CHAPTER-IV

CONCEPT OF MAN IN TAGORE AND BENDRE

Rasa is Janana (birth)

Virasa is Mararana (death)

Samarasa (Perfect harmony) alone is life.

-Bendre

The question 'What am I?' has intrigued thinkers and philosophers for centuries, each one trying to find the answer in his own way, struggling to find his identity, and in the process to decipher what the real meaning of man is. Since the time of the savage stage of his life, man has never been satisfied with only the fulfillment of biological and material needs like the animals. He has always wanted to know what he is, what the aim and purpose of his life are.

Whatever may be the true and real nature of his being, it is to be accepted that it is profound. According to P.T. Raju, "Man is a material being whose body acts on the material environment and is acted upon by it. He is also a living being with an internal purpose or immanent teleology and strives to maintain himself intact in his surroundings".1 (p.24)

Great prophets have realized that the 'I' that appears in man is the curse that obstructs him from knowing 'the self' from the 'not-self'. Every man seeking the Divine has to do away with this obstacle from his path to becoming the Supreme Man. On his path, man confronts many other obstructions too. Time and again he finds
himself perplexed and troubled but he has to persevere to find happiness. The will to persevere in spite of all distractions will strengthen man to achieve greatness. Through efforts and anguish, through meditation and resolves, man struggles to find a way out from the hold of 'I' to gain a larger view.

THE CONCEPT OF MAN IN TAGORE

"In the history of Man there began from that day in many forms, in many ways and many languages the answers to the one fundamental question, 'What am I?' In the true answer to this question lies his joy, his glory. He has understood that he is not simple, but hides a mystery of depth within himself, and that he will finally know himself only when the veils of the mystery have been pierced. Through centuries he has persisted in this attempt".2 (Tagore, p.195)

According to Tagore man's real nature is that which he has not yet realized. The real glory of Man is hidden within him, "The major aspects of the Supreme Man are yet unrevealed. The hope of revealing him extends continually to the future. The Supreme Man is to come. His chariot is on the move, but he has not yet arrived".3 (Tagore, p.196)

Even while accepting man as a materialistic, psychological, social being, Tagore draws our attention to the moral and spiritual aspects of man's nature. For this Radhakrishnan labelled Tagore as a Vendantin, a thinker who draws his inspiration from the Upanishads.4 (p.2)
In fact, Tagore was greatly influenced by Upanishadic thinkers, the saints and Bauls of Medieval age, "but he has felt in his heart the greatness of man, the immortality of his being and therefore his idea of man is his own." 5 (Kakoli Basak, p.61)

Tracing the principal feature of human personality Tagore felt that it was transcendental and that it would fulfill itself only by reaching to what lay beyond itself, to what should be and what might be. Man who is yet finite should search for the Infinite and the individual should search for the universal. He firmly believed that man was potentially greater than what he believed himself to be and that he was a link to the universal life. Human soul, the finite, has sought fulfillment through union with the universal soul or the divine, the infinite, and hence would be filled with bliss whenever such a union would take place. According to Tagore only a quarter of man is actually in the apparent transient world. The rest is in the form of immorality.6 (p.193)

Having had the profound vision of a poet, Tagore dwelt in a different dimension than the ordinary man. He had had a realization about the mysteries of man, nature and the vast universe. This realization of truth is found in all his writings.

As we know, it is the thought that distinguishes man from animal. As Descartes said 'I think, so I am' - Ironically this thought process has also confused man and he is eternally seeking answer to the troublesome question, 'What am I?' Only when he finds the correct answer to this question does man find his joy, his glory. This
is quest for the divine, is the meaning of his very being. Man has sought help from different religions, rituals and revolts alongside his natural instinct, for he knows that he is, and wants to be far greater than he externally appears to be. This greatness will integrate and not segregate him from himself or his individuality. Tagore never searched temples, images, and scriptures for the divine; he preferred to find the divine in man. To Tagore the religion of man is higher than any formal religious institution.

**The Religion of Man**

Unquestionably, Tagore’s broad vision could not be confined by or to any form, be it nation or religion. The limitations of different religions only made Tagore deliberate upon the true ‘religion’ of man. According to Tagore the Religion of Man is one that first explains his material existence and then evokes his essential human spirit to overcome material challenges of life and attain harmony. Rhythm and harmony are essential in man’s life and form the basis of human existence and this is what Tagore’s Religion of Man aims for. By religion, Tagore meant the natural foundation on which man builds his life. According to him, existing religions become rigid by following rituals, superstitions, and orthodoxy. These inadvertently breed narrowness and divert man from his real religion, which is to open his heart to Nature, that which is eternal and immense.

Real religion lies in the intrinsic nature of man; it exists at the root of human existence and thus flows through human life. The life of man is meant to realize this religion; to comprehend that his nature
is separate from his body and from this material world. To realize the higher form that he is capable of attaining should be his goal of life; this is what man should persevere for. To understand this religion, it is essential that man should first know what he is, only then he can easily identify what he wants; indeed it is easy to lose track of the goal, the ways can be misleading. Man cannot reach excellence through mere knowledge but he has to go through many trials to achieve perfection of being. He has to turn away from temptations and refrain from evil. His mind has to control passions. Thus by reducing all the impurities and disturbances around can Man see his own eternal truth and become Supreme Man. Undeniably, Tagore has given volumes of thought to these persistent questions and problems that have intrigued man since the time he became conscious of himself and of his life on this earth and his position in the universe.

Tagore rightly identifies the value and importance of life. To him the universe had existed since time immemorial but it was only when life started even as a cell that the existence gained some meaning. Then started the multiplication of cells and consequently came evolution. The creatures on their four legs and with the resultant limited vision, struggled for physical existence - fight for food and survival of the fittest. One creature persevered to cross the constraints of nature and the metamorphic first step was to stand on two legs. As a result, his vision widened and stretched over the vast expanse. Was it not only natural that his mind too should yearn to discover the beyond, the unknown and the unexpected? Satiating his
physical needs was easier for him with the use of two hands. He had more time left for himself. He could linger in his thoughts, in his spiritual domain, to dwell upon himself and the universe. He was free to unravel the mysteries of existence. His mind challenged him to go beyond, higher than himself, while remaining true to his basic nature.

“Tagore does not think Man to be imperfect but incomplete, which is due to the fact that real meaning of himself is not yet realized in his present state”.7 (Kakoli Basak, p.62) According to Tagore, the infinite exists though unrevealed in Man’s nature. The infinite is present potentially and therefore by nature man is good. Only the veil of ignorance has to be lifted so as to reveal the true nature of man. Tagore attributes to man a divinity, just as he states man is also in the Divine.

**The Supreme Man**

Apart from the initial duality in man – animal and spiritual - there exists a duality in his idealism. This is that of being individual and universal, of being finite and infinite simultaneously. With all this seemingly contradictory traits in him, man has to put in a lot of resolve to attain the status of Supreme Man. Taking encouragement from his first step, his initial challenge to nature, man can still go beyond his apparent strength and be the Supreme Man. For this he has to go through a process of evolution – from an individual to a World Man, to a Universal Man, to Supreme Man, a process that can be termed as spiritual Darwinism.
Everyman is born into a world that passes on to him all thoughts and achievements of all men irrespective of caste or colour, as also from beyond the boundaries of time and place. Thus everyman exists in communion with all men of all times. He is thus born a world-man. This world-man wants to retrieve the golden age of the past and all strivings show an implicit expectation of a golden age even in future. This golden age will bring along the Supreme Man whose attributes he cannot fathom. But definitely it is his aspiration to be that Supreme Man. “In his heart of hearts, man the animal reaches up to the World Man. There he no longer wants mere happiness but something greater. He wants magnificence. That is why of all animals, man alone is intemperate. He wants profusely and has to give profusely, for in him there is the Infinite Man”.8

(Rabindranath Tagore, p.197)

This Infinite Man is the universal Man who is present in every human being. Everyman aims at perfection. His ideals, values, aspirations make him one with all other men. By himself man feels incomplete, but where he is one with this perfect Man or universal Man he senses completeness. It makes him a part of the whole universe.

“He who is infinite in Man must be expressed in the finitude of human life, of human society. Man must translate this idea in his action. ... Not by turning up one’s eye-balls and sitting with closed breath and staying far away from Man do we gain this truth”.9

(Rabindranath Tagore, p.215)
To find the truth he has to acknowledge first this flow of universality, which relates him with the world flow and makes him realize that his soul is related to that of others and he is only a tiny part of Divinity. Man always nourishes the desire to be one with God. The yearning is intense in man but his distinctions, egoism, hold him back, and limit him to be finite.

Tagore believed in the oneness of soul which to him is eternal and a universal reality. It is a fundamental unity in the individual soul (Atma) and universal soul (Paramatma) that delivers man from the contradiction and distinctions of life. The One in man becomes God.

Paradoxically, "Man as a collective is not conscious of his distinctiveness, but mSSan as Man is a unique being".¹⁰ (N. K. Reddy, p.5) Everyman has his own individuality, which is his main force in this world. There is no one else like him. The moment he loses his individuality he becomes a non-entity. "The contradictions of human life provoke the quest for truth. Man is a finite-infinite being. He combines in himself spirit and nature. He is earth’s child but heaven’s heir".¹¹ (S. Radhakrishna, p.5)

Tagore takes into account the polarity of human existence; "At one pole of my being I am one with stocks and stones. There I have to acknowledge the rule of universal law. That is where the foundation of my existence lies, deep down the below. Its strength lies in its being held firm in the clasp of the comprehensive world, and in the fullness of its community with all things.
But at the other pole of my being I am separate from all. There I have broken through the cordon of equality and stand alone as an individual. I am absolutely unique, I am I, I am incomparable"12 (Tagore, p.306)

Thus Tagore’s approach to human existence and to the problem faced by man is determined by the full consciousness of the conflicts that will arise by man’s spiritual life. He acknowledges an initial dualism in man. “There is a basic duality in Man’s being. In the aspect of Man that belongs to animal life, the satisfaction of his necessities is adequate to his happiness”.13 (Rabindranath Tagore, p.197).

“He has observed the deeper endeavour of his own heart and felt that he is not exclusively an individual. He is also one in spirit with the universal Man, under whose inspiration the individual engages in expressing his ultimate truth through crossing nature’s limitations. To these expressions he gives the name of the true, the good, the beautiful, not only from the point of view of the preservation and enrichment of society, but from the completeness of his own self”.14 (Tagore, p.194).

Tagore believes in the continuing perfection of individuals till the ideal is attained. The soul has to pass through many lives before the goal is reached. “Thou hast made me endless, such is thy pleasure. This frail vessel thou emptiest again and again, and fillest it ever with fresh life”.15 (Gitanjali, No.1, p.43)
Man and the Divine

Man is the centre of Tagore's thoughts. His Man is boundless but at the same time within bounds just as he is infinite and also finite. He believes that there is essential identity of being between Man, Nature and God.

In the process of tracing the divinity in man, Tagore assesses the proper relationship between man and God. God is the perfect form, the absolute ideal. He is the perfect man; through the realization of absolute ideal in life man becomes divine in life. This union of finite life with the infinite explains the relation between man and God. Man experiences this infiniteness through his sense of unity with God. Man is an expression of God representing the creative spirit. The Creator has revealed Himself not only through human beings but also through the whole creation. Therefore man gets the glimpse of God in all objects of Nature and in every being. Thus when man says, 'I am He' it is not prodigious egoism. It is not the exaggeration of a small isolated self, but the expression of great soul, which includes all. "The word ‘Soham’ carries assurance of the truth of a grand unity which waits to be realized and justified by the individual".16 (Tagore, p.212).

Quoting Atharvaveda, Tagore says – "He who is wise knows Man to be greater than he appears to be. They, who know the Great in Man, know the Supreme Being himself." 17 (Tagore, p.214)
As said in Atharvaveda, man is spiritually much more than his apparent self. This is his surplus. In a very subtle and expressive example Tagore has explained the meaning of this surplus, where he equates surplus to the life-giving homogenous atmosphere of the earth, and relates man to the earth.¹⁸ (Tagore, p.215) The beauty, the glory, the wealth and even the life of earth are due to the atmosphere. In the same manner the glory, the truth and supremacy in man comes from his infinite surplus.

“What you are, you do not see, what you see is your shadow”.¹⁹ (Stray Birds, V-18, p.399)

**Universality of Man**

Not surprisingly, Tagore was always intrigued by the nature of man and he contemplated incessantly on it. As his theory of man evolved Tagore attributes man with dualism. At one end man is part and parcel of Nature bound by natural laws, which are universal. At the other end man is an individual entity, unique, different from all creations. This Universal Man dwells in the inmost part of all individuals. “Age follows age in human history and man continues in his ceaseless search, not for the satisfaction of his material needs, but in order to strive with all his might for revelation of the Universal Man in the world of men, to rescue his even inmost truth from the crude obstacles set up by himself. That is the Truth which is greater than all his accumulated wealth greater than all his achievements, greater than all his traditional beliefs and knows no death or decay”.²⁰
Thus these two opposite characteristics find themselves together in the nature of man.

However, in spite of having universal characteristics each man is different from the other. This is because a man is just not body and mind; he has something more which as we know, Tagore terms as 'surplus'. This surplus helps him to feel one with the universe, one with God. This surplus also makes each person stand out from the others because of the 'Personal Man' in him. According to Tagore the 'Personal Man' satisfies the inner personality characterized by love, freedom and creative power. The Personal Man determines relations with the world of reality through his own intrinsic relationship to the world. It is the emotional force of man that makes the world real and appealing.

According to Tagore, man distinguishes himself from animal because of his ideals; and by his search for a need that is neither materialistic nor indispensable for his physical life. This is a need of his universal self. This universal self is always seeking perfection and can be got not by external commands and prohibitions, but in sanctifying of the heart.

With a very simple example, Tagore illuminates this idea of oneness of man with the universe and unravels the incomprehensibility of that idea, "The human body is a universe inhabited by millions of cells. Each of them is in tune with its own individual life and yet with a deep direction towards a mystery of
unity... though the complete and direct knowledge of the whole body would surely be beyond the power of those cells".  

Tagore emphasises that man is not just an individual but that he is also universal. Man has an ideal of perfection. This ideal of perfection is present in every human being and he has universality within himself. His ideals and values make him one with all other men. Man feels that he is incomplete by himself, but when he is one with this Perfect Man or Universal Man he senses completeness.

Thus the universality of man raises him above laws of society. Then, there remains no difference among human beings. The social, educational, economic and political conditions cannot differentiate the inherent unity of all men. Man is part of the whole universe. He cannot be true unless he discovers this flow of universality, which is common to all and by which he is related to world flow.

Tagore says – "... Man's individuality is not his highest truth; there is that in him which is universal. If he were made to live in a world where his own self was the only factor to consider, then that would be the worst prison imaginable to him, for man's deepest joy is in growing greater and greater by more and more union with the All".  

The universality of man has taken two forms. At one place, man realizes his unity with all human beings by his sense of unity with the flow of humanity and at other place he feels himself to be a point of the whole universe by the sense of unity with the world flow.
Individual man is limited by time and place. But he is part of eternal time. In ‘Gitanjali’82, Tagore says –

“Time is endless in thy hands, my lord
There is none to count thy minutes...
At the end of the day I hasten
in fear lest thy gate be shut;
but I find that yet there is time.23

(Gitanjali No.82,p.71)

Evolution

The continuous spiritual advancement in man is a certain kind of evolution, be it over centuries or in an individual life. According to Tagore each man is endowed with endless opportunities to improve himself in a variety of ways.

Tagore says – “When the course of evolution advanced to the stage of Man, its character changed, it shifted its emphasis mainly from the body, to the mind”.24 (Tagore, p.193) “The aspect of Man which has surpassed the animal grows with its ideal”.25 (Tagore, p.193)

Tagore firmly believed in the theory of evolution. He agrees that the higher species of life have developed out of the lower forms. Man is a gradual product, evolved out of Nature’s machinery. The perfection of Man is concerned however with the passage of time in Tagore. Centuries follow in perfecting a wild flower says the poet in Gitanjali.
The course of evolution in the opinion of the poet has changed in two ways. The struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest have had their own influence on the organic life of man in the past. Firstly, because of changing influences emphasis is on the supra physical characters of man's personality. Secondly the evolution of man has made rapid strides in its long course through the passage of time when compared to other species of creation.

"Evening" a poem of Tagore, traces the feeling of earth at various stages of evolution. The aspiration of Mother Earth for a union with the highest seems pure and powerful. The present evolutionary stage of man cannot however be considered as absolute. There are still many unknown stages and levels in the process of the organic and the inorganic strides towards perfection. The inner reaction of the Earth towards the various phases of evolution has been well explained in this poem. The emphasis is upon the mystic and divine element.

To sum up, Tagore places man on a high pedestal and firmly believes that man can achieve Divinity, and that he can merge with the Divine. For this man has to follow a certain religion that distinguishes him from other creatures. He has just to acknowledge the divine within him. This quest, for attainment of a higher level is universal, it is inborn in man. It is only confusion about his source of happiness that delays man from attaining divinity. The religion of man prescribed by Tagore will help man to become a Supreme Man. He will evolve slowly to the higher level. This Supreme Man will bear universal characteristics. However, to become supreme, man has to retain his
own individuality in order to avoid being a nonentity. Tagore thus puts forth clearly with simple examples, the complex theory of the concept of man, with the ideas of dualism, universality and individualism and spiritual Darwinism.

THE CONCEPT OF MAN IN BENDRE

That Bendre had realized man as an integral presence in the overall Infinite is clearly evident through his writings. His works ‘Sahityada Virat Parva’ and ‘Navmanav Darshan’ speak of the poet’s philosophy of life. Deeply indebted to the Upanishads and the teachings of Aurobindo; as also from his personal experiences, Bendre speaks of the values that enable man to achieve communion with the Divine in everyday life. In his writings he has offered the ways and means of attaining the ultimate goal of human life – Divinity.

In stark opposition to Tagore’s aristocratic inheritance Bendre had a lower middle-class upbringing. Where Tagore had seen life in all its finery, Bendre found and witnessed stark realities of life at home and all around him. He saw man struggling for the basic needs of life. It speaks volumes of the poet’s stature to see that concept of man garnered by him is of a very high being – a supreme being. Through the rawness of life Bendre had formed a refined ideal of man, which we have to gather from his writings.

Once when Prof. V.K.Gokak asked Bendre about his attitude towards life, he had answered without hesitation "all that I meant to do was to live." Prof Gokak continues:" It seems that he had pondered
over it long since, for in a playlet in his early days occurs the sentence
"To be is the goal". This reply represents a peculiar type of temperament. To live is all; to dream, suffer, hope, storm the four stages of consciousness, ransack the universe for knowledge and experience, and so to live on till all be well and one – is that not a royal ambition?"26 (Gokak, p.9)

Right from his childhood, under the influence of his grandmother and mother Bendre was well acquainted with the Bhajans of saints, an influence that remained with him throughout his life. He greatly venerated the saintly figures, overawed by their enlightened views. To him these saints made the path to attain divinity easier for the common man. He also considered some his contemporaries as 'Gurus'. Above all it was faith in God instilled by mother that was never shaken. His faith remained absolute, with no room for any doubt. It was this staunch faith that helped him to face all adversities in life with fortitude and yet remain optimistic about divine will.

Bendre was a thorough Indian at heart and in thought. Having imbibed the essence of Vedas and Upanishads, he called himself a 'Vedic poet' and his poetry 'Vedic poetry'. Among the many bases that form his poetry, spirituality is prominent. This spirituality was a result of the strong Indian tradition of Rishis (seers). Thus understanding Bendre is to understand the varied forces, apart from his mother, behind him like, Aurobindo, Tagore, scriptures, mystics, folklore and even the street singers.
Through his previously mentioned two works 'Sahityada Virat Parva' and "Navamanav Darshan' we can expound Bendre's theory of evolution. For Bendre, man had to go through three stages- from 'Vanya' (Bestiality) to 'Vana' (Transitory stage) and then to 'Nava' (Divine-Navamanav) to attain divinity. Since the ancient times in India, the forest (nature) has been the sanctuary of the Rishis, a place where the soul of man would be in communion with the soul of the world. As Tagore says, our civilization has its roots in forest. Sri. Aurobindo translates 'vana (forest) as that delight'. According to Bendre the meaning of word 'vana' is a means to achieve happiness.27 (p. 7) Bendre plays with the words 'vana' and 'nava'. 'Nava' not only signifies newness but also represents very important number 9 in Indian philosophy and also in Bendre's philosophy. According to Bendre it signifies a rejuvenated man radiant by his capacity to renew himself constantly.28 (p.7)

Bendre's article 'Navam Dasham' (Nine, Ten) deals with the negative aspects (vanya stage) of man's personality, which act as hurdles in the path of self-realization. He identifies six foes like desire, anger, jealousy etc. and seven vices like gambling, eating meat, drinking, promiscuity etc and eight types of conceits and says that in order to evolve as 'navamanav' one has to overcome all these obstacles.29 (p.11) These obstacles are part of evil in various forms in the world that man encounters in his everyday life. Life itself is a manifestation of imperfection in this world. The very goal of life is to
move from imperfection to perfection, from finite to infinite. Thus to be ‘Navamanav’ is to realize one’s life in the Infinite.

In the poem “Girishikhar” Bendre talks about the man who is inspired by the mesmerizing, divine beauty of nature. He aspires to raise himself to a higher level, which will be closer to the divinity in nature. Naturally he is attracted towards the high summits (Girishikhar), which are symbols of the spiritual progress and sublimity.

According to Bendre everyman holds divinity within himself. However, it is only a Guru who can awaken this dormant aspect. A Guru makes man realize his potentialities and gradually raise him to a higher level of self-consciousness (Vana stage). Bendre says it is necessary that ‘Navamanav’ should tread this path under the guidance of Guru.30 (p.11)

To attain divinity Bendre feels that man’s goal should be to establish harmony and connectivity with everything around him. Where ‘Satva (essence), tatva (doctrine) & ‘Swatva’ (self identity) combine together as one then we have the ‘Nava Manava’. The person who has achieved the balance of these three is Guru and being in the proximity to this Guru should be the aim of a disciple. Ideal meeting place for the Guru and the disciple is the forest, which is the symbol of an ideal state of mind.31 (p. 7)

On the way to the sublimity, man is frequently caught in dilemma. To be or not to be is always a persistent doubt. Bendre identifies these distractions and temptations coming from all
directions, like the six foes, seven vices and eight conceits. It is only the Guru who steadies the disciple at such times away from these distractions leading him to a higher level.\textsuperscript{32} (p.10)

'Navamanav' the new man can experience the freedom of consciousness; can unite with all only when he is in harmony with Nature and that too with the help of a Guru. Only a Guru who has already experienced the bliss of higher level is able to make his disciple realize his full potential and encourage him time and again to proceed on the path of self – realization.\textsuperscript{33} (p.10) Living in the joy of sensory world, man is ignorant about the bliss beyond. It is only the Guru who can make him aware of real happiness.\textsuperscript{34} (p. 10)

Modern civilization has made man a slave of money. This struggle is usually fruitless and endless, taking man away from all the essence of life. Only when man achieves a right attitude towards money and desire will he be able to achieve a constant state of contentment.\textsuperscript{35} (p.8) Man has a lot to comprehend, to assimilate and to achieve and only a short time, a span of one life, has been allotted to him.

Being an ardent follower of Sri Aurobindo he believed in Aurobindo's theory of 'Spiritual Darwinism'. Bendre trusted in the ingenuity of man, wherein man would constantly evolve himself in order to reach sublimity and divinity towards of the end of his life. Spiritual Darwinism puts forward the concept that man is born to evolve from littleness to greatness or divinity.
Sri Aurobindo's poems speak of spiritual bearings that chart a new course for man, heralding the emergence of a new species of superman. He believes that man's travails, sufferings and death have a purpose in the scheme of evolution of human consciousness. Man is a transitional being constantly driven by an impulse to exceed himself and evolve towards divine consciousness, harmony and joy. Aurobindo points out rich potentialities in man beyond normal imagination. Aurobindo describes the transcendence of man as the consummation of earthly evolution and emergence of supramental race on earth.

Aurobindo's thoughts greatly influenced Bendre whose idea of man is expressed in nutshell in the poem, “Parvati Saluhu” in Aralu Maralu. In this poem Bendre speaks about the basic essential qualities that every man should have and persevere for. He identifies them as purity, strength, belief in divinity & faith. According to him, these qualities give meaning to man's life which otherwise would have been merely an existence. Bendre's concept of man rests on these qualities that will help man achieve harmony, happiness, largesse & finally divinity.

Joy is birth
Sorrow is death
But their harmony is life

In three simple lines Bendre summarizes the importance of the first quality mentioned - Harmony (Consonance), that needs to be achieved for progress towards divinity. According to D.R. Nagaraj,
Bendre first expounded his theory of harmony in the poem ‘Nrityayajna’.

Bendre believes that to feel oneness with nature, to have no discord but only a feeling of harmony is the truth that every man should attain. To strengthen this idea Bendre quotes Aurobindo’s ‘Savitri’

Awakened to the
Meaning of my heart
That to feel love and
Oneness is to live
And thus the magic of
Our golden change
Is all the truth I know
Or seek, O sage.36

(Savitri)

Man’s nature is bi-polar. At one end is divinity and the other is bestiality. When the beast has an upper hand there is bound to be discord. Only when man frees himself from the pull of bestiality does he go towards the pole of divinity. Bendre discusses this in the poem “Yaksha Yakshi”.

Proximity to divine brings about peace and harmony. Thus distancing oneself from discord man also distances himself from unhappiness. He is now on the path of happiness. However, man values happiness only after experiencing pain. The proof comes from Bendre’s personal life where he had to bear insurmountable grief.
the death of his children, especially his grown up son. Hardship was never far away from Bendre, still he always celebrated life and radiated happiness. To him happiness had to be the essence of life.

He wholeheartedly followed the precepts of Upanishads where it is stated that the universe is filled with joy. Nature, a medium for divine bliss, exudes this divine happiness. The wind, river, plants, soil, daylight, sky- symbolize different expressions of happiness. To him all forms of life on this earth or in this universe were contributing their share to the divine happiness. This happiness should resonate in the universe and as also in the soul of man.

Though Nature is in a continuous process of obliterating pain, pain is inevitable in life. Only on acceptance of that fact, does pain become bearable and can there be harmony. Without pain it would be difficult to understand what happiness is. Further, it is only a person, who is in harmony with the eternal joy pervading this universe, can find happiness. Harmony here attains a wider meaning. Beyond harmony between man and man, it also suggests complete surrender to the divine force where even everyday chores are considered as divine will.

**Divinity**

After having achieved happiness through harmony and munificence the step towards divinity is but a short one. According to Bendre this world is the creation of God of which man is an integral part along with the birds and beasts. What differentiates man from other creatures is his awareness and faith in the Divine.
In the poem “Mahaprasthana” Bendre's idea of evolution, where the matter through the medium of man attains divinity over period of time, finds expression. This theme is found again in detail in another of his poem “Atmaprajne” where he goes further and finds that in the end soul-consciousness and cosmic-consciousness are one and the same.

Bendre concentrated more on progress towards divinity of an individual who ultimately constitutes the society. Though born at a time when the society was in turbulence, Bendre did not think of elevation for society as a whole. To him each individual of the society contributed to its progress, which consequently would lead to the elevation of society. As a firm believer in Aurobindo’s Spiritual Darwinism, he felt man had the potential -spiritual & biological - to become a superman. To Bendre the relation between individual and community is harmonious. As he says “Each individual or every being is unique. It is only through being unique every being finds similarity. At the same time there exists oneness among them”. 37 (qtd in Amur, p.163). Individual evolution would naturally bring about an evolution on the community level too. In his “Rudra Veena” Bendre finds society in a state of chaos, which is, but an intermittent stage in the evolution of humanity.

Men and women groan

Laboring and bemoan

The fate that will be their own

In coming days.
Loath are they to change
But a new life will range.
Abroad and sure estrange
Them from their ways.\textsuperscript{38}

\textit{(Tr. Gokak, p. 31)}

To express and communicate his idea of Spiritual Darwinism Bendre uses different symbols. The poem “Belagu” (The Dawn) symbolizes man’s progress from darkness to light. The moment of sunrise is like the moment of enlightenment when all things become clear and all differences melt away, like matter and spirit, man and divine. This is the ultimate goal of man’s life that Nature shows through her suggestive ways, but only if man is in a state of awareness, can he grasp these subtle suggestions.

This enlightenment brings an enlarged view of life, full of love and bliss. Just as man connects with the divine he connects with every other being for he sees divinity everywhere and in everything. This incomparable joy is expressed in his “Kuniyonu ba” (A song of Dance). The poem is about joy unbound. It expresses the ideal dream of Bendre and his philosophy of life.

**The New Man**

Eventually comes the New Man, a man who is in harmony with nature and other men around him. A man who has a munificent vision that encompasses the whole universe as one. Nothing is different; there is a oneness in everything. Man has elevated himself from the lowest rung to become a Vishva Manav
In “Sahasratanti Niswanadante” (The harp with a thousand strings), Bendre hails the birth of new world.

Light and delight are about to rain
Earth's address will stream with milk again
At the down pour of earths monsoons.
And to the chanting of Love's tunes.
Heaven dissolves in an ambrosial shower.
The nooks and crannies of earth are afower
'T is the birth of a new world, a new power.39

(Tr.Gokak, p.83)

Conclusion

Vishva Manav emerges as the ideal man in the vision of these two poets. Being humanists, naturally the progress of man was their prime concern and their thoughts revolved around him. Tagore has developed his own Religion of man, while Bendre closely follows Aurobindo’s spiritual Darwinism. The emergence of the New Man who exudes happiness, harmony, munificence and universality becomes a realizable possibility for every human being, in their view. Their vision of life and man rests on liberal humanism and universality. The perceptions of life and the universe are associated with the consciousness of man. This human consciousness is very crucial in the identification of the universe.

In their writings there is a unique image of man's individuality. Man is bi-polar; there is a duality in him. The urge for submission to
the Divine is a distinct quality of man. The relationship of God, man and the universe in this context becomes meaningful 'It is not only man who is in search of God, but God too is in search of man'. Tagore and Bendre both show an unshakeable faith in man's potentiality to raise himself to a higher level.

REFERENCES:
3) Ibid., p.196.
7) Kakoli Basak, op.cit., p.62.
11) S. Radhakrishna, op.cit., p.5.


25) Ibid.


28) Ibid.
29) Ibid., p. 11.

30) Ibid.

31) Ibid., p. 7.

32) Ibid., p. 10.

33) Ibid.

34) Ibid.

35) Ibid., p. 8.


39) Ibid., p. 83.