Chapter-4

Progressive Art Movement
In Bengal
Chapter IV

PROGRESSIVE ART MOVEMENT IN BENGAL

Bengal was the place where the first national art movement or the cultural movement emerged at a time. The event integrated several issues and created a ‘movement’ which brought together E.B. Havell, Abanindranath and A.K. Coomaraswamy and other. Bengal was made a specific landmark through the nationalist and ideologist in art trend of aesthetic which were prevailing at that time. They gave a significant shape to the Art of Bengal. At that time there was the identity crises in art. They tried to give a sense of direction to the art movement in the country and create confidence to the traditional values.

The names of many art movements use the ‘-ism’ suffix [e.g. cubism, fauvism etc.] they are sometimes referred to as isms, but basically its held a movement or awareness of art. The “movement” were especially important to follow norms or the basic thought though any transformation or any development is said to be “progressive”, they could decide to change the process and development.

The progressive movement with its awakened sense of art’s mission, proposed that it was imperative for their work to reflect the temperament of
the time. They tried to assemble an aesthetic ideal that essentially belonged to modern life, with an emphasis on progress. Actually fact is, it was a complex world that rejected the models and the standard of past. The progressive people thought that by simply breaking with the past, they will be called as ‘modern’. Though if we define the ‘modern’ only a chronological reference, assumed that due to chronological gap the term modern has shifted. According to Ruskin’s the concept of modern was carryover of the high tide of bourgeois hope that began with the ‘Renaissance’.¹

Similarly the term ‘modern’ has been used with different cannotations at different times. At the time of the Italian Renaissance the modern manner inspired, strongly enough. “Gothic art” to some “antique art revival” to other, if focussing on “revivalism” as to how the art of the past was discovered and is being imitated or even practised.² If the term “progressive” is applied over here, art movement in Bengal in modern period might not be irrelevant.

According to “Ananda Coomaraswamy” who mentions this word in his book. “The dance of Shiva”, he wrote – “the letters have always possessed and have not yet lost, what the “progressive” amongst the men have lost, the incalculable advantage of familiarity through oral traditional with a epic literature vast in amount and saturated with a great philosophy”.³

Although, the beginnings of the progressive art movement in Bengal are tangled and complex. The characteristic of these movements was highly significant pictorial revolution – a period of experiment and adventure. India had its share of impact of the artistic adventure of western modern art. Its a result of assembled movement of world in 1900 which reflect a Bengal art movement.
Then we may said that in the field of art there is evidence of growing appreciation in west of Indian or western value of aesthetics this encouraged the Indian artist to draw with the inspiration from the traditions and ethos of his own people. We remember that India was the custodian of valuable traditional, social, moral and artistic thought.

Thus this movement given way to new style of painting that was the first aesthetic development that appeared at the turn of the century. The term Bengal school was associated with a style rather then with a period of time or with a regional development. It could be ultimately traced by pioneers like Tagore team with other few great artist.

If we discuss about regional development of Bengal school and the main causes for these revival, then we should go through the history of early Bengal circumstance, which initiate the leaders or academicians to gave a new way of life. Calcutta was a headquarter of Britishers, all over the Indian intellectual personalities came over there and exchange their views, so, at that time Calcutta was a rich in academic centre. Someone had rightly said – what Bengal thinks today India thinks tomorrow. Early 20th century Calcutta was seat of central government and 1917 the Calcutta university commission report exposed the ‘Folk art’ academic superiority of ‘Bengal Babu’ when they were not attending the colleges of graduation without going to certain colleges, so we are not criticise the artist and painters but we want to present the true pictures of art and academic demonstration’. Reported by members of Calcutta Commission, Dr. Ziauddin; Principal of M.A.O. College of Aligarh (presently known A.M.U.) went over these for the inquiry and wrote
the survey report about the situation of academic culture of Bengal, during that period all over the India was awakening about education and then it developed and established new academic centres. The literary group survey all over the India encouraged the pupil for the education in every field. One of the pioneer of India Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, the founder of A.M.U. and he consider as a forefather of a academist. He was related to the administration of Calcutta university which was established in 1857, he visited Calcutta in 1878-1880 to present a academic report in every field especially to awken the Calcutta minority muslim. If we traces the history of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan the astonishing part was that, in 1878, a poet and painter, ‘Ly-tton” appointed him as a member of Governal General or Viceroy concept. ^ It was fruitful appointment in respect of legislature and dominance in India. As per observation of these period researchers, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and R.B. Tagore are somewhere interlinked to each other, means the concept of awakening the Indian people regarding “Indianness”. The idea of founding the universities for higher education with some decipline another common thing is both took idea from outside.

These reports clear that the literary and cultural awakening was already exist into the mind of eminent personalities of India from late 19th century to 20th century so these ‘academist’ to ‘academic’ movement glorious bloomed all over the India at that period. In this way the revolution of education in literature and art and craft was nurture to the public of Bengal. The basic thought for foundation of universities, A.M.U. and V. Bharati were more or less same, both of them gave a new hegemony to Indian pupils, both of them believed in development “advance” education with the traditional ethos, so
we can supposed to co-relate them as one was forefather of academist and another one was father of 'cultural academist'.

However, the cultural efflorescence that took place 19th and early 20th century in Bengal with a evolved as a vital centre economically, politically, culturally and emerged as the “Bengali Renaissance”. The position of Bengal in the sphere of visual art was a peculiar one. Educated Bengalies have been eager for artistic expression form the art creation of extinct tradition of southern and western India viz. those of Ajanta, Rajput and Mughal art. Abanindranath had played a pivotal role in the process of developing the art languages of 20th century in Bengal with Havell. The neo-Bengal artist have been able to demonstrate their genius in sphere of painting and have deservedly established for themselves the foremost place in this sphere in modern India, but there is no gain saying the fact that in the main their has been a borrowed art. As per “Ratan Parimoor” observation, he focussed that the whole process of this movement was tapped by Indian artist in 20th century, which they would rather enumerate as influences, there was the multifacet impact –

(a) Influences of miniature painting from Mughal, ✓
(b) Influences of Ajanta style, ✓
(c) Influences of folk art, ✓
(d) Influences of Indian life and environment, ✓
(e) Influences of western art, ✓
(f) Motif of south Indian painting, ✓
(g) Influences of Indian religious epics. ✓
Then it witnessed that a new culture emerging in India, is mixed culture of dichotomies, namely east, west, past, present, rural and urban, industrial and technological. So, there is the inevitability of change in the traditional social structure, urban growth and the urban elite, as distinct from rural masses and their way of life. The question is, are we in our cultural and creative manifestation trying to come to terms with our own times or collect the idea of national basic indigenous sources’.

Many event and causes had taken places and also necessary to built up this movements. Abanindranath could take the epochal step of re-aligning himself with the native tradition which had not been even fully known and understood around the year 1900.

The famous Tagore family played a significant role in this area as they were pioneers in Art and culture first associated with this multitalented members of the family. They are the ‘oldest Jamindar’ in Calcutta and surrounded by elit group. Basically Calcutta was a great commercial city and established a trading past though the aristocratic family and elite group of people was assemble there and Britishers also rewarded that place. Among the factors contributing to this ambience was firstly the growth of a lively new middle class. Calcutta was a growing city to which migrated members of people who had served their connection with the land and become interested in trade, industries and the professions. Thus grew a urban culture different form the feudal aristocratic communities of earlier times. Thus middle class was largely built up the higher caste Hindu families who adapted for the fashionable western bearing attitude and customs and through them suddenly
confronted the vast field of western ideas and way of living. Their upbringing fashionable thought could divided the classes among middle class to upper class and Elite class.

However at the same time art and culture storm was blown over these ancient town, the critical observation explore that the main focused of this movement spread over the urban elite and its widespread to the people of the higher society of Calcutta So, we may said that at that time school was depicted as a “urban school of art”, in painting also reflect the authentic society of that period, if counted the labour or lower class of that city, they are not as a grass root level, they got the privilege as a “urban poor” level, the paradox was Bengal School artist language and its idioms are mainly derived not form the soil of Bengal or the living traditions of the Bengali race, but from extinct traditions extraneous to Bengal.11

The tide has turned to Indian art is on the way to recognition. It was perhaps not yet time to deal fully with the causes leading to this new orientation since we were yet in the transition stage. A principal factor in this transformation was the renaissance movement in Indian art led by Abanindranath and Gagindranath Tagore. It was true the prior to the activities of these artists many monographs had been published on the ancient movements of India.12 But they reached the eyes only to the learned few and these unfortunately were mostly derived from the artistic perception necessary to appreciate works of art.

Art movement was in progress in India established art school in different places such as Calcutta, Madras, Lahore and Bombay, where the
westernised education system was followed due to this reason. The artist was not creative and vibrant. The result was the production of pictures, subject and style was totally foreign style. But such group which was established this school tried to re-established the new pattern of art in India but these attempt of restorations was not along the traditional lines of ancient Indian practice nor was it in keeping spirit of art indigenous to this land.

Indeed, the downfall of Mughal, Rajputana or the hills of Kangra and Garhwal, those were remained tried to adopt the technique of the western with disastrous results. Thus indigenous art was rapidly approached extinction at revival was made. The Indian’s ancient style.

According to Havell’s report, which was preserved in Rabindra Bhavan archives in Viswa Bharati university. In “Art and Politics” report, state that, “there has been in the last 20 years a new development which has also been described as a Renaissance of art in India, that is to say a small section of India’s intelligentsia has thrown aside the indifference to art born of the revival of the practice of miniature painting which was one of the intellectual recreations of the courts of the Mughal and of the Indian aristocracy until the beginning or middle of the 19th century…. The revival had made Indian painting again to a certain extent aristocratic and fashionable, that to say, fashionable for society function and exhibition as art is in Europe. Its has given birth to an Indian art Review”.

Havell was a principal of the Government College of art and craft. He attached with Abanindranath and few other intellectual personalities. He gave maximum effort for the development of Bengal School. Then Abanindranath
appointed as a Vice Principal of that College in Calcutta (1905-1915) within his span of time the founding of school was in solid range.\textsuperscript{16}

Abanindranath’s first students namely Nanalal Bose, Gagendranath, Suren Kar Iswari Prasad Verma, Kshittendranath Majumdar, K. Venkatappa, Hakim Mohammad Khan, Asit Kumar Halder, Pramod Chatterjee and Sunaini Devi. Unfortunately, it was not possible to trace work of Samit-uz-Zaman who started off as a company school painter and later joined A.B. Tagore. Sumaini Devi was an important figure belonging to the Tagore family means Aban’s sister.\textsuperscript{15}

These movement drew the attention of the Bengali intelligentsia from the very beginning for its nationalist overtone. The editor proprietor of the foremost monthly journal of India, boldly exposed these mission. Modern review, Pravasi, ‘The studio, Sahitya, Bharati Rupmala etc. its represent the development of school of nationalist movement. ‘Shilpa Pushpanjali’ one of the famous magazine of that period, people believed that it was the first magazine of art and culture of that period. Indeed in the beginning it was plan that the public reaction was not at all favourable, humous writers joined in cheap criticisms illustration with cartoon, appeared in the pages of all periodicals interested in the movement.\textsuperscript{16} But when painting by the various schools of the medieval and late Mughal, Ajuanta, the decoration of the ancient temples etc. were all studied with a new interest, resulting the national art consciousness, which was totally absent before, that react a favourable effect in the society.
Dear Mr. Havell,

At last we have succeeded in rousing the Calcutta Public—I mean the Bengalis—‘Sahitya Parisad’ the foremost literary Society has presented you with an address in a public meeting specially held for the purpose.

Of course your latest Book’ gave the finishing stroke. The tide has turned back let us hope it will continue flowing in the right direction. There was a large gathering, my Uncle Rabindranath Tagore the Poet took the Chair, all our best men also the art student and teachers being present. The meeting lasted full three hours. Mr Percy Brown was there and even I poor picture-maker had to make a little speech in Bengali which I find was very much liked although I served it to them very bitter! It is a good sign when a sick man likes bitter mixture don’t you thing so?

I am enclosing two cuttings from the Bengali Amrita Bazar. Didn’t I tell you that the tide has turned? This I call artistic revenge. I send you fuller reports by the next but let me assure you that the Society never gave such an address to any other Englishman before & I as an Indian will feel really proud if I get such an address in my old age from the institution.

I very much hoped that my best friend shall have some things better than the school boy address which Ghilardi got and at last I am satisfied.

We are entrusted with the work of illuminating the address, also doing for you your portrait in the Indian style which I hope to get done nicely in the School.
My only regret that you are not here to receive the address personally. Mrs. Havell would have been so glad to see the meeting. In honouring you I think that my countrymen has learnt to honour their own art.

With all best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Sd/A. N. Tagore

Sister Nivedita who was initiated for the development of culture and promoting the new style of Bengal art, she gave advices to Nandalal and Asit Kumar Haldar to copying the Buddhist painting under the supervision of Lady Haringham. These copy was published in “The Burlington” magazine. Before the visit of the group of Bengal School Mr. Ferguson, who had great interest in Indian sculpture and architecture, gave the details of Ajanta art writing. “Rock cut Temples of India” on the East India Company, then Robert Gill was prepared a thirty copies of Ajanta paintings and continued ten years those copies (was) published in two volumes. Among them news (was) displayed at South Kensington Museum but others were fired. The Japanese visit there and they also take a inspiration on art form there. So the imitation of Ajanta’s work of style was continues in different way in different period.18

Nandalal was also influenced form Ajanta’s style of work and in 1911 and 1912 various painting (exhibition) was held on oriental art society, so the development of the Bengal style of work was actually outcome by A.B. Tagore and the collection efforts of his student. It was the turning point of Bengal school movement. A.K. Coomaraswamy delivered the lecture of this matter in ‘Art and Swadeshi’. Wrote a 1913 was published in madras.
describe the present situation of Bengal School of Art.\textsuperscript{19} These was gladly accepted by the art conscious people of Bengal. In ‘Studio’ magazine was published the attitude at that period of the critic view was summarised by Bengali Doggeral, i.e.,

\begin{quote}
“Purbe meye urbe chai
Tobe tar gan gai!”
\end{quote}

“Mean let the daughter be cremated and her ashes blown to the four winds, it will be time then to sing her praise”.\textsuperscript{20}

One of the nobelist of Bengal are support to the Bengal School was Rabindranath Tagore gave his initial support to the Bengal School though his time his vision demanded a fuller view and hence a separate from the “movement”. His educational institute, Vishva Bharati at Shantiniketan devoted a national Pan Asian universal vision would be his chosen vehicle.\textsuperscript{21} In 1902, Japanese artist, thinker, ideologist revivalist of Asianism arrived in Calcutta. It was Okakura visited India for the awakening of nation and send other artist Yokoyama, Taikan and Hisida Sunso, after that invite Rabindranath in Japan, and invited another artist Arai Campo to teach at his school in Shantiniketan. In Vichitra Club, Nandalal learn the Japanese technique from ‘Arai’. During these days Vichitra club invited Jagadish Chandra Bose to paint a mural, depicting the scene of Mahabharat on the inner wall of Bose institution.\textsuperscript{22}

Thus the Bengal School matured in reaction of these and a few other efforts that the consolidation of this movement occurred during the swadeshi movement that ‘an-in-built-artistic criterion was established with art. This would sooner or later artistically fossilese the movement.
After the division of Bengal the feeling of Indianness moved ahead as an important part of the national movement. The national leaders by adopting the feeling of “Indianness” announced a boycott movement. The burning of evils of fire of ‘Halika Dahan’, non-cooperative movement, celebration of Rakhi Bandhan etc. are of example of nationalist feeling.\(^{23}\)

At that movement R.B. Tagore wrote a ‘Eng-Beng’ patriotic song, which was mainly criticise the nationalist pupil for their reluctant behaviour about nation. It was published on “Prabashi” magazine. He cried –

“Ma ebar male shaheb hobo,
Ranga chule hat boshiye,
Pore notiv nam ghochabo,
Sada hate, hat die ma bagane berate jabo
Kalo badan dekhlre pore “blacki”
bole mukh pherabo\(^{24}\)

which means my mother (Goddess), my desire is that I will become a Saheb (British) and will be proud with my red-brown hair and in this way I will be relieved from my ‘Native’ name.

And then I will hold another white hand (British Hand) and will walk in the garden and at that time I will turn my face if I see any black native and mock them ‘blacki’.

In this way poet, writer and artist of Bengal School all of them combinely raised their voice against this agitation, so, first time, the movement gave rise an infrastructure separate from British patronage. The other artist of Bengal School excluding Tagore group are Samarendranath Gupta Saroda Ukil, M.A.R. Chughtai and Jamini Roy were the student of
Abanindranath. They exhibit their painting in different places in India and other countries also, to introduce the new style of paintings.

The aim of this association was to organise the exhibition of oriental art and send the message through publications. In 1908 society arranged the first exhibition with their first group of student. These exhibitions were remarkable record of "progress", recorded in 'Dawn magazine'. These exhibition was gaining the popularity of the Bengal style of paintings.

The second exhibition was held at Shimla in 1909, 'Omar Khayam' painting of A.B. Tagore and was admired by English artist too. Then 1910, the 'Dream of Shahjahan' of A.B. Tagore, 'Mahadevi' Nandalal Bose, Asit Kr. Halder, 'Krishna and Yshoda' and also Venkatappa, Hakim Mohammad, Hironmoy Choudhury's metal work was exhibited.

Nandalal's 'Ahilya' [Plate 41(i)] was the third exhibition of this group which was appreciate by Nivedita in visible in "Modern Review" magazine. Then fourth one was held at Allahabad in 1911 with Coomarswamy's miniature, Gangooly's works, Venketappa's tempra. The fifth in 1912, the copies of Ajanta by Nandalal, Asit Kr. Halder and sketches of Surenkar. In 1915, ISOA exhibit the woman artists paintings that is Promita Devi, and Sunaini Devi participated in first time in Bengal school exhibition. Sunaini Devi was a sister of A.B. Tagore, became well known for the folk style of work like Jamini Roy, Sunaini Devi, Promita Devi and Shanta Devi were the three women artists in Bengal School of that period.

Among the exhibitions, the local exhibition in Early Bengal art was fall into two groups – (a) Paintings and (b) sculpture. They also divided into two
section, that related to the Modern school, i.e. works executed in the western method and the indigenous Indian School. The local exhibitors of the modern school are such well known names as B.C. Law, E.A. Harris, Atul Bose, H. Majumdar, F.C. Scallon, Satish Singha and late G. Jino. Added some promising pencil drawings by the students of the Government school of Art.²⁹

The Indian section contains much more careful study of pictures by D. Rama Rao and Rahman Chuughtai, Jamini Roy and many other artists. One some Japanese paintings of Indian subjects of an intriguing nature were also represent there. And in sculpture section V.P. Karmakar was create a notable production among others. These ‘whole report was published in catalogue of “Exhibition in Kalkata” in 1923.³⁰

In 1915 on the other side exhibition travelled to Madras with “the world famous works of the modern school of Indian painting”. In south, for the first time the exhibition was held by Anne Besant and C.P. Ramaswami Iyer, a prominent South Indian, while it was prepared and advertised by Basent’s paper ‘The commonwel’. The exhibition was not only to inform the south of artistic genius to the nation but to create the unique collection of oriental art.

In this way the early pioneers of Bengal School were exhibited their painting not only India but also try to spread over the other countries too. They exhibit their painting in London, Paris, America, Japan, New York etc. and also exchange the views and style of work.

The first ambitious exhibition of art in the west took place in Paris. Bengal School was greeted with silence by the English critic. IN 1914 by the
President of the French Republic, Reymond Paincare was opened this exhibition. Suzanne and Andree Karpeles was arranged two hundred painting of Bengal School for the exhibition. Havell and then John Woodroff was also joined this exhibition to encourage the artist.31

After Paris show it travelled Belgium and Holland, before arriving in England. Then exhibition was held in London at the imperial institution in 1914, under the aegis of the Indian society. But among the artist Iswari Prasad and Gagendranath’s works was not impressed to the pupil of London, claimed by “The Times of London”.32 These critical views offended O.C. Ganguly. One of the most striking thing was that exhibitions of Bengal art movement was held on a few months before the outbreak of the first world war. Secondly English critics viewed Indian art as clashing with the progressive tenor of life in the west. So the situation was clout in the whole world.

Then in 1924, the travelling of oriental art was organised by the American Federation of Art. O.C. Ganguly remarked ‘to America belongs the unique distinction of housing the most representative collection of Indian art ....’.33 Then these exhibition travelled to Europe.

On the contrary one of the important exhibition of European paintings in India was held on 1922 in Bauhas. It was culmination of Euro-Indian paintings. Rabindranath Tagore was a initiator of that movement.34 but unfortunately the situation was tangled and complex. Another group was raise their head against the group of early pioneer’s thought.

With the European influences in 1940s onwards, this new spirit of artist thought was more advance then the early group they also called
themselves a “progressive group” but people address them as a “Calcutta group”. But here the progressive word used in other sense actually this word basically used in political field. The Marxist of Bengal used this word as a ‘power’ and ‘achievement’ so these group represent themselves as a leftist group, they had a nostalgic feeling regarding the Bengal paintings but some artist of this group state that ‘why we still called our group “progressive” not the retrogressive institution”, we change the all leftist fantacism which we have manifesto a new group”. Yet it was a exciting situation in Bengal artist and the pupils of Bengal, where to be the part of the brave new modernism. They inspired a new ideology to creating a new synthesis between the East and West.

Though, here the progressive define as a anti-traditional advancement in paintings and depiction of new concept of life. Early 20th century artist was able to placed before the unconventional idea and new approach towards life. Therefore they were able to grasp and to efforts the Indian point of revelian in a methodology of new concept and India’s of life and society that’s why we used to called this approach of new life as a progressive idea and vision.

But, the amalgamate situation and problems was not timid the Bengali artist, their representative of courage and in good colours of life, their concept and ideas of encouragement of people for the knowledge and struggle for their clear concept of life or art.

Early Pioneers

The Bengal School was largely moulded by the personal style of its originator Abanindranath Tagore. Its Victorian qualities, romanticism an
interest in the past and its literary beginning remain at once of Pre-Raphaelites.

With this understanding of Indian’s rich art heritage Havell took the historic decision to revive art and craft centering the Art school. But when he decided to replace the forty years’ old moribund European ‘Academic’ art education by the traditional Indian art teaching, a serious agitation against this measure was launched by a section of Calcutta’s elites voicing their views through the press. A determined Havell however went on with his mission and is a daring step sold out all specimens of European paintings and sculpture. In this episode, the reviving Indian art found in Abanindranath, a promising painter of the Jorasako Tagore family.

He was the great grandson of Prince Dwarakanath Tagore. He was the first among the great members of the family was avoid collector of western sculpture and painting. Recent writers like Partha Mitter, Ratnabali Chatterjee, Tapati Guha Thakurta and R. Siva Kumar was present him as an artist of nationalism and its aesthetic. His art of ‘revivalism’ and nationalism, become interrelated and developing terms, loaded with culture and political implication.

Abanindranath was an outstanding painter and a compelling story writer. In a biography on him, by his son Alokendranath Tagore, there is an anecdote which reveals his character. When Abanindranath was sixty years old, a Dutch professor bought his painting, Zele-ul-Nisa – the veiled poeters. And praise his painting but A.B.Tagore remarked that “Sorry, I’m still
learning”. It reveal that artist attitude towards art to study, to borrow and to assimilate.37

The residence of Jorasanko with the famous Dakshiner Barandhe where all three Tagore (brothers, Gagendranath, Abanindranath and Samarindranath worked became the center for discussions on all aspects of Indian art accessible to all those interested in creative endeavours.38

Initially, he learnt to sketch from his father. Gunindranath Tagore, who had himself been one of the first students of the Calcutta school of Art. Later on Abanindranath had joined the school, first under an Italian, O. Gilhardi and then under Charles Palmer. He had acquired the rudiments of Western technique from them when Havell declared his dislike for the methodologies of teaching in art school, Abanindranath felt an emotional affinity. In these days, Havell showed him some Mughal miniatures and Abanindranath realised for the first time what treasure lay hidden in the medieval art of India. On this context Abanindranath had said – “took me up and shaped me and had my reverence all through as the “guru”.39

Though Havell’s advices for the adoption of the Indian ideals of art, which were spiritual and introspective, appealed to his soul. But the transformation occured the moment he studied the album of ‘Delhi Kalam’ and a few pages from the Irish illumination painting. He immediately discovered that painting is a different domain all together. Pictorial is independent of visual manifestation, colour is the intuitive vehicle of emotion.40
Hereafter, Abanindranath’s search for an Indian ethos led to the outcome of the Krishnalila series, which had an Indianness quality and tenor. But his equipment was limited to the training he had earlier received at the Government school of Art. A training which had left him a weak draughtsman and given him no feeling for strong design or powerful colour. The basic qualities of the Calcutta school of Art were still in essential, simplicity and feebly British.

Though Bengal School had revived a new style of art. E.B. Havell, then, the principal of the art school in Calcutta had great interest in the originality of painting while Partha Mitter and Tapti have contributed immensely to our knowledge and understanding of the period in which Abanindranath worked and its cultural discoursing. They tended to look at him more as the leader of a nationalist school of painting rather than as an individual artist.41

Under the guidance of Havell, Abanindranath was particularly attracted to Mughal and Pahari miniature and their influences can be seen in the Ritusamhara pictures and in some of his paintings based on Mughal theme. Two paintings from the Ritusamhara series – The traveller and the Lotus and Avisarika along with Buddha and Sujata [see Plate 4(i), 6(i)] were reproduced in the studio in 1902 and the Passing of Shahjahan, The Building of Taj and the Capture of Bahadur Shah were shown at Delhi Durbar exhibition of 1902-03.42

Though Abanindranath borrowed the theme and the compositional model from indigenous sources, but he breathes a new feeling into them,
partly by infusing the figures with realism which was absent in the regional. He chose to paint pictures on subjects taken from the Indian history, epic or even from more romantic tale such as those Arabian Nights or Omar Khayyam.\textsuperscript{43} \cite{Plate 41(ii)}

He came to realise that Indian style could never attain great height by merely adapting European style. Though he desire to assert the artist his individuality and personality. He became Vice principal of Government college of art and craft and introduced new style of work. He freely synthesised the decorative elements of Irish music sheet illumination, compositional elements of indo-Persian miniatures and the literary sources of medieval Bengali Vishanava poetic works.

According to O.C.Ganguly “were designed as an organised protest against influencese and as a passionate plea for artistic expression through indigenous form, a plan for the use of the old vernacular art of India as the medium of a truly national art.”\textsuperscript{44}

Binod Bihari Mukherjee, who, I think the most authoritative writer does not make any statement which would support the above stand. On the contrary he said – Abanindranath’s fame in India rests on the fact that he is the reviver of Indian art, where as, in fact he never wanted to rediscover anything with any specific effort”.\textsuperscript{45}

Above all, no doubtedly we can assume that Abanindranath had an inevitable patriotic personality. His contribution in swadeshi movement was the best example of his patriotic feeling. With the support of his uncle
Rabindranath Tagore and other artists of Bengal School, he spearheaded Swadeshi movement and "Banga Vanga" Movement in Bengal.

The new school of art was profoundly motivated by Japanese artist and British colour techniques. It evolved a novel way of using the media, this came to know as 'wash' technique; and became the hallmark of Bengal School.

The colour washes are repeatedly laid around sensitive outlines. The transparent pigment alternates with gouche to secure both luminosity and volume. Taikan's brush dipped in water to soften the forms gave Abanindranath the idea of dipping his own painting into a bath water. The paintings of darkness of the twilight in *Dewali* and The ambivalent space of the sky in *The Siddhas of the Upper Air* done during 1903-1904 was based on the above technique.

However, Abanindranath's literary banning are important in this connection. He was himself a distinguished writer and stated publishing his book as a painter. His book 'Bageshwari Shilp Prabandhawali' composed the theory of art, especially described the "six limbs" of Indian painting. His biography "Shilpa Guru Abanindranath" was wrote by Rani Chandra reflects the light of his life.

Abanindranath left the Government art school after deference of opinion on the issue of student discipline with the principal, Mr. Percy Brown in 1915. He left the school to turn all his energy in building an artist studio at Jarasako house which later came to be known as Vichitra Club. A.B. Tagore initiated this platform for the active field of art and culture. Abanindranath
was not only an artist but also an ideal teacher. He was able to recognise the internal power of his disciples, instead of moulding their thought. In 1985 Mr. Lala Ishwari Prasad was invited from Patna Style of painting for the sake of sharing his knowledge of Mughal art. He was one of the profound disciples of A.B. Tagore along with Nandalal Bose and Surendranath Ganguli among others. They stand on the front raws of his disciples.

However a group of enthusiasts for Indian art, both Indian and British, had formed an organisation called Indian society of Oriental art. His brother Gajendranath continued to teach in a formal manner. The society become an important platform for the presentation of the new art. Then they produced a journal “Rupam” edited by O.C. Ganguly, the new research of pioneers and good colour production.

The most important products of the Indian society of Oriental art were the student of A.B. Tagore and Gagendranath who, in spite of the great controversy and criticism of the school, were loyal in their adherence to the style and to their ‘Guru’.

Gagendranath Tagore was elder brother of Abanindranath. Belonging to the same family, but in art. However he had independent mentality and cannot include himself with specific institution.

Both Abanindranath and Gagendranath belonged to the same period of social, economic changes in India. In this period, Shantiniketan became the centre of the so-called revivalist style under the leadership of A.B. Tagore and Nandalal Bose. But Gagendranath first time made serious attempts to come to terms with European art while simultaneously striving for a personal style.
Whereas Abanindranath collected around him band of artist, Nandalal Bose, Asit Kr. Halder etc. who at that time transmitted the light of the master across the length and breadth of India, Gagendranath elective genius functioned entirely outside the ambit of the revivalist movement around him. The politics of the new movement in Bengal the critic and art historian was anxiously served his views, to compare with Gagendranath to Abanindranath, there harsh stated “the revival period up to 1915-20, some of the Abanindranath works shows originality and some of Gagendranath’s work is outstanding. Archer, writing on Bengal School nearly fifty years after Fry, agreed with his view.

His paintings therefore was a leisure activity and shows great range of Indian independence. He was interested in social and political problem, big hearted, versatile and a man of sentiment. His sense of irony is displayed in his comments on contemporary life and mannerism, and finds expression in his Posters used to paint of his times to interested in black and white paintings as sketches with some time gold background. After ‘Ogata Korin’ (e.g. Elephant procession) these experiments however, were not of much consequence, artistically. Gagendranath painted over including several kinds of paintings, and the specific methodology, i.e. painting of romantic subject with a fairy tale atmosphere, abstract painting with a sense of the mystery of light and cubist painting.

Gagendranath’s experiments is so-called cubism art, in fact was so far removed from the original concept of cubism which Picasso and Braque
developed that they can better be described as semi-cubistic abstractions with an emphasis on structural quality in the images, dreamy interiors.\textsuperscript{53}

His significant sketching is fairy land, \textit{Desolate House, Parul and her Seven Brother} [Plate 42] and \textit{Garden party}. In these particular sketching of them the sketches with black ink have been optimally used. His animate and dynamic crystallizing into cubes and cones had build up a systematic structure, they express the radiation, turbulent, hovering or pacified force of inner experience.

According to Niroda Chowdhury, "Gagendranath’s inspiration was psychological rather than artistic. He was more concerned with the emotional and ideological significance of things than the attributes of form and structure."\textsuperscript{54}

Though, an active member for the cause of independence and swadeshi movement he played a revival attitude under the leadership of Abanindranath, Rabindranath and Nandalal Bose. He made different posters of cartoon regarding this movement. In this way in 1912 they came in limelight alongwith Rabindranath Tagore, in which pictures made by him were published. He was one of the member of Bengal School but he broke away from the old traditions and conventions and worked out an individual style which gave a new direction to the art movement in India. Rabindranath was eventfully to show just these strength when he visit to Japan and wrote to both the nephews’ from Japan admonishing them for their timidity as travellers, the painting had barely crossed his mind – "Gagen, within on earth are you going to step art of the house and travel the world? I am now sending along… an
There is nothing so good for an awakening of consciousness as a good joint from the outside.55

Though Rabindranath Tagore was somewhat read pulse and not to bound his freedom. His pictures are preserved specially in Rabindra Bharati Calcutta and Viswa Bharati Santiniketan as an appreciable work.

Rabindranath Tagore, a poet and philosopher become a painter at the age of sixty seven and surprised the world. The great poet and writer who has represented the nation to the world. Tagore’s art is related to play or spontaneous activity and also to the poetic imagination that dwelt within him. He did not receive any formal training in drawing and painting. He apologetically in 1930 stated “I, as an artist, cannot claim any merit for my courage of the unsophisticated, like that of one who walks in a dream or a perilous path who is saved only because he is blind to the risk.”.56

Tagore is a true expressionist as an artist. The world is real to him only to the extent, he was in harmony with it. IN a country where conversion plays an important part in life and where traditions seems to follow one another, his independent rebellion was not even understood, no tradition and responsibility determined their form. One can contrast his work with that of Nandalal Bose, who felt a sense of responsibility to create something for society and belonging to the stream of tradition.

Tagore inspired the creativity of artist for art and vision of new things in an he discussed one story for this matter, his idea was –

“A child came to me and commands me to tell her a story. I tell her of a tiger which is disgusted by the black stripes on its body and comes to my
frightened servant demanding a piece of soap. The story gives my little audience immense pleasure, the pleasure of a vision... she could vividly see [the tiger], because by the help of her imagination it became her own tiger, one with herself, and this union of the subject and the object gives us joy” 57.

He wanted to give a wider shape to the Indian art movement and founded the Kala Bhavan at Shantiniketan with Nandalal as its principal. In order that this institution might not turn into a fortress of conservatism he kept it open to the light and air of the outside world. Andre-Karpele, Mrs. Milward, Miss Liza Von Pott and other artists from abroad were invited to Shantiniketan as art teachers.

Rabindranath travelled all over the world for the purpose of observing the culture and art and spread the style of work of Bengal School in other countries. He visited Argentine, where he observed paintings. He felt the need of an adequate and congenial atmosphere for creating art freely which he established at Santiniketan. In this way he also visits China to build a paramount bridge between China and India.

Rabindranath’s images were born of a powerful imagination and a sense of rhythm that characterises the Indian and Persian decorative art expression, moreover there is a kind of spirituality in his forms of men, women, birds, animals and trees and even inanimate objects.

The beginning of poets art can be traced to the dodles and deletions, he made it while writing verse. He had a naturally beautifully handwriting, rhythmic and clear, and arranged his lines on a page in an unconscious pattern. Often he crossed out lines or words not required and joined these
together in an abstract pattern. The drop and loop shapes come easily to Tagore’s brush or pen. Although related in the oscillation of their curves to ‘free form’. 58

Though dominating black ink lives divide the tinted areas which are themselves of intriguing shapes sometimes fantastic birds and legendary animals, finely cut in arabesque and sometimes mask like faces in profile or oval shaped. In his women figures and sadness expression of a certain far offness. In more then one female face we find the same pairs of eyes, so to say, shinning brightly with a sad look. Nandlal Bose asked Tagore about this eyes, he said – ‘The eyes of Natun Bouthan are so deeply impressed in my mind that whenever I sit to draw a human figure those very eyes begin to dazzle before mine and I can never forget them”.[59] These was one of the example of Bengal School painters, they represent the ‘eyes’ in this own feeling but the shape and size are same manner.

Though people said that he had drawn a few female faces with ironical smile and most of them are non-Indian faces.[60] But each faces express a distinct mood or character. It is fully in accordance with the Indian tradition of art.

His colour schemes are dark harmonies of deep mystery, from where the figure often emerge with light ‘outlines’, his few painting like Night of Dream, male head and man riding a donkey in pen and ink are opt examples.[61][Plate 43]

The nature of worm colour is that it tends to move forward while the cool colour tends to recede or move backward, the quantity of stress colour
could now ignore the perspective and yet express the distance. The expressionist the cubist and the abstract artist were seen to use figures with all kinds of distortions, Nolde, Mattisse, Picasso, Braque, Kandenisky showed the tendencies to ignore natural forms. So Rabindranath might have realized that paintings maintain an overall balance and has a story and novel idea of communication. European paintings were able to form a good work but outside the limits of traditionalism.

In the year 1930 an exhibition was held for his painting in gallery Pigal, Paris. After achieving success in his exhibition he had moved to other exhibition like London, Berlin and New York. In the year 1946 his four paintings were selected in International Modern Art Exhibition UNESCO.

This was the starting of the realist movement. It was most logical to be conceived by artists and writers to move from the idealized to actual form of art. This nephew, Abanindranath and central figure is the so called no Bengal art movement, felt almost the same way. They advised his followers to get cultural antecedents, their myths, history, folklore, customs, etc.

Nandalal, one of the student of Abanindranath, the most resourceful and responsive to his ideas, came to Santiniketan in 1914. He was already considered by many as the crown prince of the neo-Bengal art movement. He received a flattering reception at the ashram. Rabindranath did a literary roll out of red carpet and composed special verse in his welcome song that embarrassed Nandalal, song is –

"Tomar Tulika Ranjit Kore Bharati Chitto
Bangal akhhi bhandare se je jogae notun Chitto,
Bhagyabidhata......"
Tomar tulikai Kabir hriday
nandid kare nanda,
Tai to kobir lekhoni tomae parae
apan chanda....

means – your brush strokes decorate the Indian art so as to the reservoir of Bengalees and Bengali literature. It gave a new flow of art. Bengal is proud to get such excellent paintings of yours through which Bengal Fine Arts or Bengal Paintings are appraised by the country men and abroad. Obviously the God has blessed you and has given you a new Mantra of painting by which you are welcomed and recognized by the world and in this way you have placed your name in golden letters in the field of world paintings.

Poet’s mind is full to the brain of happiness for your magic touch of your paintings, so the poet’s pen through writings do welcome you in a new passage of immortality. So the poet’s blessings are showering to the painter (Nandalal Bose) with a great hope that the painter may be involved in creating new art of paintings which will give new tastes of labour to the future painters with a flow of water falls like the Lord Shiva’s matted-hair flows for the people of the Universe.

The environment of Santiniketan attracted him away from the crowded city of Calcutta. After his first experience Nandalal became a compulsive nature painter.

However, Nandalal observed that Rabindranath wented the Kala Bhavan to be a creative hub from where a broad based art movement could emerge. Rabindranath’s ideas about art education and the demands on the institution were developed. Although Abanindranath’s students started by
painting historical themes in the wash technique which was adopted from Japan and became the identity of Bengal style of art.

In 1910 when Bengal school was convinced of the need to break fresh ground he met with Coomaraswamy around this time changed his perception of tradition. His visit to Ajanta with Lady Harringham, have revealed how different level of language of art persist. Then he meet with Okakura whose advice was to combine tradition with individuality.

Rabindranath invited Asit Kr. Haldar in 1911, and introduced the faculty of Kala Bhavan alongwith Nandalal Bose, they each other from the beginning of their artistic life. As a student of Abanindranath in 1905 both of them came in close contact from the Ajanta tour and was rightly influenced by his work.

In 1920-21 Nandalal Bose, Asit Kumar Haldar and Surendranath Ganguli went to a Bagh again to prepare the copies of it. In this way Nandalal became familiar with the great school of Far-Eastern art. He travelled to China, Japan, Barma to collect the knowledge of art. His work bore an affirmation of nature as well as sense of wonder at the architecture forms. He was completely patriotic and believed in Indian classical ideas, critic in general remark on the indianness of his creations. He inspired and make the contemporary people and his disciples as a classical forms. His painting was made by tempera on paper and colour apply are with very bold stroke, figures are covered with hold lines. It shows effect of Ajanta and Kalighat style. Some paintings are mentioned here, cobbler, girl with Tambourine carpenter etc.
Though Nandalal was interested in different techniques, it came from his commitment to art teaching. He wrote, “The most significant fact of modern days is this, that the west has met and the East and far this monumentous meeting of humanity”.

Nandalal experimented in the field of creation throughout his life. He kept on proceeding with his experiments and never got tired to repeat himself. Among them creation of Nandalal the following pictures *Vish Payee Shiv, Sati Dah,* etc. Among this painting, *Shiv Drinking poison, Sati, Sujata* and *Taponisth parwati* [Plate 44(i), (ii)].

The wall painting were made at Santiniketan in between 1935 to 1947, entitled *Arjun Chitrangda, Natir Puja* etc. He was an able writer related book was Shilpa Kala Rupawali and Shilpa Kathna was the collection of paintings.

Indeed Nandalal occupied the special place in Bengal school regarding his work, then also include to Asit Kr. Haldar, K. Venkatappa, Jamini Roy etc. were soulful devote for this movement.

As early 1930s Jamini Roy had create distinct indigenous style in seeking inspiration from folk are traditions against the elitist approach of the Bengal school. He abandoned his interest in portraiture in oils and the wistful sentimentality of Abanindranath’s style after 1910. But his folk art at a time was prominently remembered to Indian artist were attracted as a alien art forms. His contribution in art movement in Bengal from early pioneers to new flow of artist were same [Plate 45(i), (ii)]. Yet he fully supported to the young artist and understand this feeling of new upliftment thinking of art was attracted to Mr. Roy. Here A.R. Chuhtai one of the profound figure of
Bengal school, counted his name with A.B. Tagore, Gagendranath and Nandalal who prompted by a great urge to infuse in his work a distinct character of the calligraphic line, in Mughal manuscript and old Persian paintings emboss in Bengal school style. After he evolve out wash technique and develop a great quality works. Further was influence by Ukil group of artist in Delhi during 1920-30s exercised some work of art with supporting of new group.

**Individualistic Art of the 1920s-1930s**

The 1920s and 30s gradually saw the hide and fall or culmination followed by a steady decline of the Bengal school movement. European was at the time in the grips of cubism, futurism, expressionism and surrealism. The Bauhas painting exhibition in 1922 throw the new inspiration to our artist. The pioneers and source of inspiration in 1920s like Gagendranath Tagore, Jamini Roy and Rabindranath Tagore, then Amrita Sher-Gul*, also gradually represented her leading exponents. The decades of 20s and 30s witnessed the gradual ascendancy of modernism, but the spread of modernism by no means ended the era of naturalist art. They claimed superior ‘authenticity’ for their own particular brand of history of paintings.

In December 1922, the major exhibition of the avant garden German Expressionist art by the Bauhaus artists at the Samavaya Mansion Hall in Calcutta. Hereafter the European inspiration was more clearly absorbed with Gagendranath’s unique sense of design and mystic mood. His infrastructural

---

* Each of this artist had their own unique style of painting with their own characteristic features. For eg. Shergul was most different and unique among them all who perhaps started her own way of interpreting art i.e. nude painting usually art is governed by the artists background and circumstances the European birth and cosmopolitan background give birth to the artist like Shergul.
effort cannot be underestimated. His pioneering efforts allowed the artists to review in a social respectability and artistic freedom.

In this way Rabindranath Tagore though had very much touch with European art through his travels and was particularly inspired by German Expressionism. He was self-taught of creative insight of his art an incredible power. He create thousand of works in the course of twenty year period which was exhibited widely in Europe during his lifetime. Then he established Kala Bhavan the art faculty was set up and the Bengal school movement after its initial take off from Calcutta moved to Santiniketan. In 1970, Nandalal Bose was appointed as a principal, so the individual creativity of Rabindranath’s own brilliant activity setup the movement in other direction. The intellectual luminaries and talents came from other places provided a new sense of inspiration to artists like Ramkinkar, Binod Behari, Sankho Chowdhury, K.G. Subramanyam and others, thus all creative artist came under one roof.

The most distinguished artist who developed a very strong individualistic language of art was Jamini Prakash Roy. He was the first Indian artist to draw sustainable inspiration from the living folk and tribal art forms and traditions, while this idiom shared with the modern. Although he had begun his artistic career under the heavy influence of impressionist and post-impressionist painters of Europe particularly Van Gagh, soon he realized that he needed a own language rooted in his own experiences and explore indigenous ideas. ‘Pujarini’ painting was first fact of Bengal school ideas. Later he adapted the ‘patua’ mode of painting, which he introduced modernist ideas and minimized the lines to create a fusion of tradition and modernity.
Then the another prominent figure of European post-impressionist romanticised imagery was Amrita Sher-Gilli, her vision was highlighted by her emphasis on colour, which contrasted with the atmospheric mistiness characterising the Bengal school works. Her themes came to focus on mostly rural visions of the villages woman with a modernist idea of works. Though suspicious of modernist ‘distortions of reality’ academic artist did not necessarily set out an oppositional agenda. They simply represented another way of global modernity they concern for the individuality of works.

The Ceylonese artist, George Keyt was also finding its aesthetic maturity during the late 1920-30s. At his first major exhibition 1928, attracted the reviews of various personalities. His work was evolving Indian artistic modernism, he also inspired from traditional sources which were easily identified with one’s national identity. Though ancient Indian art and its religious mythology, European modernism, especially the idiom of cubism, and Sinhalese art were supporting his individuality. Yet, the methodology and the arousing the new idea of art was create a dynamic movement. So, 1920s-30s generation was fought with paradoxes.

The Avant-Garde Movement: 1930s

In early 30s a number of Government Art school student, who left the school in the wake of a movement against the autocratic attitude of its administration towards their complained, formed a kind of artists cooperative and launched a new art movement thus a new era was started.

---

1 Perhaps she was perfect blend between the modernist and traditionalist i.e. mix of orient (soul and outlook of accident. By choosing this theme of painting the women folk’s show’s her passion for the rural India in general and women folk’s in particular.
They united by organizing the young artists union (1931) and stayed together a rented house and pursue art study mostly in outdoor work. In 1933 they defined the character of their movement by forming the Art Rebal Centre. In this group the artist are Gobardhan Ash, Abani Sen and Ananda De, who invited Bhola Chatterjee.73

Some of the other students of Percy Brown and Jamini Prakash Ganguly also came to join the centre’s activities. Atul Bose, was a chief adviser of this group. The first exhibition of the Art Rebel Centre was held in April 1933 at Dharmatala Street. Besides the above artists the participants in the exhibition included Keshab Chandra Khan, Kalikinkar Ghose, Barindra Nag etc. The exhibition was an impressive with about two hundred paintings. Catalogue of the exhibition declared it that – “Our aim is to create an art that is strong, bold, virile and antisentimental, fearless in its desires for new adventures, a powerful advance-guard, which can save art in India by traditional conservatism and the habitual indifference of the public”.74

Though this group represent the counterpart to the Neo-Bengal school, upholding by Jaminiprakash Ganguly and Atul Bose [Plate 46(i), (ii)]. But the life of the centre was very short, in adding some new values in according to the Calcutta painting. Gobardhan Ash and Abani Sen were marked as powerful exponents of realism with a social commitment and Bhola Nath Chatterjee was remembered for his formal innovations inspired by cubism and including a sculpturesque portrait of Karl Marx.75 The Art Rebel Centre2 it

2 This should not taken into account in literary sense but it only covers the different technique and rebel style that the artist practice which was consider it as a rebel.
was forerunner of the Calcutta group formed in 1943 in a more critical situation of the city life.

Though, Mukul Dey the deciple of Abanindranath could not remain confined to the pages of epics and mythologies. In 30s he made himself busy in depicting scene from the life of the city. He was posted as a principal of Government Art College. In his time college student got the opportunity to learn processes of print-making, woodcut, etching etc. Muralidhar Tali, Adinath Mukherjee, Safiuddin Ahmed and Haren Das were among the student of Mukul Dey. Somnath Hore, a leading graphic painter of next generation was a student of Safiuddin [Plate 47-52].

The economic depression of the thirties that sapped the middle class population of the city ended with the beginning of the second world war. That was a period of political turmoils, two distinct trends dominating the scene. The main stream national movement was at its climax being motivated by Gandhijii and other trends represent by the communists who were engaged in the campaign since Germany under Hitler attacked the world.

The Calcutta artists, along with the poets, and dramatists responded to the crisis of the nation as it was their moral and artistic responsibility. They represented the crime of starving to death of poors on the pavements city. The hungry skeleton figures of men and women, and babies clinging to mother’s breasts were drawn by Debiprosad Roy Chowdhury, Atul Bose, Gobardhan Ash and other of this group. But all the above artist Zainul Atudin, a newly

---

Art is always dominated by the contemporary situations and inspired by its surroundings. The Artist psyche is governed with the happenings in and around consciously or unconsciously they are governed by those situations same was happening now.
appointed teacher of the government art college and Chittaprasad, both hailing from east Bengal, drew the most heartfelt and authentic pictures of the famine [Plate 53-54]. This documentation of downfall of Bengal was concern the 40s and 50s artist of Calcutta group.

**Calcutta Group – 40s-50s**

The modern movement in India achieved full bloom during world war II, when global industrialization and increases in trade commence effected India at an accelerated place. In an environment of total uncertainty of the future of mankind, as experienced in the days of the famine and Japanese bombers, a nervous tension came to dominate the society. In such a situation it need of replace the new one from old values. Some promising artists of the city, whose social awareness led them to come out of their individual cells of artistic isolation. During the war time a number of British and American writers and artists came to reside in Calcutta and European art books and journals poured into the city for their demand. Many of Calcutta artist were availed the opportunity to study the contemporary art journals and books of western countries. This western contact inspired the group that they named ‘Calcutta group’ remembering the role played by the London group.

This group formed in 1913 with abandoned the revivalist and academist realist of an art which served nationalism. Instead this new generation of artist whose work was silently done in this violent critical movement, they are the teachers of art and gave many creative efforts. They create a new group with eight members. The eight numbers of Calcutta group were, Pradosh Das Gupta, Niroda Majumdar, Paritosh Sen, Gopal Ghosh,
Rathin Mitra, Abani Sen, Prankrishna Pal and Kamala Dasgupta, Respected Calcutta based critics such as Bisham Dey, Sudhindran Dutta, Shahid Suharwardhy etc. were close associated with the group and gave their support [Plate 55-59]. Their first public exhibition was in 1944 at the survive club, Calcutta.\(^7\)

The group was determined to produce an art which took into account contemporary values, something which the orthodox schools were failing to do. They were closely related with European art. Their aim was identical and expressed in their slogan – ‘Art should be international and interdependent’.\(^7\)

The Calcutta group declares – “This is inevitable whether we like it or not. In our world of supersonic planes and televisions, it is not possible nor desirable to preserve the lily white purity of our tradition ... it is better that we consciously, discriminately, choose and integrate foreign influences with our national style and tradition... we hope to succeed because we try to understand the spirit of our times and acknowledge the dictate of necessity”.\(^8\)

Though the groups main objects was to evolve a modern language of Indian art, benefiting mainly from the western achievements. Some of its members failed not to respond to the dictate of necessity and became associated with the ‘Anti-Fascist Writers’ and Artist Association, founded in 1942 mobilize public opinions against the German and Japanese aggressors of the second world war. Some of them even learned towards Marxism.\(^8\) As for instance, Rathin Moitra and Niroda Mazumdar participated in the left peasant movement as painters and it was almost inevitable since the group was largely motivated by the horrowing experience of the famine. Though other members
of the Group remained in the country and steadily evolved their own idioms during visual ideas from both western and traditional sources. The new generation of artists wanted to create “Art for Art’s sake”\textsuperscript{82}, or present art the unity it is which they thought would bring progress. So this group called themselves as a “Progressive group”. Here it means, that development of ‘awakened group’ of arts mission. The term turn towards the political field, motivate with the Marxist people. Their work of art jog the society about the situation of that period.

However, Pradosh Das Gupta, one of the founder member of the Calcutta group, the artist of Bengal school never thought that the image of god and goddess and the borrowed themes from the epics and Puranas were a total misfit in the new condition of the society wherein the man as the supreme power, must have a unique position in human society and thus should occupy a major role in the concept of aesthetic expression.

Though, this movement was occurred against the Bengal school, as per their views, art cannot progress or develop, if we always look back to our past glories and clig to our traditions at all costs. Some intellectual thinkers had try to convence the people that nature had put ‘our eyes in front and not back’ as Dr. War Doyal. For the source of inspiration is just keeping into past or looking backward in ideology nourishment or source of inspiration. They thought that one should respect the past but not carry on their shoulder.

The artists of Calcutta group tried to go over the nostalgic feelings of the Bengal school inspired a new ideology creating a new synthesis between the East and West. Perhaps the best ambassador of this movement were
Gagendranath, Rabindranath and Jamini Roy had already paved the way. But it was believed by group, only spirit of adventure.

According to Das Gupta – Jamini Roy who was a man of conviction, touched very crucial paints and laid them bare the Bengal school movement. He point out the increasing gap and drawback of Bengal school movement...."^83

However the lend of eight artist in Calcutta were enlightened the great history. They change the devasting famine of Bengal the horror stories of the world war, and the communal tension of partition demanded that art be produce for the cultural regeneration of social life.

Although, lacking the scepticism of the Bombay progressive, displays a similar sense of excitement about modern world. They claimed that “...the Paris of Sartre, Stravinsky and Picasso is the centre of our days...”^84 So, reacting to Calcutta group’s exhibition, held in Bombay in 1944 and 1945, which aroused a great interest in Bombay artists.

This exhibition louded by Rudy Von Leyoon, a great critic, wrote – “Bengal has exercised a very strong influence on modern Indian art ever since Abanindranath Tagore and his followers inspired the “Indian Renaissance movement some forty years ago... we welcome this exhibition of the ‘Calcutta group’ which brings to Bombay....”^85.

Though in 1950 the Calcutta group again held joint show with the later established progressive artist group of Bombay, initiating a much needed regional interaction. Which captured the media on “Amrita Bazar Patrika and
'Times of India'. Some critic Rudy Von Leydon, Hermon Goetz and Mulk Raj Anand gave strong support to the progressive artist group.

Out of original members of the Calcutta group, Niroda Mazumdar was one of the first Indians to receive a French Government scholarship to Paris. His entry into Modern art was nurtured by the tutelage of Braque and Broncusi, providing a solid foundation which he create a unique indigenous art with combination of tradition and contemporary. In contrast Gopal Ghose was directed towards expressing nature and landscape, dealing nature in colour in a way not much different from the French Impressionists.

In the forties Calcutta witnessed a flourish of left culture. In plays and songs, literature and art socialist realism was its best and creative. In painting and graphics this ideology was powerfully pursued by Chittaprasad, Somnath Hore, Adinath Mukherji and Deabratu Mukhopadhyaya. After the heart rendering famine scenes, Cittaprasad and Somnath depicted the valiant episodes of the ‘Tebanga movement’ launched by Bengal peasants. In 1945 the historic working class strives found the expression in the work of Chittaprasad and Dekabarata. In the wake of the ultra-left movement of the communists in the late 40s they serve their political events and were joined with fresh talents as Debkumar Raychodhury and Bijan Chowdhury. They make a posters, cover designs and illustration, though especially meant for political propaganda, their whole works mostly in Black and white, with the political field of social dimension in Calcutta.

Though other pioneers of this group of independent artist are Benod Bihari Mukherjee, Ramkinkar Baij and Zainul Abedin, picked up this very
subject and produced powerful images in expressionist languages dealing
directly with issue of human agony and aspiration.

Ramkinkar was first experiment with abstract sculptural form, apart
from his sculpture, especially cubist framework was reveal in his work. On
the other hand Binod Bihari’s work also landscape and everyday rural life, but
unlike Ramkinkar his scroll painting with the space preparations for mural art.
Using traditional methods his pioneering experiments with the mural medium
began in early 1920s to 1940s in Santiniketan Hindi Bhavan fresco of
medieval saints was one of the example. Zainul Abedin one of the pioneering
artist of modern art who had a enormous power. According to Nazrul Islam,
the great revolutionary poet of Bengal, the significance of Silpachariya (Art
teacher) was Zainul Abedin, his work were depicts the environment, the daily
encounter with the lower class suffering people. His 30 feet long scroll
painting with ink was rendering the tidal wave in Bengal “we Bengalis unite
only in death”, he remark about his work.

The pre-partition Lahore was also in experimental centre of modern art
activity encouraged by the presence of M.A.R. Chughtai influenced by Ukil
brothers of Delhi in the technique of wash painting during the 1920s-30s
exercised. Though he nurtured his art infrastructure to Delhi Shilpa Chakra in
AIFACS. Then the young B.C. Sanyal had left the CGCA, joining the Mayo
College as a teacher, 87 his personality proved the reality of his effort of work
which encourage to many artist.

Though most activity was regenerate and continue the amid public
patronage, which influence the Bombay artist during 1930s. The Marg
Magazine and Sadanga Saries organise some exhibitions such as George Keyt's Bombay show in 1947 with the other activity of the Lalit Kala Academy.

Therefore, in 1953 the Calcutta group had its last and eventful show organised in Delhi. People except it gladly with compare with the European artist, Initially there were perceptible influences of the western masters like Picasso, Matisse, Van Gogh etc. but with the passage of time these influences in most cases were integrated artist individual expression. Among the other artist, the rumors was louded that Paritosh Sen was get the opportunity to meet and interact with celebrated international master like Pablo Picasso and Brancusi. Further discuss with his wife Mrs. Sen was not gave the satisfactory answer. So, the researchers used to search regarding this matter still now.

Though the art scene in Bombay was drastically changed soon after independence inspired by the exhibition of Calcutta and Bombay group of artist bimming the new ideas founded the progressive manner, so 'Progressive' art moment tangled with lots of 'progressive' problem with several groups and their individual artistic mentality.
References:


5. Ibid.


16. ‘Viswa Bharati Quatarly’ Abanindranath Tagore, Note by some thoughts of Art, a symposium. Vol. XII, Part-II.


22. Ibid. p. 68

24. ‘Prabasi’ magazine “Eng- Bhanga Jatio Sanjit”, ‘The Article was published as a short journals. vol- 29, 2190 (Bengali Calender 1375).


33. Ibid.


Early Pioneers

37. ‘Contemporary art’ Op.cit p. 27.


42. Ibid, p. 68.


53. ‘Abanindranath and Art of’ Op cit. p. 86.
54. ‘Contemporary art in India’, Op cit. p. 32.
56. ‘Contemporary’ Op cit. p. 31.
61. ‘Contemporary’ Op cit. p. 31.
65. ‘The Bengal School’ Op cit.

**Individualistic Art of the 1920s- 1930s**

68. ‘Art of Bengal- Past.’ Op cit.

69. Ibid.

70. ‘The flamed, Op cit.

71. ‘The trimph’ Op cit. 126.

72. ‘The flamed’ Op cit.

**The Avant- Garde Movement-1930s**

73. ‘Banglar Chirakala’ Op cit.

74. ‘Calcutta Painting’ Op cit

75. Ibid.


77. ‘Banglar Chitrokala’, Op cit. and also ‘Calcutta painting’ Op cit.

**Calcutta Group- 40s – 50s**

78. ‘The flamed mosaic’ Op cit and also’ the legacy of Antitradition’ by Sundaram Tagore, ‘The art India’, news magazine Vol II, Issue-I

79. ‘Contemporary’ Op cit.


81. Ibid.

82. ‘The legacy of Anti’ Op cit. p. 34.


84. ‘The legacy of Ani’, Op cit. p. 34.

85. Ibid, p. 31-38.


(Plate. 39) Abanindranath Tagore with his first Batch of students
(Plate. 40) The artist studio at Jorasanko Tagore House. by Nandalal Base. 1909.
(Plate. 41,i) "A Scene from the Ahilya" by Nandalal Bose.
(Plate. 41,ii) A scene from the Arabian Nights by Abanindra nath Tagore 1930.
(Plate 42) “Parul and her seven brothers” by Gagendranath Tagore
(Plate. 43) Art of Rabindranath Tagore with Black Ink.
(Plate. 44,i) Shiva drinking poison by Nandalal Bose.
(Plate 44,ii) "Sati Dah" by Nandalal Bose.
(Plate. 45,i) “Three women” by Jamini Roy
(Plate. 45,ii) “Krishna and Balram” by Jamini Roy
(Plate. 46,i) “The Homeless Mother” by Jamini Prakash Ganguly
(Plate. 46,ii) The Comrades by Atul Chandra Bose. 1918.
(Plate. 47) “Mussafir” by Gobardhan Ash 1956
(Plate 48) "Shop" by Adinath Mukharjee 1940.
(Plate. 49) “Homeward” by Safiuddin Ahmed 1940.

(Plate. 50) “Tabhanga” by Somnath Hore 1946
(Plate 51) "The Nest of Pigeon" by Haren Das 1956.
(Plate 52) "Tarpan" by Mukul Dey.
(Plate. 53) "Famine 1943" by Zainul Abedin

(Plate. 54) "Famine 1943" by Chittaprasad
(Plate. 55) "Consolation" by Pradosh Das Gupta
(Plate. 56) The Tantric Goddess by Niroda Majumdar 1975

(Plate. 57) “Carrrying a lota” by Paritosh Sen
(Plate. 58) “Majur-Majurani” by Rathin Maitra 1942
(Plate 59) "Wrestling" by Prankrishna Pal 1950.