagful of information instead we rob the child of his earth to teach him geography, of language to teach him grammar. His hunger is for the epic, but he is supplied with chemicals of facts and dates. He was born in the human world, but is banished into the world of living gramophones, to expiate for the original sets of being born in ignorance."47

It is then vivid that Tagore from the very beginning was conscious of the modern trend and had started experiments in education on modern line placing the child in the centre of his programme and giving due importance to the interests and aptitudes of the children. He believed that children are not born ascetics fit to enter at once into the monastic discipline of acquiring knowledge or grown up people who were conscious of the special need of the society. Hence they should be dealt with love and affection. Their interests and aptitudes must be taken into consideration for effective teaching. So he said - "I believe that children have their subconscious mind more active than their conscious intelligence. A vast quantity of the most important of our lessons has been taught to us through this."48
This is the most psychological and significant trend and it finds its best application in the programme of Tagore's educational reconstruction.

Another trend of the modern education is 'to individualize education but to socialize pupils'. In the words of Sir Percy Nunn, the leading educational philosopher of this century - "Educational efforts must be limited to securing for everyone the conditions under which individuality is more completely developed." He does not stop here. He then points out that it will not only receive conditions for the complete development of individuality but also it will at the same time enable him "to make his original contribution to the variegated whole of human life as full and as truly characteristic as his nature permits." He must make original contribution and not secondary. The social conduct implies a strong self; and again the original personality is unintelligible apart from the social medium in which he grows.

So Ross observes, "Thus individuality is of no value, and personality is a meaningless term apart from the social environment in which they are developed and made manifest; self-realisation can be achieved only through social service."
Thus it is clear that modern trend in education, in other words, the latest trend, aims at both individual and social development. Education must be individualized but the pupils must be socialized. That is to say, ample opportunities must be thrown open to each individual irrespective of his economic and social status for his self-development, but it will not stop here. Along with self-development social development must be ensured. Because man is a social being and he has to live in society and so individuality cannot be successfully developed by ignoring his close association with the society and doing no good for it. So Nunn very emphatically says, "Individuality develops only in a social atmosphere where it can feel on common interests and common activities." He quotes from Christopher in support of his view that 'men are never individual when alone'- What he demanded is this — "All we demand is that individuality shall have free scope, within the common life, to grow in its own way, and that it shall not be warped from its ideal bent by alien forces." He clarifies it further when he says that 'individuality is by no means the same thing as eccentricity.' So he defines in this light what should be the teachers' task or function. He says, "Teachers are not called upon to manufacture it deliberately, but merely
to let it grow unimpeded out of the materials of each child's nature, fashioned by whatever forces, strong or weak, that nature may include."  

This is, no doubt, the latest trend in education. If it be so, Tagore's educational effort or experiment helped in every possible way to secure for every pupil who resides and reads there the most congenial conditions under which (i.e. under benign influence of nature) individuality of the pupil was completely developed in relation with 'all existence'. It was Tagore who believed in the principle of life and not in any formal method and advocated the freedom of mind. He knew it for certain that children are living beings more living than grown up people. So he thought that "it is absolutely necessary for their mental health and development that they should not have more schools for their lessons, but a world whose guiding spirit is personal love."  

Thus we can undoubtedly say that Tagore's ideals and activities of educational efforts had a remarkable relevance to the contemporary educational thoughts of India and abroad. It is thus clear that Tagore's idea had a good point of relevance to one of the significant trend of modern education - the provision of equal
educational opportunity for all irrespective of economic and social status. His endeavour for dissemination of education through Loko-Shiksha Samsad may be referred to in this connection. He had a great zeal for the welfare of the lowliest and the lost. He was a great pioneer for the spread of mass education and eradication of illiteracy. His establishment of Sriniketan owes its origin to his philosophy of liquidation of poverty. His various village welfare schemes aimed at it.

As regards the next trend - the prolongation of school attendance, it may be said that it was Tagore who for the first time in India endeavoured non-officially to start an integrated scheme of education from the elementary to the higher education having no clearcut demarcation of primary, secondary and collegiate education. It was again he who for the first time in India increased the contents of course. His curriculum contained some such subjects that are not prescribed for examination purpose. It included music, dance, drama, art and craft in his curriculum. This idea of extended curriculum had a great bearing upon the subsequent educational plannings and commissions and a great relevance to the current educational thoughts of the foreign countries. It was also he who felt the need of free and universal education
and so his scheme was free for all the children who came there.

Now we shall see what were the heeds of the present century specially in the fifties and sixties of the current age in the highly developed countries and their relevancy to Tagore's ideas and experiments.

We have mentioned earlier that he travelled from 'China to Peru', that is to say, he travelled from one pole to the other or almost all the important countries on the globe as a non-official ambassador of India's tradition and culture. Indeed none of the great Indians travelled so many countries as Tagore did. After the establishment of his school at Santiniketan in 1901 he visited England and America in 1912, Japan in 1916 and again America in 1920. In the year of the inauguration of Visva Bharati in 1921 he made an extensive tour to European countries, namely, France, Germany, Sweden and Austria. He visited China in 1924 and Italy at the invitation of Mussolini in 1926. He made a tour to Eastern Islands, Singapore, Sumatra, Java, Bali in 1927. He visited Russia and America again in 1930 and Iraq and Persia in 1932. As he travelled over so many countries and passed a good number of days there, it is quite natural that he had come in close contact with the culture
and tradition of these countries including the educational progress made there. His 'Letters from Russia' and other written documents clearly give a good account of his experience that he received during his visits in these countries. Having thus the opportunity of coming in close contact with the latest trends and tendencies or progress in education in foreign countries, Tagore formed an idea of education that would naturally be best of its kind, comprising the best elements derived therefrom and containing his original contribution and elements of ancient Indian system of education. As he was interested in the educational experiments and made tour to foreign countries after the establishment of his institutions it is quite natural that he would be inquisitive of the educational systems of other countries. He admitted it when he said that the growth of his institution was the growth of his life.

Dr. H. B. Mukherjee refers to this point thus: "That Tagore was keenly interested in, and quite familiar with the modern development, in educational theory and practice, is however testified by reliable observers as well as internal evidence of Tagore's own writings."

Then he refers to Ernest Rhys who wrote thus, "During his visit to America Me (Tagore) inquired most carefully
into the most intelligent system of education; he did the same while staying in England."58 Another observation of Dr. Mukherjee is worth quoting here, "Tagore's reference to Russell's work on experimental education - in the article, Manovikaser Chanda, to the famous school founded in Georgia, U.S.A. 1902 by Miss Martha Berry in the article, American Ekta Vidyalaya (1908) to an article published in an American Educational Journal, in his letter to Dhirendra Mohan Sen entitled, Siksha O Sanskriti, to the latest experiments in educational methods in the article Siksha Vidhi - suggests that he tried to keep abreast of the latest educational advancements to minute details."59 By another observation Dr. Mukherjee refers to Tagore's indebtedness and relevance to ideals of foreign systems.

It runs thus, "During his several foreign tours he must have met prominent educationists and visited outstanding educational institutions wherever he went. ...... Tagore's last educational pilgrimage was undertaken in 1930 in Soviet Russia, above the educational achievements of the Soviet Government won his passionate admiration. But as he himself wrote in the very first letter written from Russia, he found nothing on which he had not thought for long before."60
The last line refers to the relevance of Tagore's ideas to Russian ideas on education. We shall see it in detail below. We have said above that we shall only refer to four highly developed countries of the present century, namely Russia, America, England and France that he visited.

Tagore's ideas & Russia

That Tagore was highly satisfied with the educational experiments that had been undertaken by the Russians after the establishment of Soviet Socialist Republic in 1917 is quite apparent from first letter that he wrote from Moscow on 20th September 1930. He was surprised and at the same time satisfied because he found wonderful relevance of his educational ideas and activities to those of the Russians. Perhaps he was not satisfied with the systems of other countries because he did not find a very close relevance of his ideas to the systems that were being followed in other countries. So he expressed his admiration in such a way that was not very welcoming to the then British rulers and perhaps for this reason the 'Letters from Russia' were banned by them. Tagore admired this, "In Russia at last whichever way I took, I am filled with wonder. It is unlike any
other countries. It is radically different. From top to bottom they are rousing everybody up without distinction."61

This is clear that Tagore found his ideas at work in Russia at last and it implies that he did not find it elsewhere. The most significant trend of equality of opportunity in education was in vogue in Russia. Not even a peasant was illiterate there. That is why, Tagore was so much filled with wonder. They had made provision for enlightening everybody without any distinction of caste and creed and irrespective of socio-economic status. It were the Russians who realized that the royal road to the solution of all problems is education. They provided full opportunities for education to the bulk of human society who had been so long deprived of it. So Tagore said that Russia is radically different from other countries and naturally her educational system would differ from others. Y.N. Medinsky points out to this fundamental difference in the following way: "The educational system of the U.S.S.R. differs fundamentally from all other systems, including the system practised in old, prerevolutionary Russia and those current in capitalist countries. This difference inevitably arises from the very nature of the U.S.S.R. as a
state of the new type — the Socialist state." Then, Medinsky assesses the cause of such difference thus, "The fundamental difference between Soviet Public education and the educational system applied in capitalist countries lies, above all, in the fact that Soviet education is public in the wide sense of the term, that is, is accessible to the whole people* and exclusively serves the interests of the people." Then we find that the Russian systems of education aims at the interests and development of the people as a whole. They were working with extraordinary vigour for the spread of education throughout the Russian society which was classless. Not that they opened the flood-gates of education unending effort is being made to bring the latest fruits of science to them.

Tagore was very happy to see what he did at Sriniketan, was being done on a large scale by the Russians in these countries on the government level. So he wrote, "what we ourselves have been attempting to do at Sriniketan, they are doing on a superior scale all over the land .......
A few years ago the condition of the matters here was fully comparable with that of the Indian masses; things have rapidly changed in this short period, whereas we are up to the neck in the mud of stagnation." This shows that Tagore's ideas that were put into
practice at Sriniketan was not an imitation from Russia. It was his original contribution. It might be said that he supplemented his ideas with various materials that he obtained from Russia. He was at the same time very sorry that he could not put everything into practice. He, however, consoled himself with the hope that though he had not been able to fulfill his youthful ideas in Sriniketan and Santiniketan he had widened the path towards it. To quote his own words, "What I had aspired to for long, Russia has realised in practice that I could not achieve this makes me sad. But it will be shameful if we give up this attempt. Even though my youthful idea has not been fully realised in Sriniketan and Santiniketan there I have widened the path towards it."

Tagore candidly admitted that he was gathering materials from Russia. The greatest gain was his firm determination to give away with the Zamindari business for which he had a deep repugnance since long. So he wrote from Russia to Pratima Tagore to be mentally prepared to live without the income from his zamindari and said, "I have realized this well - our greatest work lies in Sriniketan. To solve in small measure the problem as to how our entire country can be saved, this is the task we have accepted. Had you come to Russia you would have gained
much experience along these lines. However I am gathering materials, we shall discuss them when I return home. We must forget about ourselves, much greater things impend."

This clearly shows that he had been gathering materials that would be very much useful for supplementing his ideas at work.

What Tagore did at Santiniketan had a wonderful relevance to Russian system of education, with only one exception that examination was not of primary importance as it had been in India.

So he wrote, "I notice that boys here have been divided into groups and given charge of different departments; in connection with their dormitories they undertake all sorts of responsibilities, some looking after health, some after the stores, the sole control remaining in their hands; they have only one superintendent. I have always tried to do the same at Santiniketan, but little has been done beyond framing regulations." What is the cause of failure. Tagore said that it was because of the ultimate aim of the school department to get the boys through examination. It was the primary thing while everything else is secondary.
The end of the Tsarist rule in Russia took place in 1917 but within a short period of 13 years when Tagore visited Russia in 1930, he was astonished to see the wonderful progress that was made everywhere inspite of various internal troubles and threat of the capitalist countries and even lack of external resources.

Another point of relevante was the organization of bratibalak and bratibalikas. He wrote, "I saw it the other day when I went to visit one of the educational centres founded in that country called the pioneers commune. The pioneers there are something like our bratibalaks and bratibalikas at Santiniketan." 68

No doubt that he gained much over the Russian system of life and education by his visits to the various institution, educational and recreational, of Russia. So he said, "Since I came to Russia I have had to think a good deal on our national education. With my solitary and modest powers I have gathered some new experience and shall put it into practice." 69

The system of education through starting of museums, by organizing tours, organization of health centres, attempt for spread of education among the peasants and backward classes has great relevance to Tagore's ideas

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that he put into practice at Santiniketan and Sriniketan. In a reply to the reception given to him by the Russians, Tagore said, "I am beginning myself to be convinced, that your ideas are very much like my own dream for a full life for the individual, for complete education." Then he said, "Since I have come to this place I have been able to realise that your ideal of education is very similar to mine, that the people are living a complete life through which their mind is prepared to receive education in its full richness and not merely to hoard isolated facts of scientific instruction or information. You have been stimulating the people's mind for creative work which is the highest privilege of man. It has not been possible for me to give effect to this idea in an adequate manner in my institutions." 

Thus we find from Tagore's own remarks that his ideas had a great relevance to Russian ideas from the point of aims, means, methods of education. That is to say, the philosophy that worked under the Russian activities for the spread and improvement of education on mass scale had wonderful relevance to Tagore's educational ideas and activities. The curriculum that was followed in Russian schools and the daily activities that carried everyday in their educational institutions
are, as if, the same that are followed and carried out at Santiniketan. Let us quote it from Tagore's own account—"Their daily time table is as follows. They get up at 7 in the morning. Then follow fifteen minutes' physical exercise, wash and breakfast. Classes begin at 8'o clock. At 1 there is an interval until 3'o clock. The curriculum includes the following subjects: history, geography, mathematics, politics, sociology and literature, handicrafts, carpentry, book-binding and the use of modern machine ploughs etc. There is no Sunday holiday. There is a holiday on every fifth day. According to the special time-table of the day, the pioneers go on visits to factories, hospitals and villages, etc. after 3'o clock.

Visits to villages are arranged on occasion they act their own plays and on others they go to theatres and cinemas. In the evening they have story reading and story telling and meetings of the debating, literary and scientific societies. On holidays, the pioneers wash some of their clothes, clean the house inside and out, read books other than their school books and go on rambles. The age for admission is seven or eight and the school leaving age is sixteen. The period of their study is not interrupted by long holidays as in a short time." This passage is quite relevant for our purpose.
Santiniketan programmes are still more exhaustive. Sundays are not observed there as holidays. One thing that was lacking in Russian system was the daily prayer that was compulsory at Santiniketan. Nevertheless, everything was included in Tagore's programme.

That Tagore was very eager to study the educational methods followed by the Russians is quite explicit from the following passage: "I have come to study your educational methods, to draw strength from the atmosphere of creative efforts which surrounds you. I have my educational colony in India which is linked up with the surrounding villages. With meagre means I and my colleagues there by our best to serve our neighbours, to invite them to our festivals, to supply them. With medicine to demonstrate to them the efficiency of up to date methods of agriculture. Whatever you can show me, therefore, of your educational work will be of very great use by me indeed. I wish I had more time and energy to study your work properly, but I shall do all that I can to utilize my visit to your country."73

This is clear from the above that Tagore visited Russia with the intention of studying the educational methods, specially those methods by which they have been able to improve the condition of the vast peasantry of
the big agricultural country like Russia so he said that as an educationist he was vitally concerned with all the great movements that the Russians had initiated for the good of the peasant masses. By his farewell speech he admitted with much gratitude that his visit to Russia had been greatly successful and he had gained a valuable knowledge that he required for the success of his endeavour at Santiniketan and Sriniketan. So he said that the little that he had seen had convinced him of the marvellous progress that had been made, the miracle that had been achieved. Tagore had a dream of the time when India would be able to enjoy the great boon of educational and equal opportunities for all the people. He was glad to visualize in Russia in a concrete form the dream that he had been carrying for a long time in his mind. His was the dream of emancipating the people from ignorance, illiteracy and poverty. Then it is evident from the foregoing discussion that there are many good points of relevance of Tagore's ideas and activities to those of the Russians in respect of spread of education and rural upliftment.
Tagore's ideas and other countries:

That Tagore's educational ideas and activities had some good points of relevance to those of the Americans is to be traced from Tagore's own remarks. Firstly in a letter, written to D.M. Sen and published under the caption - Siksha O Samskriti (July 15, 1935) Tagore wrote that he had been very glad to read an article published in an American journal about the 'Siksha-Vidhi' (the method of education) that he intended to discuss. He was happy because the idea that was published in the American journal was exactly the same which he contemplated. Besides, the American writer had realized the truth that the greed for the material prosperity has paralysed culture which is the essence of education. The American writer had very rightly pointed out that education can never be complete without culture. Because it is culture which brings 'light and sweetness' from the very core of the human heart. By its influence interest for the disinterested action and pursuit of pure knowledge become natural. So it is said that the pursuit of culture means pursuit of perfection, Education aims at it.

Tagore then said that the American writer agreed
with him on this point. Because the latter expressed the view that "under the influence of culture the soul attains that eagerness which brings peace to the mind, generates self-respect and self-control, and fills every situation in life with the bliss of friendly fellowfeeling." So it is opined that the lack of culture breeds the poison that destroys the great ideal of humanity and the divine bond of love and friendship. It again breeds dis-respect and disregard to man and nation of the world and thus makes human life miserable. So they are agreed on the point that the aim of our educational institutions should be the eradicating of the evils that are contained in the poisonous seeds of meanness and vulgarity and this is to be done from the very childhood through such education that does not attach much importance to the passing of examination by committing everything to memory, but that paves the way of developing the sense of respect for all that is noble in human history through joyful acquaintance. Needless to say, Tagore followed these principles at his institutions. So Tagore was happy to find the relevancy of his ideas and activities to the ideas that were expressed by the American writer. He refers to the motto of the modern Europe, "I know everything and I will do everything."
This motto was reflected in education. So the modern Europeans were not only satisfied with the theoretical knowledge but also they put much emphasis on the practical skill and therein lies the secret of success. Tagore's educational planning was out and out job-oriented and aimed at practical efficiency. Specially the programmes of Tagore's Sriniketan deserve the credit of the above motto.

We have pointed out elsewhere in this chapter that the provision of equality of educational opportunities is the significant trend of the modern age. The Russian programmes of educational reconstruction fully aimed at this and the Russians had been able to achieve spectacular success which was not possible by the capitalist countries like America, England, etc. Medinsky writes thus: "Literacy among the population (up to 50 years of age) increased from 56.6% at the end of 1926 to 89.1% by the beginning of 1939...... The Soviet Union is today a country of universal literacy." So he remarks thus, "Such rapid development of the Schools, and of public education in general, as witnessed in the U.S.S.R., has no precedent in the annals of mankind. Soviet rule has raised public education to a height never attained and unattainable in any capitalist state......"
The Soviet system of education has given all the peoples of the U.S.S.R. the conditions that make for the floren-
cence of a culture that is socialist in content and national in form."77 That Tagore admitted it has been pointed out in 'Letters from Russia'. Thus we find that Tagore learnt the secrecy of universal literacy from Russia and confirmed his method of education from the activities of the American educational reconstruction. Both the points that were most significant in the post war period bear a great relevancy to Tagore's ideas and activities.

All schools of U.S.S.R. are opened, maintained and run by the state but schools in other countries are not nationalized as it is in U.S.S.R. The other significant trend, the prolongation of school attendance and extension of school course, is almost the same in all the countries. In England and France the attempt was being made between the World wars to reorganise the education system in such a way that it might provide equal opportunity of education to all. Kandel observes thus as regards the reorganisation of education in England that was recommended by various agencies, "The common thesis that ran through all the recommendations was the desire
to eliminate those inequalities in educational opportunities that arise from the economic conditions of parents and the accidents of residence. The principles which it was sought to establish were the substitution of a unified and articulated system of education for the traditional duel system and the creation of a system based on equality of educational opportunities.\(^78\) Regarding the position of France Kandel observes - "The needed reforms of French education were outlined by M. Rives capitain, commissioner for National Education ...... He emphasised the provision of greater equality of educational opportunity for all in the interest of social justice and the principle of recognizing the dignity of the human being."\(^79\) As regards the position of the U.S.A. Kandel writes this - "A few countries are already on the way to putting into practice the principle of equality of educational opportunity as one upon which the educational system of the United States has been based from the beginning of the Republic in theory and in practice progressively for the past century."\(^80\)

Kandel, however, admits that the progress has been slow. But this is due to the democratic set up of the country. In totalitarian states the progress has been very rapid because it does not pay heed to the public
opinion. In his words, "the totalitarian authorities bring about changes by fiat, by dictation, without consulting those who may be affected by them." Whatever may be the rate of progress — rapid or slow, it is quite clear that the post war trend in education was fundamentally to provide equal opportunities for all irrespective of socioeconomic status of the individual. Tagore by making travels to the different countries before the war and coming in close contact with the educational reorganization in both aim and methods before and after the war had been greatly benefitted to put into practice the ideas that developed in him from a very long time. In other words, we can say that his ideas and activities had a great relevance to the modern trends that are prominent in the foreign countries, especially in the highly developed countries of the world.

Another trend which was not stressed by others was strikingly prominent to Tagore. It was the international understanding in education. After the first world war a change in the attitude of the great powers for maintaining peace all over the world and establishing good relationship with one another was formed everywhere. Tagore came to understand it when he visited the European countries after the war. So he wrote, "When I was in Europe
I met with individuals everywhere who were glowing with the enthusiasm of the new hope of unity and brotherhood which was dawning after the war, the hope of a humanity which should no longer be divided into a thousand conflicting races and needs but a mind, all outward differences should be intimately one." He was satisfied to find this latent trend into practice in Russia when he visited it in 1930. He made remarks on this point thus, "At least the people of one country in the world today are thinking of the interests of mankind as a whole beyond narrow national interests." But the imperialistic greed of wealth and lust for power had led to the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939. This gave him a rude shock. His faith in unity of man and universal humanism and mutual love and friendship had been shattered by the brutalities of the war but he did not lose hope in the good sense of man and he held up to the last moment of his life the view that the goodwill of man will ultimately win and international peace and friendship will be established. He at the same time thought that it is India that was endeavouring from the dawn of civilization to establish the truth of the ideas and she will prove it in future. With this view in mind Tagore established Visva Bharati which stands for the ideal of universal humanism.
and international friendship. This idea he pronounced in his last address, given on the occasion of his eightieth birthday. This was originally entitled 'Sabhyater-Samkat' but translated in English later on and is now known as 'Crisis in Civilization' (May 1942). It is said that this address that was written only three months before his death has a historic interest as his last message to the world. It contains his agony of spirit at the spectacle of the devastating barbarism of the war and his hope of the ultimate triumph of Man's spirit. It also contains his prophecy of the coming of a dawn from the East where the sun rises." He more directly said that it will come from India. To quote his own words - "I had one time believed that the springs of civilization would issue out of the hearts of Europe. But today when I am about to quit the world that faith has gone bankrupt altogether. Today I live in the hope that the Saviour is coming that he will be born in our midst in this poverty shamed hovel which is India." Thus we find that this idea he cherished till his death and so he put his ideas into practice at Visva Bharati. It can be undoubtedly said that when some countries all over the world were thinking of devasting war and some thinking of establishing international peace, mutual friendships, co-operation and peaceful co-existence, Tagore being
fully convinced of the need of international friendship had started his work at Visva Bharati. He thought that it might give guidance to the world in due time. Herein lies his originality in thought and actions. So we can conclude that Visva Bharati symbolizes the evolution as well as the culmination of his philosophy of life and education. It is a unique creation of the poet philosopher and it contains all the ideals that are current in the modern thoughts of the East and the West.

As to the relevance of Tagore's ideas to the modern needs of India and all the world over it may be said that Tagore's programmes aimed at meeting those needs. If the current needs of the world are liquidation of poverty, eradication of illiteracy, establishment of international peace and fellowfeeling, universal humanism, Tagore's ideas on all these points were put successfully into practice at Visva Bharati or at the institutions at Santi-niketan and Sriniketan. Herein lies his eminence over all the educators of the world as none but Tagore had been able to put ideas into practice so vigorously in his life time.