CHAPTER X

TAGORE: AN EDUCATIONIST

10.1 Educational Philosophy

Tagore is as celebrated for his advanced ideals and innovations in education as for his poems, philosophy, stories, plays and pictures. Khanolkar (1963) recalls that James Findlay of Manchester University writes in his 'Foundation of Education' that there are two great men in our speech, John Dewey (1859-1952) in the West and Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) in the East, whose wisdom not only illuminates the general mind but has stooped to the level of the children. Dewey himself acknowledges the greatness of Tagore. One of Dewey's followers and co-workers, Prof. Kilpatrick, in 1926 came to India and visited Santiniketan and Shriniketan, where he observed the educational system and held long discussions with the workers. He had been full of admiration for Tagore's ideals and the way in which these were being pursued.

Mahalanobis (1941) explains that 'Rabindranath', which means 'the essence of the day's light', taught through the light of his own personality. And this light was the medium of truth and inspiration of Santiniketan. Mukherjee (1961) contends that Tagore, the post-educationist, is not a trained school-master, as ordinarily every educationist is, but he is one of India's greatest geniuses who has made a bold attempt in revolutionising the educational ideas and thereby the system, to such an
extent, that he has won international fame for his international university at Santiniketan. He wanted education to be truly related to our social life and our cultural background.

Banerjee (1961) points out that the greatness of Tagore as an educationist, among other factors is due to his perfect understanding of the child's mind. The boys and girls of Santiniketan greet him with bowed heads and folded hands. He has a simple and a kind word for everybody. But the little children do not stand apart in reverence like the elders. They run to him, shouting, 'Gurudev' and cluster round him in utter childlike irreverence. Primarily, he looks at children as children and not as adults. Once purposefulness enters into education, it belongs to the adult mind.

Russell (1937) claims that the founder of Visva-Bharati, he has introduced himself as a practical educationist. Marking his contribution in education it can be said that he was a great educationist. Sivow (1961) remarks that Tagore extended the meaning and functional importance of certain aspects of personality as nobody else had done before him. According to Ali (1960) there was no place for narrowness in Tagore's educational ideals. He did not believe in suppressing any aspect to human nature and held that the harmonious development of all the faculties can alone lead to an integrated personality. True education must develop the intellect as well as the
emotions and the will, and achieve harmony with nature and balance between the different subjects of study.

Mitra (1946) considers that these objects can be best attained in a residential school. There the children can be brought into intimate and daily contact with nature. They can at the same time imbibe the national traditions through close personal association with dedicated teacher.

According to Bisai and Chatterjee (1942), Tagore refers that if the country was to live a life of power and prosperity, the concept of education must be altered. He loudly declared that we need education in which emotion, language, and life shall be fairly combined. He launched his pleas for a new approach to education. He has left on record his own childhood impressions, on which one amusing incident is worth quoting. When he was a child of four or five, his parents had engaged a private tutor for him and his elder brother. But Tagore thought that going to school was a great fun. His parents at first would not allow him because he was too young. But he became so persistent that in the end, out of sheer evaporation they allowed him to go to school, for reasons we do not know.

Kriplani (1961) recalls that whatever may be the reason, the exasperated tutor gave him a resounding slap and said, "You are crying to go to school to-day, but a day will soon come when you will cry even more in order not to go to school." In My Early Life, Tagore (1958)
again expresses, "I have no recollection of the tutor of ours, but the impression of his weighty advice and weightier hand has not yet faded. Never in my life have I heard a true prophecy." And by the time he was fourteen, or may be fifteen, he had decided that the type of school to which he was sent was not the place for him. Again he has left it on record that when he started his own school at about 40, it was a strange irony of fate that the child who refused to go to school, should in course of time, become a school teacher himself and devote all his attention and energy to ensure that the children did not run away from the school. He succeeded, because the methods which he adopted, the motivation which he provided, and the attitude with which he started, made his school a place of joy for children.

Chaudhuri (1962) believes that Tagore does not want the process of learning to be a burdensome one, but he wants it to be one of joyous adventure, full of thrills, wanderings and surprises. Chattopadhyay (1947) considers that life in the open air, freedom from restrictions of all kinds, natural and joyous comradeship between the human being and his natural surroundings, free scope for the fullest expression of the child's inborn talents - constitute some of the features of his educational work. He does not like a child being brought into the educational factory wherein lessons are taught
in a lifeless and colourless manner, practically
dissociated from the context of the world, within bare
white-walls, staring like eye-ball of the dead. In the
words of Sykes (1943), Tagore (1918) wrote a short,
causing article 'The Parrot Training', in which the
ignorant parrot, which sang and flew in freedom, is
educated by being imprisoned in a golden cage and stuffed
with 'Copies of copies' of text-books. It's wings and
its feet are chained. At last, it lies dead and only the
stuffing results.

In Talks in China, Tagore (1924) claims, "We
are born with that God-given gift of taking delight in
the world, but such delightful activity is fettered and
imprisoned, stillled by a force called 'discipline',
which kills the sensitiveness of the child mind, the
mind which is always on the alert, restless and eager
to receive first hand knowledge from mother-nature."
In the words of Banjimittan (1948) Tagore states his
own experience, "So long as I was forced to attend
school, I felt an unbearable torture. I often counted
the years before I would have my freedom. My elder
brothers had finished their academic career and were
engaged in life, each in his own way. Now I envied them
when after a hurried meal in the morning I found the
inevitable carriage that took us to school, ready at
the gate. Now I wished that by some magic spell, I could
cross the intervening fifteen or twenty years and
suddenly become a grown-up man. I afterwards realized that what then weighed on my mind was the unnatural pressure of a system of education which prevailed everywhere."

10.2 **AIMS OF EDUCATION**

According to Datta (1957), being a great visionary and a man of spiritual wisdom, Tagore's object of education is the emancipation of man from all kinds of bondages. He aims at a perfection, not only that of body or mind but also that of the soul. In order to achieve that aim in his endeavours, he makes education as broad-based as possible. That becomes evident when in *My School*, Tagore says, "But for us to maintain self-respect which we owe to ourselves and to our Creator, we must make the purpose of our education nothing short of the highest purpose of man, the fullest growth and freedom of soul."

Banerjee (1961) recalls that Tagore's object of education was to bring about the perfection of man by dispelling the darkness of ignorance and the ushering in of the light of knowledge. For Tagore knowledge does not mean mere pedantry but true wisdom which will be expressed in action through sympathy and love. In this connection Tagore (1926) observes in *A Poet's School*, "We have to keep in mind the fact that love and action are the only media through which perfect knowledge can be obtained, for the object of knowledge is not pedantry.
Elmhirst (1926) ascertains that according to Tagore, true freedom is not possible unless it is expressed in action. By developing a broad outlook through education an individual can express himself fully in many ways; through which perfect freedom of body, mind and soul is possible. In the words of Schilles (1953) Tagore emphasises again that in educational organizations our reasoning faculties have to be nourished in order to allow our mind its freedom in the world of truth, our imagination for the world which belongs to art, and our sympathy for the world of relationship. The last is even more important than learning the geography of foreign lands. By creating an atmosphere of ideas in his institution, by making provision for the growth of mind through many creative activities, by making teaching life-inspired and life-centred, and by making education a joyous adventure of intellectual exploration and discoveries— the freedom aimed at is to be achieved according to Tagore.

Elmhirst (1955) believes that another object of education according to Tagore was the highest one, that of giving man the unity of truth. Gandhi (1945) holds that unity of truth can be obtained only when there is no separation of relationship between the intellect and the physical and spiritual aspects of education, but a harmony prevails. Tagore rightly
observes that the highest education is that which does not merely gives one information but makes one's life in harmony with all existence. While aiming at such a harmony, he deplores people devoting their whole attention to giving children information, not knowing that by this emphasis they are accentuating a break between the intellectual, physical, and the spiritual life.

Gandhi (1936) conducts that Tagore attached far more significance to moral values in education than for mere results of science, which produced a system and physical power. Tagore (1924) maintains in Talks in "whims," "we should borrow science from the West if right, we have a great thing to accept from the people of the West - their treasure of the intellect which is immense and whose superiority we must acknowledge. But it would be a great degradation on our part if we forget our own moral wealth of wisdom, which is of far greater value than a system that produces endless materials and a physical power that is always on the war-path. Ghosh (1948) pleads that having witnessed the disasters that the first World War produced, he began to distrust the evil purpose for which man's intellect has been utilised and therefore, he observes, "I came to the conclusion that what was needed was to develop and give form to some ideal of education so that we might bring up our children in the atmosphere of a higher life."
In his Creative Unity, Tagore (1950) contends, "Then again, let us admit that modern science is Europe's great gift to humanity for all times to come. We in India, must claim it from our hands and gratefully accept it in order to be saved from the curse of futility by lagging behind. We shall fail to reap the harvest of the present age if we delay." Kaviraj (1969) states that in fact what Tagore objects is the artificial arrangement by which foreign education tends to occupy all the space of our national mind, and thus kills or hampers the great opportunity for the creation of a new thought-power by a new combination of truths. It is this which makes us urge that all the elements in our culture have to be strengthened, not to resist the Western Culture, but truly to accept and assimilate it, to use it for our sustenance, not as our burden, to get mastery over this culture, and not to live on its outskirts as the hewers of texts and drawers of book-learning.

Gupta (1946) writes, thus Tagore does not want education to be merely informative but desires that it should be creative also. He narrates that the great use of education is not merely to collect facts but to know man and to make oneself known to man. In the words of Das (1932) Tagore was particularly enthusiastic about bringing children into contact with creative artists and thinkers who would provide an incentive for children to express themselves in poetry, music, and other arts.
Kabir (1961) tells that the aims and objects of education which are of a varied nature have been incorporated by Tagore at his Visva-Bharati in a crystallised form. They find a place in the Abridged Syllabus and Recommended Books (Jan, 1935) under 'Aims and Objectives' which are reproduced here below:

(a) **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

I. To study the mind of man in its realization of different aspects of truth from diverse points of view.

II. To bring into more intimate relation with one another through patient study and research, the different cultures of the East on the basis of their underlying unity.

III. To approach the West from the standpoint of such a unity of the life and thought of Asia.

IV. To seek to realize in a common fellowship of study the meeting of the East and the West, and thus ultimately to strengthen the fundamental conditions of world peace through the establishment of free communication of ideas between the two hemispheres.

V. And with such ideals in view to provide at Santiniketan a centre of culture, where research and study of the religion, literature, history, science and art of Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Islamic, Sikh, Christian and other Civilizations may be pursued along with the
culture of the West, with that simplicity in externals which is necessary for the spiritual realization, in amity, good fellowship and co-operation between the thinkers and scholars of both Eastern and Western countries, free from all antagonisms of race, nationality, creed or caste.

Gupta (1941) ascertains that when the aims and objects of Visva-Bharati, referred to above, are subjected to a critical analysis, it may be found that Tagore, being a visionary and a true seeker of Truth, has covered the entire gamut of human thought and has been deliberately comprehensive in adumbrating his aims and objects of education.

10.3 CURRICULUM

Kriplani (1941) narrates that as education, according to Tagore, aimed at the development of complete manhood for the attainment of a full life, the curriculum envisaged in his educational thought also partook of that idea and referred to all aspects of human life: physical, moral and spiritual from one point of view; individual, social, utilitarian, non-utilitarian, etc. from another. Ghosh (1966) remarks that the curriculum of studies which the students at Santiniketan followed, showed that Tagore understood the all-sided development of character in which the adequate expression of emotions played a very important part.
The conception of the curriculum indicates that Tagore interpreted the curriculum not in terms of certain subjects to be learnt but in terms of certain activities to be undertaken. As Bunn (1920) maintains that the school must be thought of primarily not as a place where certain knowledge is learnt, but as a place where the young are disciplined in certain forms of activity. We find, accordingly, that at the Santiniketan school, and later on at Visva-Bharati, the teaching of the various familiar academic subjects like history, science, nature-study, geography, literature etc. include a variety of relevant practical activities like drawing, excursion, gardening, regional-study, laboratory-work, drawing, original composition, collection of museum and herbarium. Kulaareatha (1961) considers that a multitude of so-called 'extra-curricular' activities like games, social-service, student-self-government, etc. formed a regular feature of the normal working of the institution in order to bring into play all the essential faculties of the children.

Mitra (1946) describes that the curriculum adopted at Santiniketan, and later at Visva-Bharati, indirectly indicates his views on the subjects being taught. There is no known document where Tagore worked out any complete list of subjects that he considered as essential to be taught in school or college. Besides this, he laid emphasis on certain subjects from time to
time, and on some subjects throughout his life in the
course of various writings and utterances of various
occasions, which are the only reliable guide to his
preferences. In this matter some special subjects on
which he laid emphasis are being taken up.

(a) MOTHER TONGUE

Roy (1916) explains that when Rabi was a
cild, his elder brother Hemendranath used to say that
a sound grounding in the mother-tongue should come first
and the teaching of English later. At that time it was
the fashion to learn through the medium of English. Rabi
benefitted greatly from the understanding his third
brother showed in teaching the boys through the medium
of Bengali over a long period of time. Coetz (1937)
also contends that previously English, a foreign language
was the medium used in all college courses and in most
of the high-school training of Indians, so that many
students know more about Shakespeare than about Kalidasa.
Schiiles (1953) remarks that he insisted, and cogently
established, that the medium of both study and instruction
must be the mother-tongue. He resolutely sought to
convince the intelligentsia that education imparted in
Middle and High Schools through a foreign-tongue like
English, while admittedly unnatural, was further more
destructive for the national language, national culture,
and the natural development of the spirit. In the words
of Lakhotia (1961) Tagore ascertainsthat his emphasis
on the use of mother-tongue as the medium of instruction grew out of his recognition that education is most effective when it is unconsciously imbibed. An alien language, however rich, has its own associations and atmosphere. As these are unfamiliar to the child, they impose a strain on his mind.

(b) **MEET\**

Sukherjee (1943) represents that while Tagore attached the foremost importance to the mother-tongue as a factor in education, he was also duly conscious of the importance of the English language for Indian children not only as a language of business in the existing set-up in the country but also as the means to establish contact with the wider world of Western learning and culture which he considered indispensable in the modern age of science and technology.

Interestingly enough Tagore (1993) in Prasanga Katha recommends that the teaching of English might be started in early years. Let the English language be taught from childhood, but as a supplement to Bengali, and in small doses. In that case, the knowledge of Bengali will help the learning of English.

(c) **OTHER LANGUAGES**

Tagore (1915) describes in Bikas Bahan that although he laid special stress on English as a foreign language for world-contact because of its historical relations with India, he stated that it would be better
if other European languages like French and German were also learnt. Among the Indian languages in the modern group, the teaching of Hindi and Urdu were started early after the foundation of Hindi-Urdu in 1916. Courses in Marathi, Gujarati and Sinhalese had been intended to be started. Of these, Tagore attached special importance to Sanskrit. Sanskrit was cultivated in the Tagore family with avidity and Tagore had come under the spell of the language and its literature since childhood.

(d) **SCIENCE**

Sukherje (1950) holds that Tagore's interest in scientific studies grew in his childhood. The earliest thought of Tagore in this direction was that if the scientific outlook was to be developed truly in the country, science should be taught on a mass scale instead of being, as it actually was, confined to a few; and, in order to do so, it was imperative that science should be taught in the mother tongue so that it could penetrate even into the remote villages of the land.

Azad (1951) observes that the activities related to science teaching, as recommended by Tagore and largely undertaken in the Santiniketan school from the earliest days, may be listed as follows:

Observation of the stars and the planets, study of the flora and the fauna in the surrounding areas of the institution in minute details, collection of rocks, oyster-shells, plants and herbs, personal tending of birds.
animals and plants, organization of museum and herbarium, undertaking of excursions for nature study in natural setting etc.

(e) LIBRARY

Gupta (1932) believes that himself a keen student of history, Tagore desired that history should be taught in real earnest. His suggestion for teaching Indian history to the students in the schools as also to the common people, are original and interesting as usual. If the genuine historical outlook is to be developed, the knowledge of history must be widely disseminated among the masses. The broad internationalistic angle in history teaching was also accentuated through the ceremonies performed at Santiniketan in the memory of the great prophets and saints of other lands, as also through text-books for children, like Itinas-Parichay, published by the institution, which contained an account of the lives of the great men and women of other countries in various walks of life.

(f) ART, MUSIC AND DANCING

Pearson (1916) contends that Tagore attached as much importance to his pupil's emotional as to his intellectual development. He counted on a fusion of emotion and intellect to assure him of a full and rounded life and that is why painting and music were made the two principal subjects at Santiniketan. "The expression of joy," Tagore (1919) points out in
Kalevidy, "is as vitally necessary for us as health and food." Again in The Centre of Indian Culture, Tagore (1919) describes that the creative activities through art, music, dance and drama have been the universal mean of expressing the elemental joy of life since the dawn of creation. It is the aesthetic activities that differentiate man from all other animals. Tagore pleaded that in our centres of culture, music and art must have their prominent seats of honour, and not merely a tolerant nod of recognition. According to Radhakrishnan (1951) Tagore remarks that we must make dramatic performance a regular subject of education. Children need the opportunity to give expression of their sentiments through perfect and graceful movements of the body. Never allow this capacity to use the whole body as a medium of expression to die out. So introduce the dramatic arts into your school from the beginning.

(g) CONCLUSION

Catlin (1964) concludes that Tagore was conversant with the modern development regarding the problems of curriculum and method and that in many respects his own approach to these problems was mainly on lines advocated by enlightened educational thought, ancient and modern. Indeed, many of the ideas stressed by him have become by now quite familiar, even commonplace in educational theory. The remarkable point, however, is that he could not only think so
deeply and on such progressive lines, but actually experimented on many of them in practice.

Parikh (1963) ascertains that just as the curriculum, according to him, should reflect the social ideals, traditions and customs of the educational as well as the conditions and problems of his familiar surroundings and every day life, so the method should be based on real life situations as well as the concrete facts of nature and social life. Thus facts of nature are to be studied through actual natural phenomena and through the life in nature, and facts of history, geography, and other social sciences are to be studied first-hand from direct sources as far as possible, and not second-hand from books and class lectures. Pannikar (1964) holds that Tagore based this realistic approach on a psychological principle which had long been recognized in educational theory mainly through the influence of Herbartian psychology and has now become a common place in modern pedagogy, but which had little practical vogue in the day-to-day teaching. Tagore (1905) expresses the view in Chatrader Prati Sambhasan and which is little adopted in educational practice even now—namely learning can become sound only when it proceeds 'from the near to the distant, from the familiar to the unfamiliar'. That is why he made a powerful plea for collecting knowledge from direct sources in real life and nature so that not
only our learning may be adequately motivated but our knowledge also becomes real and lasting.

Mukherjee (1956) remarks that the realistic approach to the learning process, as Tagore conceived it, also presumed the idea of acquiring knowledge 'through independent efforts and thinking' as opposed to 'the method of spoon-feeding and thoughtless cramming' which was the bane of the prevailing educational system. The article 'Aharan', is also a grand plea for a realistic education which is independent of books and is founded on the study of life and society in the raw through the independent exercise of one's power of observation and reasoning.

According to Mukherjee (1960) the problem of the medium of education may be regarded as the very central point in Tagore's philosophy of educational method and as one of the most fundamental aspect of his educational thought. He had been an uncompromising and passionate champion of the mother-tongue as the medium of all education since the 'Bharati' till his last days.

In the words of Harvane (1964) Tagore stresses 'Education in Nature' which obviously affords scope for a first-hand study of the innumerable facts of natural life and phenomena. It is on this account that Tagore recommended travelling or educational tours to different parts of the country as a valuable means
of education through direct first-hand experience. In 
Russia-R-Cithi, Tagore (1956) particularly referred to 
this theme and pointed out that in the former days 
pilgrimage was the traditional method of learning about 
the country.

Radhakrishnan (1961) holds that the idea of 
peripatetic learning, brings out another fundamental 
principle in Tagore's educational method, namely, the 
activity principle. Though the activity principle 
includes the familiar idea of learning by doing, it has 
a much deeper significance as Tagore conceived it. It is 
based on Tagore's philosophy of the inseparable relation 
between body and mind, which he had been pointing out 
since Sikkar Herpher.

It is from this point of view that he regarded 
the middle-school as the ideal school. Teaching while 
walking is the best method of teaching. It is so not 
only because walking facilitates learning many things 
through direct observation but because it keeps our 
awakened mental faculties constantly alert and receptive 
through contact with ever-varying scenes and objects 
and the rhythmic marching together of the inner and 
the outer. Tagore (1956) gave a full exposition of 
this idea in another remarkable document entitled 
Movement in Education.

According to Radhakrishnan (1973), allied to 
the above principle is Tagore's emphasis on the 
importance of joy as a most valuable principle in
educational method. He laid his finger forcefully on this fundamental principle in his very first educational writing, 'Siksa Sarpher' where he points out in vivid words how joy is of cardinal importance for the wholesome growth of children in body and mind, and how Indian children were typically deprived of it through the prevailing joyless system of education. He always wanted that through the various joyful activities of his institution this joy of consciousness would slowly, silently, and lastingly percolate into and accumulate in the depths of the being of his pupils.

The principle of joy, presupposes the allied 'Principle of curiosity and interest', in which also Tagore laid due emphasis. Tagore (1935) in Aamar Siksa observes that lack of curiosity is a sign of inner lifelessness. A heavy curriculum and a mercenary aim of education, in his opinion, had crushed all curiosity and interest in children since childhood. According to him, curiosity can be aroused in the pupils only when the teachers themselves are alert and interested.

Then Tagore advocated a 'fulness of experience' for children for attainment of the ideals of life. The provision of a rich experience through the educational process is as much a problem of the method, as that of the curriculum. Therefore, Tagore (1917) in Personality considers that our children should be given its full measure of life's draught for which it has an
endless thirst. A similar biological argument for the same principle is found in Tagore's plea that children require an ample space for the free movement of both, their body and mind. Hence the environments and methods of teaching should be so organized that this amplitude of physical and mental experiences may be available to them.

10.5 DISCIPLINE AND FREEDOM

Freedom and joy being the heart and soul of Tagore's conception of an ideal education, it is but natural that he was entirely opposed to any form of rigid and hard discipline. Tagore (1913) brings home in Madhana that childhood is the period when we have or ought to have more freedom—freedom from the necessity of specialization into the narrow bounds of social and professional conventionalism. According to Mukherjee (1961) Tagore felt strongly that boys and girls could be happy without the enforced discipline that so often defeats its purpose, and that the discipline of nature would make their bodies glow and their minds to sprout. If according to him the unrealistic curriculum and formalistic teaching methods rendered the prevailing system of education lifeless, the heartless and even brutal, discipline of those times made it repulsive and dreadful.

Harsh discipline, Tagore (1916) points out in Chatrasan Tantra, betrays a lack of insight on the part of the teacher into the delicate and intricate mechanism
of the human mind. Conversely Tagore's faith in the principles of freedom and joy as the fundamental principles of life naturally inspired him to apply them as much to the problems of discipline as to other educational problems. The negation of freedom was to his mind the negation of life and growth. It obstructs the child's natural urge for self-expression through body and mind which is of vital significance for his physical and mental development.

In Sikas Sanskar, Tagore (1906) realizes that childish restlessness is both natural and healthy and instead of being suppressed, it should be fostered under proper control. Tagore went to the extent of declaring in the same article that true to this principle he considered it fortunate indeed that he could start his school with a set of naughty boys. In the valuable publication Movement in Education we find Tagore (1919) interpreting and supporting the spontaneous restless impulses of children for physical activity. Tagore (1919), therefore, remarks in Visva-Bharati that children should not be restrained in the least from spontaneous physical impulses during the process of their learning, even from laughing, jumping or running about, when a class is on, however much this might militate against the conventional notion of class management.

Again, Tagore (1923) in Visva-Bharati states with some amount of pride, that in very few institutions in the world have students been given so much freedom,
and this is not a small matter. Criticizing the stereotyped method of punishing unruly children by curtailing their freedom, Tagore (1924) in The School Master claims that most of us think that in order to punish boys who are wicked, a restriction of their freedom is necessary. But restriction itself is the cause of nature going wrong. He, therefore, adopted the system of freedom-sure which is mainly on the lines of the doctrine of 'Punishment by Natural Consequences' associated with the names of Rousseau (1712-1778) and Spencer (1820-1903). "When the children", again Tagore (1923) said in the Visva-Bharati Ideal "found themselves in an atmosphere of freedom and trust, they never gave us any trouble." In the words of Chakravarti (1961) Tagore recalls, "I tried to establish a school where boys might be free inspite of the school. Knowing something of the natural school which nature supplies to all her creatures, I established my institution in a beautiful spot, far away from town, where the children had the greatest freedom possible, especially in my not forcing upon them lessons from which their mind was unfitted."

Ray (1947) believes that he even went to the extent of allowing his students openly and publically to criticize the cherished fundamental ideas of the institution. According to Ramachandran (1941) Tagore once declares," This Santiniketan will fail, if it fetters your mind or makes you fear— Today is the day of my
victory because my students have said today freely and bravely that I am hopelessly in wrong. I do not admit that I am wrong. But I want you to have the courage to say so, if that is your conviction. May Santiniketan always give you that freedom and courage."

Some years later in the essay Tapovan, Tagore (1910) upheld the ideal of Tapasaya. Again in Dharmodhy, Tagore (1927) maintains that self-purification and training of character are necessary for the realisation of the universal aspects of truth. The concept of true culture, that Tagore (1935) defined in Siksasamskriti, brings out how he valued the qualities like broadmindedness, courtesy, tolerance and selfless service, which may be found only in a finely disciplined character.

Roy (1966) considers that while Tagore admired discipline, he was never in favour of enforcing it from without. True discipline, according to him, is discipline that grows from within. In his son Nethindranath, who had come of age, Tagore (1937) in Githi Patra, gives the advice of undertaking the task of self-improvement through his own efforts and of protecting himself from all evils.

According to Sajydein (1966) Tagore was critical of the conventional form of moral instruction through daily didactic sermons as a routine in character training. In SiksaTapasaya, Tagore (1906) recalls that it served to place the learning on the box of the accused and made all good counsel better and repulsive. On the other hand, Tagore (1917) in Personality forcefully
made the point that moral and religious sentiments can be truly cultivated only through a proper atmosphere.

Tan (1942) states that another point of interest needs some incentive here, it is Tagore's faith in meditation as an art of self-discipline. Tagore (1929) in Bhyan in Japan admires that practice of meditation in Japan on a national scale is largely instrumental in awakening discipline in the national character of the Japanese people. He also introduces it as a regular activity, for fifteen minutes each time morning and evening in his own institution. According to Pearson's (1915) testimony the children of the institution maintained 'perfect silence during prayer services.'

Tan (1943) summarizes that finally, Tagore's conception of discipline is fully in line with the modern concept of 'Free-Discipline.' In fact, few modern educators would dare to go as far as he did in this direction both in thought and practice. But while he was an uncompromising critic of the harsher forms of discipline and a passionate advocate of freedom in education, he never supported anarchy or the discipline of character. He contended that the ideal method of discipline and character building was operative in the Gurus of Ancient India, through the observance of Brahmacharya, under the sheltering care of the Gurus, which represented a happy synthesis of restraint and freedom.
Among the writers of the world, interpreters of the child-mind are few, and among these very few Tagore is the most remarkable. He had the knack of the child-mind, some of the profoundest truths. The sorrows and joys of child life, the absorbing interest in jokes and games, the fancy and the extra-ordinary inventiveness of childhood—are all revealed by the genius of this great personality.

According to Moore (1941) Tagore expresses:

'A child sitting on the mother's lap complains,
Why should you mind if I take a sheet of paper;
When you see my father wasting heaps of papers with Crabbes marks all over, you do not seem to mind.'

Sneehy (1959) contends that if we want to educate a child properly we shall have to start from the very beginning. With the advancement of age the child-mind grows more and more thirsty for higher values. A shower of rain from the literary sky is needed at proper moments. Moreover, a 'chemical combination' of what is learnt with life is 'true education'. Education which is not correlated with life situation is futile. Inbetween the life of books and actual life of children, there is a big bridge of grammar and dictionaries. This disparity in the name of education is far from being satisfactory. The power to see, to think and the zeal for creative efforts and invention should be fostered in educating a child.

Tagore, as an individualist, recognises individual
differences and wants us to provide for each of them. He goes on to say in Siksa (1351 B.C.) that machine has got one advantage that an article of a particular size as per order is available. But there is a great difference from man to man. Even, a man today varies from the same man another day. If we look for uniform results we would do injustice to individuals. So Tagore (1916) explains in My School that life's line is not the straight line, for it is fond of playing the see-saw with the line of the average, bringing upon its head the rebuke of the school.

According to Sridharani (1946) Tagore ascertains that children are ever inquisitive. Childhood should be given its full measure of life's drought, for which it has an endless thirst. The young mind should be saturated with the idea that it has been born in a human world which is in harmony with the world around it. A child is a note of interrogation embodied. We should not pin down his curiosity. He is to be brought in active touch with things and beings, so as to enable him to establish a cordial relationship with the environment.

Vigour and energy are nature's best gifts to children and there is always a fight between the vigour and the code of respectability in our civilized homes. Through this eternal conflict have been born all kinds of aberration and real wickedness, through an unnatural repression of what is natural and good in itself. In the words of Dybil (1971) Tagore holds that the child is
not a miniature adult. He has his own likes and dislikes. So whatever procedure we take on the basis of adult inclination, it is bound to do much harm than good, if we do not take into consideration a child's peculiar mental set-up. In 

Viva Bharati Quarterly (Education Number, 1947) it is observed that the child, because has no conscious object of life beyond living, can see all things around it, can hear every song with a perfect freedom of attention, not having to exercise choice in the collection of information.

Again we ask our children to concentrate upon the black figures of books which have a forbidding appearance. This is psychologically incorrect. "The School Master", as Tagore (1924) says, "is of the opinion that the best means of educating a child is by concentration of mind, but nature knows that the best way is by dispersion of mind." When we were children we came to gather facts by such scattering of mental energy, through unexpected surprises. Facts must come afresh to children to startle their minds into full activity.

All the time children should enjoy freedom. Aronson (1947) emphasises that children have their active sub-conscious mind which, like a tree, has the power to gather its food from the surrounding atmosphere. For them the atmosphere is a great deal more important than rules and methods, buildings, appliances, class teaching and text-books.

Thompson (1921) maintains that Tagore, thus
wants to train up instincts and impulses of a child first through playful activities to be followed by a mixed procedure of play and work which is purposeful, through day-dreaming and reality upto the adolescent stage. In the later stage work, especially physical work, in which teacher will part, will have an important place. At this stage, some abstract and moral problems which cannot be solved by philosophical abstractions will arise. Thus when the educand is physically and emotionally matured, he becomes ready for rigorous intellectual pursuits. But even then the basic principles of love and affection, sympathy and initiative, joy and spirit of adventure, will continue to make the whole educational process pleasurable, not monotonous and boring.

TAGORE'S IDEAL TEACHER

Tagore depicts in *Siksha (1315 B.C)* that formerly in India we used to get knowledge from a Guru not a Teacher, begged for wisdom of a man not a machine. Narasimhan (1946) considers that these master-teachers of ancient Aryavarta were all forest-dwellers. Their usual abode was some shady spot either on the Ganges or on the banks of a lake in the Himalayas. Under the shadow of the banyan tree, encircled by the murmuring bamboo jungle, they lit their sacrificial fires. Under the watchful eyes of the Gurus, these students grew in sympathy with all Creation. The birds nesting in the thatched huts were their singing companions. The rivers that were stirred by their eel-like splashings as they
took their morning baths, had a great message for them. Communion with nature was the first step towards communion with life’s fundamental problems. Direct contact with the Guru’s own life was the main part of their education in the forest school.

Malik (1961) pleads that there was no disparity of ideas and opinions with books. Teachers were available by an advertisement in the newspapers but a real Guru was not readily got on demand. Tagore humorously describes in Visva Bharati quarters (winter, 1957), “Fix a cane and some brain with a phonograph machine, and you will get a teacher.” Again it is described in The Educational Record (1960) that now-a-days, teachers go to the students dressed by necessity but it is the law of nature that a disciple should approach his preceptor at the instance of the former.

In the words of Johari (1938) Tagore expresses that the main object of teaching is not to explain meanings but to knock at the door of the mind. If any boy is asked to give an account of what is awakened in him at such knocking, he will probably say something very silly. For what happens within is much bigger than what he can express in words. So a synthetic understanding, on the part of the teacher of the child-mind is imperative. He who has lost the child in himself is absolutely unfit for the great work of educating human children. A man in the street cannot teach. Tagore’s idea of the divine humanity leads him to think of a Guru who is supposed to
handle human materials. Certainly the highest respect is given to the teaching profession.

In The Calcutta Municipal Gazette (1941) it is explained that Tagore himself is included in the list of teachers, but he has never been trained in the art of teaching. He has been tutored in the school of life and becomes a successful teacher who afterwards wants a thorough overhauling of the existing system of education. No body else feels so deeply the helpless condition of pupils confined in the prison-house of the school, the walls of which, 'stare like eye-balls of the dead'. In the Visva-Bharati Quarterly (Education Number -1947) it is held that he wants full development of individuality but he never ignores the personality of the teacher in the process of socialising the child. Thus individualise-education, but socialise the child is the watch-word of his theory. Here teacher's personality is imperative.

A good deal of preparation and experimentation are required on the part of the teacher. In the Visva-Bharati News (1941) it is recalled that a most important truth, which are apt to forget, is that a teacher can never truly teach unless he is still learning himself. The greater part of our learning in the schools has been wasted because, for most of our teachers, their subjects are like dead specimens of once living things, with which they have a learned acquaintance, but no communication of life and love. In Education (1942) it is stated that according to Tagore, punishing pupil is
brutal. It proves the defeat of the teacher. It slackens
the silken bond of love between the teachers and the taught.
Any kind of punishment, if at all unavoidable, must come
from the hands of him who can love the children. A teacher
whose heart is not open enough to accommodate all the
students of the world, is a misfit. In his Aaron School,
Tagore has never allowed others to inflict punishment on
children. He had to break all sorts of mischiefs from
the pupils but has been always tolerant.

In Future of Education in India (1918) it is
conducted that 'Spiritual Report' between the teacher
and the taught should have to be established so that both
may be benefitted from the 'intellectual feast'. A lamp
which itself does not burn, cannot kindle another lamp.
Tagore himself with his simplicity of life and character,
long curly hair, Napoleonic beard, is 'the most universal,
the most encompassing, the most complete human being'. More
than mere sermonising, he himself has practiced the
ideologies befitting a true teacher. Rose (1943) ascertains
that in most of the great cities of both hemispheres,
surging crowds have been held spell bound by the melody
of his voice, even when they did not understand the
language of his addresses or recitations.

Pillai (1917) narrates that though the child has
been made the centre in Tagore's scheme of education, yet
the importance of the role of the teacher is not neglected.
He wants the teacher to be an inspiring friend, philosopher
and guide to an educand. The teacher who is full of life,
character, insight and love, can mould the life and learning of the child. A teacher cannot control himself from exercising his influence upon the children. Jyengar (1946) writes that the teacher must put an example before the children. He should try to become an ideal whom children may follow. The teacher has his own distinct role to play in moulding the personality of the child and this role cannot be played by anybody else. Thus in Tagore's scheme of education, the teacher is given a dignified and exalted position along with the child.

The most fundamental point in Tagore's philosophy of education was that 'the process of education should be full of life'. He was an uncompromising critic of any system of education that was mechanical and lifeless. His main criticism of the typical Anglo-Vernacular schools of his time was that they were more or less educational factories turning out uniform products through their mechanical system of education for getting into a job and conducted through an unrealistic curriculum and the medium of a foreign tongue. In his own childhood, he ran away from such an educational system and in his educational thoughts and activities he was most insistent that little children must be saved from similar ordeal. Aikut (1931) remarks that in this respect, his views are in line with those of the naturalists who have sought to rescue education from dead formalism and breathe into it the fresh air of light and life, placing it mainly on the fundamental footing of the child's natural interests and impulses.
Brown (1935) brings home that Tagore did not allow his theories to remain on paper. In the area of his own estates he established an organization on co-operative principles and initiated a self-help movement among his tenants based on self-reliance. Mukherjee (1943) emphasises that his own school Santiniketan, represented his protest against a soul-less system where memorisation in a foreign tongue was passed off for education, and also as a retreat. Chakravarty (1961) writes that Tagore, with his wife and children, and with a few friends and their families, started an experimental school where he hoped to provide children, not only with modern ideas and proper text-books, but with the inspiration of nature and the fellowship of young growing minds.

10.8 Santiniketan

Of the many priceless gifts that the great poet of India has given to his people and to his age, the educational experiment at Santiniketan is by no means the least among his imitable creations. Ramachandran (1941) maintains that unlike his other compositions he did not release it in a finished and perfect form, but like nature herself, gave it life and impulse, and for forty years watched and tended its growth, inviting all those who may share in the creation. Its defects and imperfections, therefore, reflect the defects and imperfections of ourselves, in so far as we have failed to justify the truth he has left to us, for it is as much a gift of his countrymen as a test of their worthiness to receive it. That test is being worked out and only the future can measure its results.
Samanta (1948) claims that there is a legend attached to Tagore's choice of the site for Santiniketan, 'The Abode of Peace'. The story is based on tradition as are the histories of all Gurukulas, or clans of the Gurus, of bygone days. The poet's father travelled the length and breadth of India but never until he had seen the isolated ground where Santiniketan now stands. When he saw this particular area in Bengal, he was struck by its appropriateness for the site of a sanctuary. He visited the place again and again. Finally in 1953 he bought the ground, sculptured the wild growth into a beautiful garden and erected a temple.

Radhakrishnan (1951) conducts that on the 22nd of December (the 7th of Paush) in 1901, the boy who had been a truant in his childhood founded a school of his own and named it Santiniketan, 'The Abode of Peace'. Sen (1976) contends that Tagore called it his 'tangible poem' and observed that it resembled a work of art and not a pedagogical laboratory. Anand (1946) states that certainly this was never expected of him who had spent the most fruitful years of his life in writing plays, songs and poetry. Therefore, people naturally thought that as a seat of learning it might not be one of the best of its kind but it was sure to be something outrageously new, being the product of daring experience.

North (1957) holds that the entire life of Santiniketan was centered on the versatile personality of Tagore, inspite of the great scholars and artists who
took Tagore's 'Verse of Peace' as their own permanent residence, in spite of a brilliant faculty and a growing student-body, Santiniketan was essentially a 'One-Man-University'.

Tagore's forest retreat, like the schools of ancient India, offers a sharp contrast to highly organized modern university.

Liebenthal (1957) maintains that the unpleasant experiences of his school days impressed on him that his school should be different from the schools wherein he was instructed as a boy. The school-life of his boyhood days was so distasteful to him that he played truant from it as often as possible. He longed for freedom in greater world. In A Poet's School Tagore (1926) himself claims, "The founding of my school had its origin in the memory of that longing for freedom which seems to go back beyond the sky-line of my birth." It is also due to his deep love for children. In the words of Das (1928) the jars of lozenges or boxes of chocolates were always kept at hand for little boys and girls who never went to his room without coming out with something in their hand or mouth. Not even Pariah dogs were excluded from his affection. He had several children of his own and he wanted them to be as happy as possible and train them to use to the full their gifts of mind and body and spirit.

Tagore (1916) says in My School that the number of students, on his testimony, was only about ten to start with of whom the poet's eldest son, Rathindranath, was one.

Aromadorhab at once introduced the pattern of the forest schools of ancient India almost in its entirety. It is

"elsewhere he also gives the figure as five."
narrated in Viava-Chamati Patrika (1898 3.4.) that besides others, Nathindranath, in an article Reminiscant of his earliest days at Santiniketan has recorded, "It would now sound as exaggeration, but it is none-the-less quite true that we felt same joy in that easy and austere life devoid of any material luxury."

According to Cankner (1976) the early years were difficult and authority changed hands several times with little apparent success. But not withstanding these administrative short-comings, the school did enjoy some spells of happy and fruitful activity and embark upon some novel experiments that undoubtedly possess deep educational significance.

According to Kar (1949) to Tagore, the great gift of ancient India was her meditative calm which he wished to recapture. Pupils, teachers and the various assistants, lived together as in a large family and shared a common life. Free life in open nature end intimate contact with its various beauty and phenomena, were a most happy as well as profitable experience for the young children.

Sybil (1974) describes that here, in Santiniketan, the recreational hours in the evenings are spent in story telling, watching the stars, singing and performing plays, some of them composed by the pupils themselves, passed delightfully. Every morning a group of student-singers would go round the Ashrama and wake up the boys before sunrise by singing some of the songs of Tagore which signified joy and praise to God for morning and evening.
As observed by Sykes (1943), a close associate of Rabindranath, the children loved these songs, and by learning them they learned also something of the poet's joy in this lovely world and his thoughts of God who creates it and dwells in it. Ghosh (1945) contends that in fact, most of the Gitanjali songs, when fresh in their first bloom, are sung to the boys and they come in crowds to learn them. They sing them in their leisure hours, sitting in groups, under the open sky on moonlit nights, in the shadow of the impending rains in July. Verma (1964) also remarks that pupils at Santiniketan memorize scores of Tagore's melodic songs, without any conscious effort. They learn the tunes from the morning sounds of the Ashram choir which awakens the community with poet's music. Ghosh (1947) considers that Tagore was a great patron of Indian dancing. To encourage dancing among his students he brought a dancer from Benipur to his school. He himself travelled over many places in India to study at first hand the stylized relics of Indian classical dancing.

In the words of Thompson (1921) Tagore emphasises that for these boys vacation has no meaning. Their studies, though strenuous, are not a task being permeated by a holiday spirit which takes shape in the activities in their kitchen, their vegetable garden, their weaving, their work of small repairs.

Thorough attention was paid to the health of the students. Weekly weight was taken and a regular health record was maintained. Games and gardening became
compulsory, Corporal punishment was prohibited on principle. Nehru (1936) pleads that the poet was so sensitive in this matter that he did not pardon even the ablest teachers if they happened to insult any pupil. Thompson (1943) conducts that at Santiniketan, except in rains, classes are held out of doors. A boy may sit in the branches of a tree, if he wishes. Rabindranath’s affectionate care of the boys was a powerful spirit in the school. Rhys (1916) explains, “Not many fathers speak of their sons with as great a longing and affection as the poet did of his boys.” Again Pannikar (1961) depicts that the school does not observe Hindu Festivals but there are two long vacations, and half holidays for the birthdays of Christ, Buddha, Mohamed, Chaitanya, Rammohan Roy, the seershi and other great men.

Such a novel experiment under such a distinguished patronage could not long remain unknown to the outside world. One of the earliest outside notices was, however, unhappy. In 1917, the Government of Bengal issued a circular declaring the school as altogether unsuitable for the education of the sons of Government servants, consequently many children connected with the government officials had to leave the institution. According to Pearson (1916) the parting in tears was a moving sight and it was witnessed by Dr. Adrian Phelps. Writing about his impression of the institution in a foreign journal, he stated that he had never before seen any other instance of such deep attachment to one’s school.

Children were happy to go to their school.
because there they had the utmost freedom and would not be forced into anything which they did not wish to do. In the words of Pal (1941), Tagore writes, "I tried my best to develop in the children of my school the freshness of their feeling for nature, a sensitiveness of soul in their relationship with their human surroundings, with the help of literature, festive ceremonials and also the religious teachings." Under the natural and healthy environment of the Ashram, they found a natural outlet for their capacities and a greater chance of their development. In the school of Tagore, the gulf, which ordinarily exists in most schools, between the teachers and the pupils, is bridged by a true spirit of friendship and brotherliness. Sen (1957) recalls that Tagore's pupils at Santiniketan got more than indirect contact with his great mind. The teacher and his pupil's had many an hour together.

According to Kripiani (1951), in the midst of his suffering and his literary preoccupations he constantly thought of his beloved Santiniketan and its little school for children. Tagore (1931) himself points out in The Religion of Man that he saw the building of Santiniketan 'as the divine humanity working in his mind and compelling him to practical activities'. In The Educational Record (1950) it is narrated that 'For Tagore was Santiniketan and Santiniketan was Tagore'. Sen (1947) claims that Tagore travelled all over the civilized world, and was received everywhere with warmth and spontaneous welcome; he was accorded reception beyond the expectation of a foreign potentiate. But he
always liked to return to his corner at Santiniketan, a tiny settlement in dreary spot in west Bengal, hundred miles away from his ancestral home in Calcutta with its civilized comforts.

10.9 VISVA-BHARTI,

Ali (1960) ascertains that the land of Tagore is meant to be synonymous with the region of the Visva-Bharti - The University which has grown out of 'Santiniketan' or 'The Abode of Peace'. This was the name given by the Poet’s father to the hermitage which he had built on a spot that had brought him spiritual peace and enlightenment when he had alighted from his palanquin for his evening meditation on a journey through the village in Southern Bengal. Geddes (1931) contends that the word 'Visva-Bharti', was used for 'world-University', and its purpose was to provide young and old with the climate of mutual acceptance in a world torn by hatred and suspicion. This international centre with its academic, artistic and scientific departments, soon acquired a world-wide reputation and attracted scholars from practically every major nation of the East and West. Dewan (1961) describes that Rabindranath himself was obsessed with the great idea, which was to build a University, a tower of learning, where students would be taught cosmopolitan tolerance of all cultures and all religions in preparation for future world co-operation.

Senkner (1976) maintains that the annex of Tagore’s educational endeavours came with the founding of
a University at Santiniketan. Following upon his restlessness to expand the ashes school, his thought and praxis now extended to universal fulness and international education. Sykes (1943) quotes Tagore as saying, "I know Santiniketan will not bring forth its fulness of flowers and fruits if it does not send its roots into the western soil." Tagore (1935) in Visva-Bharati Vidyatan expresses that the development of his school later into a world University, Visva-Bharati, constitutes a unique landmark in international understanding. All his life Tagore dreamt of a true internationalism. Life to him was a great festival to which each nation had to bring its own lamp. The aim of his International University is to make a cultural centre to which all seekers of truth could come and take a share in lighting the lamp of human knowledge.

The thought that led to the founding and establishment of Visva-Bharati is best explained by Tagore (1921) in An Eastern University as "I had all along experienced the want of an institution in India which should be a true centre of all the different Eastern Cultures concentrating in one spot the varied ideals of art and civilization which have been contributed to the world by the various countries of Asia." He laid the cornerstone of Visva-Bharati in 1918 and on December 23, 1921, it was formally approved by the government of Bengal and inaugurated. Ten years after his death in 1951, it was raised to a National University. The name Visva-Bharati,
indicates the vision which gave birth to it. 'Visva' in Sanskrit is for Universe or World, 'Bharati' can either mean the goddess of culture and learning or the Aryan name for India. Thus Visva-Bharati, meaning 'World' and 'India', signifies Tagore's conception of a centre for universal learning. Although the seed for the university was in his mind a decade previous to its foundation, he spent much time and energy in advancing and evolving the concept of international education, before it took shape.

It is depicted in The Visva-Bharati Quarterly, Summer (1938) that Visva-Bharati is an International University where the whole world has become a single nest! Yatra visvas bharati ekadams. In this institution Tagore tried to impart the background of internationalism and help the students to realize the true character of our inter-linked humanity and deeper unities of our civilization in the West and East. He himself referred on many occasions to the trends of his thought as well as the courses of events that ultimately led to the establishment of Visva-Bharati. In 'The Visvabharati Ideal' Tagore (1923) tells clearly how after the 'Santiniketan School' had fairly settled down on its path of progress, he felt 'a new restlessness of spirit' that urged him to experiment on fresh grounds and to expand it into a larger world.

Shastri (1931) contends that the Visva-Bharati University, now declared an institution of national importance, is located within two miles of
Solpur railway station. And the town of Solpur, with its numerous rice mills has grown so rapidly during the last so many years. It started functioning in the regular academic manner when the institution re-opened, after the summer vacation, in July 1920. Culter (1935) pleads that the formal inauguration of Visva-Bharati as an international university, however took place about a month later, in December 23, 1921, before a distinguished gathering under the Presidentship of Dr. Brijendranath Seal, the eminent Indian Philosopher. A constitution was, therefore, drafted by Surendranath Tagore and Prof. B.C. Ghoshalobis, which was adapted and registered on May 15, 1922.

10.9.1 ACTIVITIES

In The Centre of Indian Culture, Tagore (1919) states that when regular teaching was started in the newly founded Visva-Bharati in July 1919, provision was made for the study of Hindu Philosophy, Buddhist Philosophy, Sanskrit Grammar, English Literature and Criticism, and Biology among Western Sciences. Sanskrit, Pali and Prakrit were added to the courses of study by the commencement of the next academic session in July, 1920. A section for Zoroastrian studies was started quite early but had to be discontinued for want of funds. The studies in Tibetan, Jain and Islamic culture were added later on. Among the modern Indian languages, Bengali was taught from the very beginning. The teaching of Hindi and Urdu was started very early. Courses in Marathi, Gujarati
and Ceylonese were also promised in 1920 if students were forthcoming.

Apart from regular courses in the above subjects, Indological researches were also conducted in the Research Department of Visva-Bharati. Extension lectures were frequently arranged on various aspects of Indian history and culture either by the regular members of the staff or by Visiting Professors and personalities. To quote Russell (1937) Visva-Bharati makes full use of its visitors.

Very few are allowed to escape without sharing their special knowledge or skill. The Gujarati or Hindi poet must recite his poetry and, if possible, explain the literary movements of his province. The musician must play his instrument, the orator must show his oratory. They all contribute to that interest and respect for the achievements of other provinces which Rabindranath wished to see. Besides academic courses and researches in philosophy, literature, and language, representing the different streams of Indian culture, the introduction of the arts and crafts, including the fine arts, of different parts of India, for study and cultivation at Visva-Bharati, also fulfilled the objective of the institution in this direction.

The composition of the staff and the students body, representing different parts of India, as Tagore had desired, also served to bring out the intended all-India character of the institution. The figures on student enrolment show that the composition of the students also
was fairly representative of the different parts of India, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Parsee, Buddhist, Christian and Jew—all are to be equally welcomed. And each is encouraged to give to Visva-Bharati the very best of his own faith. In the Encyclopaedia of Educational Research (1952) it is narrated that there is perhaps no other institution in the world which, within such a small compass, presents such a variety of diverse human specimens.

The original conception of the Visva-Bharati included the idea of the study of the various streams of India's age-old culture on the one hand, and the study of the major living languages and literatures of the country on the other. In the Autumn Annual (1951) Tagore conducts that its original object was to provide a common ground of fellowship for the constant interchange of noblest aspirations and creations of the various provinces of India, in the domain of art, literature and philosophy, through the medium of Hindi.

Although the essential character of the institution was maintained throughout as before, it is but natural that some changes should have come about for better or for worse in the wake of the new developments. The free and healthy life in nature, classes held in the open under the trees, the simple community life, the close association and intimate relationship between teachers and pupils, the self-government of the students, the spontaneous self-expression of the pupils in various directions, the general
atmosphere of peace, quiet, and beauty always pervading

the extensive campus of the institution—were all there in

their essence. The glamour of the development at times
tended to put the fundamental ideals in shade.

The attraction of this World-University for

Tagore was irresistible. Wherever he was, at whatever
corner of the globe, the vast fields and the starry sky

of Santiniketan and Visva-Bharati always beckoned to him,

and he longed to get back to its peace and calm, and once

he was there, he was his true self. In Cithi Patra, Tagore

(1897) remarks that nothing gave him greater happiness

than to be amidst children and the budding youth, and as

he once wrote to Prasatha Chowdhuri, he felt honoured in

the regal company of children and believed that his life's

last work and last joy lay in their midst, in the service

of his INFANT MASTERS.

10.10

SANTINIKETAN

Tagore's experiments in education have been

many-sided. Mani (1961) maintains that his experiment at

Visva-Bharati was an attempt to remove the poverty of the

intellectual life of the nation and there he tried to bring

about the perfection of mental life by a co-ordination of

cultural resources. Similarly, he was equally concerned

with the problem of material life of the nation. In solving

the problem, he put much trust in the co-ordination of a

nation's resources through the co-operation of the

independent powers.
Shattachargee (1961) contends that when Tagore was in England in 1913, he had bought a large house on the edge of the village of Surul, about two miles from Santiniketan. This house was now ready for use as the headquarters of the new village work. His son was trained, and his friends were eager to help. In 1921 an Englishman, L.K. Masbirt, came to India to help to develop the rural service department of Visva-Bharati. He was a man who had also had much experience in America. On February 6, 1922, only a few weeks after the formal opening of Visva-Bharati, the centre at Surul was formally opened with the name of 'Sriniketan'. Chandrasekharan (1951) explains that the word 'Sri' contains the idea of prosperity, of welfare, resulting from activity and growing into healthy beauty. The name 'Sriniketan', therefore, reveals Rabindranath's hopes and ideals. He wished to make the village centre 'A home of welfare and beauty'.

Lesney (1939) holds that Rabindranath started the Institute with a few boys and like the other departments of Visva-Bharati, Sriniketan had its small beginning. The basis of his Institute was laid on co-operation. It is depicted in Education (1942) that according to Tagore, his educational institution should not only instruct, but live; not only think, but also produce. He wanted his centre of culture, not only to be a centre of intellectual life of India, but also the centre of her economic life. In his scheme of things true education is to realize, at every step, how the training, and knowledge gained has organic connection with one's surroundings. Therefore, it was his
ambition that education to be true, should be in full touch with complete life, economical, intellectual, aesthetic, social and spiritual.

In Visva-Bharati Quarterly (1941) it is stated that in his Institute of Rural Reconstruction at Sriniketan, Tagore has tried successfully to give effect to his ideals of education and put them in practice. Rag (1944) recalls that he knew very well that interference with village life by ignorant persons would definitely do more harm than good.

Therefore, Tagore refused to begin any rural reconstruction work without the help of men who had some kind of scientific training.

Estborn (1949) expresses that in addition to the above, there will always be a few vacancies for students who wish to come and earn their board and lodging and in return, to learn self-support and be of service in the village. There will also be accommodation for a few research students in rural reconstruction work. Rural students will be able to attend lectures at Santiniketan on certain evenings in the week and a taste for art and literature was being maintained and developed by close contact with Santiniketan itself.

Nordia (1942) considers that at Sriniketan there is also a central boarding school for village boys to which they come when they are eight or nine years old and stay till they are fifteen or sixteen. Here, through the study of Bengal history and literature, the reading of biography and the discussion of current events, their outlook
Science and mathematics have their places. The boys go on with their gardening and they begin to learn some craft, such as weaving or pottery. They do not usually take any public examination.

According to Fillai (1917) the peculiar feature of the school is home reading which has been included in the scheme of education by Tagore. He introduced home reading since he was particular in widening the interests of young men and women in the events of the outside world even after they left school. A little magazine was also published which contained important items of news of general interest. It was very helpful in adult education in helping them to think to lead a healthy life and to be happy.

Industrial training forms an important part of Sriniketan. Older boys were given training in the Silpe-Shovana, the school of crafts, so that it might help them to earn their living in the future. Training in crafts was wider in its scope since a number of courses were thrown open to them in the carpentry section, etc. In all the above sections the aim has been to keep in touch with the art school and artist at Sartiniketan, and as far as possible to make all the productions beautiful in colour and design. The main object of the department of Industries has been to revive the local industries and introduce such others as might be profitable to the village people.

Under the auspices of the department of Training camps, the Institute has been holding a series of training camps every year. Sehanavias (1951) sums up that the village
welfare department has been acting as the Extension
Department for the Institute carrying all the activities
of the villages, and co-ordinating the work of the different
departments with what one aims at the rural reconstruction.

Creser (1914) recalls that the test of the success
of Tagore's experiment in rural reconstruction is the test
of real happiness that he has brought to the village round
Sriniketan. Rabindranath tried by his experiment of Suraô
[to bring to the villages not only more money but also greater
interests in life and hence more happiness and enjoyment.
The course of training that he offered at Sriniketan has
enabled the people to become independent and self reliant
without which there could be no real freedom or happiness
for the villagers. Therefore, he wants to make every village
in India a 'Sriniketan', 'A Home of welfare and Beauty'.

10.11 CONCLUSION

Russell (1937) brings home that Tagore made
major contributions in the field of education—contributions
that are significant not only for India but the whole world.
Gonner (1976) also ascertain's that in no area of life did
Tagore extend his energies and relational life more than
in education. Chakravarty (1961) contends that Tagore
discussed his educational theories and projects with such
internationally known educators, as Madam Montessori(1869-1952),
the pioneer in children's education in the West, and with John
Dewey (1899-1952). He himself acknowledges the fact of his
not being a trained teacher. In the words of Andrews (1923)
Tagore describes, "I never had any technical training and
had never passed any examinations. At first I was diffident
about myself and thought that the founding of a school was a task which was beyond my power. Later on I had one or two with me who had received academic training and they helped me in my work."

When Tagore started his new school at Sholapur, people were surprised at poet's venture in that direction. Mitra (1946) narrates that perhaps his greatest achievement is the founding of Santiniketan at Shantiniketan - a seat of learning and all that is best in Indian culture. This universality of Visva-Bharati has always been nearest to his heart. Saradaprabhu (1946) remarks that if he had done nothing else, his work at Santiniketan would alone have entitled him to a high place among the makers of modern India. Feeling a little bit embarrassed Tagore (1912) expresses in a Creative Unity, "This was never expected of me, who had spent the greater portion of his life in writing chiefly verses. Therefore, people naturally thought that as a school it might not be one of the best of its kind, but it was sure to be something outrageously new. In fact, not only his school, but also his ideas regarding education have rather proved to be outrageously new and his educational institution at Santiniketan has proved to be one of the best in the world.

"................"