

Review article:

Co-curricular activities in Rabindranath Tagore's Visva-Bharati

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Abstract: *Co-curricular activities in educational sphere create the area of interest to do this research, like: Co-curricular activities stimulate playing, acting, singing, recitation, speaking and narrating in students. Activities like participation in game debates, music, drama, etc., help in achieving overall functioning of education. Rabindranath Tagore felt that it enables the students to express themselves freely through debates. Games and Sports help to be fit and energetic to the child. Co-curricular activities help to develop the spirit of healthy competition. These activities guide students how to organize and present an activity, how to develop skills, how to co-operate and co-ordinate in different situations-all these helps in leadership qualities. It provides the avenues of socialization, self-identification and self-assessment when the child comes in contact with organizers, fellow participants, teachers, and people outside the school during cultural activity. It inculcate the values to respects other's view and feeling and makes you perfect in decision making. It also develops a sense of belongingness and provides motivation for learning. So, to develop the values like physical, psychological, ethical, academic, civic, social, aesthetic, cultural recreational and disciplinary values among students Researcher is highly interested to do this research.*

Keywords: *Co-curricular activities, socialization, self-identification and self-assessment.*

Preamble:

Co-curricular activities in educational sphere create the area of interest to do this research, like: Co-curricular activities stimulate playing, acting, singing, recitation, speaking and narrating in students. Activities like participation in game debates, music, drama, etc., help in achieving overall functioning of education. Rabindranath Tagore felt that it enables the students to express themselves freely through debates. Games and Sports help to be fit and energetic to the child. Co-curricular activities help to develop the spirit of healthy competition. These activities guide students how to organize and present an activity, how to develop skills, how to co-operate and co-ordinate in different situations-all these helps in leadership qualities. It provides the avenues of socialization, self-identification and self-assessment when the child comes in contact with organizers, fellow participants, teachers, and people outside the school during cultural activity. It inculcate the values to respects other's view and feeling and makes you perfect in decision making. It also develops a sense of belongingness and provides motivation for learning. So, to develop the values like physical, psychological, ethical, academic, civic, social, aesthetic, cultural recreational and disciplinary values among students Researcher is highly interested to do this research.

Objectives:

1. To find out the Co-curricular activities in Rabindranath Tagore's thoughts and works.

2. To elaborate the importance of Co-curricular activities in all-round development of the children.

Methodology:

It is completely based on literature review based study.

A few Social educationists (Pal, 1982) have studied Tagore's childhood related to co-curricular activities in Jorasanko were started in the form of extra-curricular activities like: dawn-class of kusti under the supervision of Hira Singh, bath in ice water under the instruction of Debendranath Tagore etc. Pal (1982)'s writing in his book "*RabiJibani*" pointed out lot of information related to co-curricular activities in Visva-Bharati, and also in the year 1901, he wrote a letter to Tripura Maharaja about the establishment of Santiniketan Ashrama mentioning the co-curricular activities like gymnastic, wrestling etc. parallel with ashram education. At the initiation of the development of Santiniketan there were many examples of co-curricular activities were found here e.g. In presence of wrestling teacher Brahmabandhab Upadhyay, cricket teacher Rebachand, carpenter teacher Japanese Kusumoto, Judo teacher Nekujo Takagagi (1929) dance teacher Buddhimantra Singh (joined in 1919), booming in ashrama at 5-o'clock by students after walk-up, dhyana/upasana after bath at morning, after that they took foods and start learning before soil digging, gym in evening etc.

Mukhopadhyay in his book "*Rabindra Jiboni*" focus that the concept of formal education system was rejected to Tagore and play was an important

free-agent for ideal education. In this way education system of Tagore is nourished being Nature oriented idealist concept.

Mitra (2010)'s study focuses on the co-curriculum view of Tagore in "*Game in relevance of Rabindranath philosophy*" like Tagore probably the first person who engaged the Judo in education included being a part of co-curricular activities and Sanosoyan was came at Santiniketan on 1905 to teach Judo to the student and as a result in year 1910 mass drill was started as mandatory for all the student.

Mandal (2010) in his recent study "*Gymnastics and game in Rabindranath's Santiniketan and Sriniketan*" highlighted some deep information like During the establishment of Visva-Bharati on 1921 play & gym were more emphasized in Patha Bhavana and Vidya Bhavana. On 1922 Tagore extended his co-curricular thought being a part of total education system in Visva-Bharat and established Sriniketan to connect the neighbor rural reconstruction. With the ticking of time Sriniketan was developed as a co-curricular center for : fire control training, nourishing of music & songs, Brati Balaka & Brati Balika troops, social service based on medical hospitality, labour-giving by the rural-folk, training of women self protection game like *chorakhela*, *lathikhala*, *grihadip/Sahayika*/girl-guide (1923). About the importance of play as a part of co-curricular activities in general education Tagore implied his view on 1938 during the conference on 'Basic National Education' syllabus publication -'the place of play is high in education' Pal, Rath & Roy (2014)'s exclusive studies on "*Yoga Education at a glance*" outlines the Tagore's Ashramic activities (like digging the soil, horticulture, gym, music, art, craft), upasana as a part of yoga education and parallel of formal curriculum.

Kaibarta and Pal (2014) in there article "*Yoga, Maharshi and Gurudeva*" framed the historical list of upasana which is also the part of co-curricular activities in Tagore's Visva-Bharati.

Bhattacharjee (Sep.2014) in her article "Relevance of Tagore's philosophy of education in postmodern era-a conceptual analysis" described the post modern curriculum and responsibilities vis-a-vis participate of students for social reconstruction.

Majumdar (November 2009) in his article "Education as Empowerment Twins in Search of an Alternative Education" elaborate the obligatory co-curricular activity for every student in Patha Bhavana of Visva-Bharati to take lessons in fine arts , music, painting and craft.

Banerjee (November, 2009) in her article "Pedagogy in Patha-bhavana School of Tagore's Santiniketan" describe the co-curricular activities of Patha Bhavana as a part of total education like Sammilani, Sahitya Sabha Dan Sangraha (Collection of donation), GramParidarshan(Visit to village), VanaBhojana (Annual Picnic), Excursion etc.

Singh and Rawat (August 2013) in their article "*Rabindranath Tagore's Contribution In Education* "explained the following lines to elucidated the co-curricular activities of Tagore's educational thought: "Rural reconstruction, village education, craft-training, agricultural research and training and was named Sriniketan. Tagore ' s practical aspect of education also includes a description organization of daily activities in which freedom, games and sports, art, and entertainments at night are emphasized. Tagore's organization of curriculum was not narrowed down to only textbook learning, but it provided a fullness of experience for children from multiple sources"

Gnanakan (2007) in his book "Learning in an Integrated Environment" explained the importance of co-curricular activities through the following lines: "Without music and the fine arts, Tagore warned that a nation lacks its highest means of national self-expression and the people remain inarticulate. Tagore was one of the first to bring together different forms of traditional Indian dance. He helped revive folk dances, introduced dance forms from other parts of India, and also supported modern dance forms and music".

Biswas & Deka (April, 2014) in their article "*Educational Philosophy Of Rabindranath Tagore And Paulo Freire: An Exposition*" described the importance of co-curricular activities like: "Tagore interpreted the curriculum not only in terms of some subjects but also in some activities. He includes extra-curricular activities to build all the essential faculties of the children. Tagore was not believed in sanctity of static curriculum system".

Rahman and Panda (2011) explained the co-curricular activities in Tagore's Visva-bharati in their article "Tagore's Distance Education Model:Implemented at the Lok-Siksha Samsad in 'Shantiniketan' or 'abode of peace'."like "The Brati Balakas also helps in the organization of anti-malaria and village sanitation campaigns. Another important activity of the department was training camps for social service workers. The prescribed syllabus included camp-life and home-craft. Elementary Agriculture and Handicrafts, scouting, cooperation, sanitation, hygiene and first aid, and also recreational activities like games, drama, singing and story-telling."

Suri (2010) in his edited volumn "India Perspectives" he highlighted Tagore's view of co-curricular activities not only for male, rather he also implied His educational mission for women also like: "extra-curricular activities such as the 1910 drama Lakshmir Puja, which was staged and performed by female students. Tagore brought in dance teachers from Benares to train the girls and when they left, he personally taught them."

Discussion:

Tagore felt that Co-curricular activities are the true and practical experiences received by students in Visva-Bharati. The theoretical knowledge of formal education gets strengthened when a related co-curricular activity is organized related to the content taught in the four-wall classroom. Intellectual aspects of students' personality are exclusively accomplished by Classroom, while spiritual growth, physical growth, moral values, aesthetic development, character building, creativity etc. are maintained by co-curricular activities. Presently we realize that, to develop speech fluency, extempore expressions, co-ordination, adjustment etc. among students.

Rabindranath Tagore is India's first Nobel laureate but started to leave school from his 13 years age. From his childhood in Jorasanko co-curricular activities were stated in form of extra-curricular activities like: dawn-class of kusti under the supervision of *Hira Singh*, bath in ice water under the instruction of Debendranath etc. The concept of formal education system was rejected to him and play was an important free-agent for ideal education. In this way education system of Tagore is nourished being Nature oriented idealist concept. In his writings like: 'Dakghar', 'jibansriti', 'falguni', 'Visva-Bharati', 'Ashram rup o bikasj', 'prasna'; where he used the Upanishad line 'atmyanang sidhhi', the term 'khela'/play. In 1901 he wrote a letter to Tripura Maharaja about the establishment of Santiniketan Ashrama and mentioned about the co-curricular like gymnastic parallel with ashram education. At the initiation of the development of Santiniketan there are many examples of co-curricular activities were found here for example: presence of wrestling teacher Brahmabandhab Upadhyay, cricket teacher Rebachand, carpenter teacher Japanese Kusumoto, Judo teacher Nekujo Takagagi (1929) dance teacher Buddhimantra Singh (joined in 1919), booming in ashrama at 5-o'clock by students after walk-up, dhyana/upasana after bath at morning, after that they took foods and start learning before soil digging, gym in evening etc. Tagore probably the first person who engaged the Judo in education sphere being a part of co-curricular and Sasoyan was came at Santiniketan on 1905 to teach it and as a result in 1910 mass drill gym as stated (Mitra, 2010). During the establishment of Visva-Bharati on 1921 play & gym were more emphasized in Patha Bhavana and Vidya Bhavana. On 1922 Tagore extended his co-curricular thought being a part of total education system in Visva-Bharat and established Sriniketan to connect the neighbor rural reconstruction. With the ticking of time Sriniketan was developed as a co-curricular center for : fire control training, nourishing of music & songs, Brati Balaka & Brati Balika troops, social service based on medical hospitality, labour-giving by the rural-folk, training of women self protection game like *chorakhela*, *lathikhala*, *grihadip/Sahayika*/girl-guide (1923). About the magnitude of play as a part

of co-curricular activities in general education Tagore implied his view on 1938 during the conference on 'Basic National Education' syllabus publication –'the place of play is high in education' (Mandal, 2010).

Co-curricular activities in Visva-Bharati help in the development of a range of domains of student's mind and their personality like: intellectual development, emotional development, social development, moral development, aesthetic development, enthusiasm, energetic, creativity, and positive thought's inking. Co-curricular activities stimulate playing, acting, singing, recitation, speaking and narrating in students. TagCo-curricular activities like participation in game debates, music, drama, etc., help in achieving overall functioning of education. It develops the values like physical, psychological, academic, civic, social, aesthetic, ethical, cultural recreational and disciplinary values. It enables the students to state themselves freely through debates. It helps to expand the spirit of healthy competition and guide students how to organize and present an activity, how to co-operate, how to develop skills, and co-ordinate in different situations-all these helps in leadership qualities. It provides the avenues of socialization, self-identification and self-assessment when the child comes in contact with organizers, teachers, fellow participants, and people outside the school during cultural activity.

Visva-Bharati is sole in the method that the thought of this university grew out of a school 'Ashram Vidyalaya' founded by Rabindranath Tagore. Visva-Bharati is the sign of Tagore's ideas of education and co-curricular. Patha-Bhavana is partially a residential co-educational school for elementary and secondary education, preparing students for the School Certificate Examination of Visva-Bharati. Its exclusive facial appearance is open-air classes, personal contact between teachers and the taught, training in self-government. Besides curricular presentation stress is given on co-curricular activities aiming to open up a child's personality through social, literary, artistic, musical and a variety of other activities. In planning and implementation of these varied aspects of co-curricular activities, Asrama Sammilani, a student council plays a fundamental position. There are numerous branches of the Asram Sammilani and in each wing a teacher acts as an Adviser or Guide. All these activities like weekly Sahitya Sabha, Dan Sangraha, Gram Paridarshan, Vana Bhojana (Annual Picnic), Excursion etc. are performed with eagerness. Furthermore in Vinaya Bhavana artistic handicraft, wood work, green plantation, cultural assembly (sahitya sabha), sports & games (Badminton, Basketball, Cricket, Gymnastics, Outdoor Adventure, Skipping, Swimming, Table Tennis, Volleyball), Uniformed groups (National Cadet Corps, *National Service Scheme (NSS)*, Malay dance, Manipuri dance, Indian dance, Bharat Natyam, drama, Guitar Ensemble), societies (

environment, drama, cultural, gardening), Story writing competition, Essay writing competition, Art craft (Batik, Butik work), Recitation competition, Wall magazine decoration, Writes ups for school magazine, Folk songs, Folk dance, Flower show, School decoration, Sculpture making, Fancy dress competition, Preparation of chart & models, Album making, Photography, clay modeling, Toy making, Soap making, Organization exhibitions (artistic handicraft items exhibition in Vinaya Bhavana, Maghmela in Sriniketan), Celebration of festival (fresher's welcome, farewell, *Anandamela*, Rabindra Saptaho, Barshamangal, Briksharopan), Leather work, Rangoli, Weaving, Mass prayer, Morning assembly, excursions & trips to place of geographical, historical, economic or cultural interest, social service in neighborhood by Rural Development Department, Village Survey -these all are beneficial the co-curricular scenario of Tagore's thought.

The diverse Co-curricular activities could be carried out methodically throughout the year because Tagorian model of teacher ought to be a superior planner. It should be the responsibility of the teacher to give more and more chance to the child while performing co-curricular activities. Tagorian model of Teacher should act as pacesetter by introducing some ground-breaking programmes. The teacher must be a high-quality organizer so that the students experienced utmost of it. He should too act like as director, recorder, evaluator, manager, decision maker, advisor, motivator, communicator, coordinator, so that the student and child could gained highest of better aspects of Co-curricular activities.

About the perfect and real education Tagore described: That education is uppermost which not only imparts information and knowledge to us, but also supports love and follow feeling between us and the living-beings of the world. To expand this Co-curricular activity parallel with syllabus curriculum has very significance. Co-curricular activities are non-academic activities that all students of Visva-Bharati must contribute in. This strategy was introduced by Rabindranath Tagore as a means to improve social interaction, leadership, healthy recreation, self-discipline and self-confidence, development of various domains of mind and personality such as intellectual development, emotional development, social development, moral development and aesthetic development. Tagore highlighted on co-curricular activities for all-round development of the child, there is necessitate of emotional, physical, spiritual and moral development that is complemented and supplemented by Co-curricular Activities. To an enhanced scope, the theoretical knowledge gets

strengthened when a related co-curricular activity is organized related to the pleased taught in the classroom. Intellectual aspects of personality are exclusively accomplished by Classroom, while aesthetic development, character building, spiritual growth, physical growth, moral values, creativity, etc. are supported by co-curricular activities. Tagore defined as the activities that allow supplementing and complementing the curricular or main syllabi activities. These are the very significant element and parcel of educational institutions to expand the students' personality as well as to reinforce the classroom learning. These activities are organized after the school hours, so known as extra-curricular activities. Co-curricular activities are the factual and practical experiences received by students. Honesty and clearness in language and personality is supported by these activities. It assists to expand co-ordination, adjustment, speech fluency, extempore expressions, etc. among student both at the school as well as college levels. According to him the curriculum should be such as to build up the individual physically, mentally, morally, socially, spiritually to the supreme limits. A curriculum based on activities, and wide experiences will extend the personality of the child to the fullest degree. Hence the curriculum should hold activities, subjects for the progress of the personality of the individual. In *Visva-Bharati* subjects like History, Geography, nature study, agriculture and practical works like: horticulture, gardening, field study, laboratory, original creations, arts, sculpture, vocational, technical are taught. Dancing, singing, painting, designing, sewing, cutting, knitting, cooking, are taught as co curricular activities in *Visva-Bharati* are taught. It is known for its wide and varied studies, hobbies, cultural refinements blending the ancient and modern achievements of the Indian people in all the fields of human activity.

Ending touch with photography:

Co-curricular activities were nourished by Rabindranath Tagore during His time. It is still nourishing in present. Rabindranath Tagore was the follower and maintainer of co-curricular activities parallel with curricular. Tagore's Co-curricular activities which, means activities outside of your school curriculum such as sports, arts, music, etc, forces children to build up both psychological and physical abilities which in fact assist the children achieve superior in school and in actual life. It provides children both cognitive and physical proficiencies in a structured environment which boost up confidence, self respect and makes the child more attentive of what it feels like being part of something with a advanced ambition and rationale.

Co-curricular activities during Tagore's presence in Visva-Bharati



Plate 1: Tagore singing with an accompaniment by Abanindranath Tagore



Plate 2: weaving in Santiniketan in early days.



Plate 3: Tagore is busy in his painting.



Plate 4: A scene from dance drama by Tagore, also seen in the picture.



Plate 5: Student's acquiring skills in the early years of Sriniketan.



Plate 6: Scene from Tagore dance-drama.



Plate 7: Tagore and with Indira Devi in Balmiki Pratibha.



Plate 8: A ceremonial procession at Santiniketan. Indira Gandhi is seen (fourth from right) as a student of Visva-Bharati 1934-35.



Plate 9: Interestingly all five of Khsiti, Aap, Tej, Marut & Byom; the five divine blesses required to sustain a plant's life; are elaborately attired adults as per this snap.



Plate 10: Garba dancing was a part of Briksharopan procession dance as we can see.



Plate 11: It is a wonder how just three or four pieces of tiny Tagar flowers complete the style statement of the ladies.



Plate 12: This is a snap of around the same time as the one above. The dress code has certainly taken up a slightly more formal note.



Plate 13: The practice of front running specially dressed ladies has come into vogue. Students have now come into the standard format of Briksharopan, which is still followed; but the scale has got much bigger now and the dress up more exquisite.



Plate 14: It is the Lt Santidev Ghosh leading the pack of rather elaborately attired Kala Bhavan boys carrying the sapling to be planted. By this time the format of the whole program got rather well defined; and Santiniketan still tries to stick to that format. The notable thing is the loose rope marking to keep spectators away



Plate 15: old Sriniketan farm and students are busy in farm work.



Plate 16: Tagore as Raghupati in Visarjan drama.



Plate 17: Tagore selecting his painting in Moscow



Plate 18: Kalabhavana painting class in progress in early days.

Recent co-curricular activities nourishing in Tagore's Visva-Bharati



Plate A: Briksharopan festival in Vinaya Bhavana, 2014



Plate B: Upanasa in Kanchmandir.



Plate C: Briksha bandana by teacher of Visva-Bharati.



Plate D: Students are busy to carry the 'dola' for tree plantation.



Plate E: Nourishing Tagore's drama in Lipika auditorium in Visva-Bharati, 2011.



Plate F: Girls of Visva-Bharati are engaged themselves in briksharopan utsav, 2014.



Plate G: 84th Halakarshan festival celebrated in Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan.



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Plates sources:

Plate 1 to 8, 15-18 from Suri, Navdeep (2000). *Indian Perspectives*, Vol.24 no. 2/2010. Published by Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi. ISSN 0970 5074.

Plate 9-14 from Website <http://pathabhavanpraktioni.net/main/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/131.jpg>

Plate A to G @T.Pal,2014.