

Tagore And Asian Values Of Family, Citizenship, And Global Peace¹

Dr. Madhurima Chowdhury

Research Fellow, LIAS, Leuphana University, Germany

Assistant Professor

Department of South and Southeast Asian Studies

University of Calcutta, India

Abstract

The 2023 G20 summit, brought together the leaders of the world's major economies and was held in India. The Indian government selected the theme "One Earth, One family, Once Future." Perhaps unnoticed by international delegates was the deep resonance this theme had with ancient Indian values of global familyhood. One way to understand this is to understand the writings of Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), the Nobel Prize-winner poet, writer, musician, artist and educator from India, who described a world of peace, harmony and diversity that transcended the boundaries of nationalism and imperialism.

This essay explores the connection between the theme of the G20 summit, and the South Asian concepts of citizenships which emerged from Tagore's works and ideas. The motto and theme of the 2023 G20 summit is used as a framework to explore Tagore's works and. The essay argues that Tagore's vision of a peaceful, diverse and harmonious world can inform and enrich the discussion and action on the three pillars of the G20 summit theme: resilience, inclusiveness and sustainability. The essay also contrasts Tagore's views with those of other thinkers who have been used in developing development goals advocated in the G20 process.

The essay then highlights the importance and relevance of Tagore's works and ideas for the G20 summit agenda and the global community at large.

Key words: Asian Values, Citizenship, Global Peace, Culture and Identity, Rabindranath Tagore.

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I. Introduction

The concept of peace in western and eastern philosophies is not only different, but in many ways incompatible, as the former is based on the notion of citizenship and the latter on the notion of cosmopolitanism (Mark, 2016; Baggini, 2018; Robson, 2020). While western philosophies view peace as the result of establishing borders, boundaries, and ends of state-centered conflict, eastern philosophies view peace as the process of transcending the state and creating a harmonious and interconnected world. Peace is not a fixed and universal concept, in this view, but a flexible and subjective one that varies according to one's culture and history. This South Asian understanding of peace affects the way global challenges such as migration, terrorism, human rights, and environmental sustainability are dealt with. This essay suggests ways to overcome the gap between the western and eastern views of peace, such as dialogue, education, and cultural exchange. The goal is to promote a more diverse and inclusive way of thinking about peace that honors and appreciates diversity.

The concept of citizenship varies in Western and Eastern thought. The concept in Western citizenship emphasizes rights emerging from the soil reflective of one's place of birth, or that of the biological parents. This principle reflects well the concept of a nation-state, which assumes a people share a common territory, culture, and identity. Western citizenship assumes specific political rights and obligations, such as voting, paying taxes, and serving in the military. Western citizenship is also often regarded as a universal and objective value, that can be granted or revoked by the state.

In contrast eastern citizenship is based on a principle which assumes one's citizenship by one's putative ancestry and ethnicity. This principle reflects the concept of a civilizational state, where people share a common heritage, culture, and identity. Eastern citizenship also assumes certain social rights and obligations on the part of

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the state and the citizen, such as welfare, education, and cultural preservation. Eastern citizenship is often regarded as a relative and subjective value, that can be negotiated or contested by the people. Differing notions of citizenship influence the issues of diversity, inclusion, and democracy. Western citizenship emphasizes individual rights and equality before the law, which creates problems of assimilation, exclusion, and discrimination for minority groups. Eastern citizenship emphasizes collective rights and cultural diversity, but may also create problems of fragmentation, hierarchy, and domination of minority groups. The article suggests that both notions of citizenship face challenges in the context of globalization, migration, and human rights.

Rabindranath Tagore lived in a time when India was under British colonial rule and personally faced political, economic, and cultural challenges. He witnessed the rise of nationalist movements which sought to liberate India from foreign domination, while also resorting to violence, intolerance, and fanaticism. He was concerned about the loss of India's diversity, pluralism, and tolerance. He believed that nationalism distorted the true nature of India and harmed both individuals and society. He advocated for a cosmopolitan vision for India, where people of different religions, cultures, and languages could coexist peacefully and harmoniously. He also supported the emancipation of women, whom he saw as the victims of patriarchal traditions and customs (Quayum, 2012). He wrote, "*Our final spiritual refuge cannot be patriotism; compassion is my haven. For as long as I live, I will not purchase glass for the equivalent of diamonds, and I will never for nationalism to win over humanity.*" Ironically, perhaps, both India and Bangladesh use Tagore's music as their national anthem.

Tagore championed the ideals of global citizenship and peace (Shrivastava, 2016). He was a versatile and prolific and mastered various domain of art, literature, music, education, and social reform. He was also a cosmopolitan traveler engaging with many prominent figures of his time and enriched the global dialogue of ideas and cultures (Richardson, 2019). His works embody his global perspective and his aspiration for peace. Tagore belonged to a wealthy and cultured family in Bengal, British India, where he enjoyed an intellectually and artistically stimulating environment. He exhibited his literary talent from an early age and published his first anthology of poems at sixteen. He also acquired skills in musical instruments, singing, and painting. He pursued formal education in law, but he dropped out before completing his degree, preferring to learn from his own life experiences and observations.

Tagore supported the education of women and their participation in social and political life (Ray, 2017). He criticized the imperialism, nationalism, and militarism that caused wars and violence in his time. He described nationalism as a form of collective egoism that bred violence, hatred, and oppression, both within and outside the nation (Ohsawa, 2023). He believed nationalism was a product of 'Western modernity' that was incompatible with the Indian ethos and culture. He saw nationalism as a distortion of the true spirit of patriotism and humanity, which he envisioned as a universal humanism that transcended narrow boundaries and divisions. He sought to demonstrate his vision through his own life and work, such as establishing an international university and travelling around the world to spread his message of peace and harmony.

Tagore also reflected his vision of a harmonious relationship between the East and the West (Sen, 1997). He wanted both sides to learn from each other and appreciate each other's contributions to humanity. He hoped that the East would not lose its spiritual and cultural identity in the face of Western materialism and modernization and that the West would not impose its values and interests on the rest of the world. Such western nationalism he saw as a cause of division and oppression among humanity and a threat to the diversity, creativity, and spirituality of human civilization. He promoted global humanism, which is the idea that all human beings are equal and valuable, regardless of their nation or culture, and that they should respect and cooperate for the common good. He showed his global humanism through his own life and work, such as establishing an international university and travelling around the world to spread his message of peace and harmony.

It is in this philosophical context that India hosted the G20 summit in 2023, with the theme of "One Earth, One Family, One Future". This theme reflects the ancient Indian wisdom of "*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*", which means "the world is one family". It resonated with the vision of Rabindranath Tagore, the Nobel laureate poet and philosopher, who believed in the unity of all living beings and the harmony of diversity. Tagore was a self-described global citizen, who travelled across continents and cultures and enriched his creativity and humanity. He also encouraged followers to overcome our fears and prejudices and to seek truth, beauty, and justice in the world. He expressed his hope for a free and peaceful world in his famous poem, written in Bengali:

“আকাশ-সিন্ধু-মাঝে এক ঠাঁই
কিসের বাতাস লেগেছে-
জগৎ-ঘূর্ণি জেগেছে।
বালকি উঠেছে রবি-শশাঙ্ক,
বালকি ছুটেছে তারা,
অযুত চক্র ঘুরিয়া উঠেছে
অবিরাম মাতোয়ারা।
স্থির আছে শুধু একটি বিন্দু

ঘূর্ণির মাঝখানে-
...কাছে যাই যার দেখিতে দেখিতে
চলে যায় সেই দূরে,
হাতে পাই যারে পলক ফেলিতে
তারে ছুঁয়ে যাই ঘুরে।
কোথাও থাকিতে না পারি ক্ষণেক,
রাখিতে পারি নে কিছু-
মত্ত হৃদয় ছুটে চলে যায়
ফেনপুঞ্জের পিছু”

- উৎসর্গ, রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর, ১৯১৪

In the midst of sky and ocean A place where a wind has blown- The world has woken up in a whirl. Sun and moon have flashed, Stars have scattered, A thousand wheels have risen/ In an endless dance. Only one point is still/ In the center of the whirl- From there a golden lotus Has risen in the void. O beautiful, O beautiful, / With hundred petals you are the world's fortune Standing there dying. / Everything in the world's rim revolves, /Your beauty is immovable. From many directions many days I see- I get to see that smile only. In life and death, in light and darkness, I wander in loss and fulfilment, I wander in the whirl. / I go near whomever I see seeing He goes away far; /I touch whomever I get to touch I go around him spinning. I can't stay anywhere for a moment, /I can't keep anything- My mad heart runs away Following the foam. O love, O ever-beautiful, /You have made the nest of stability /On the edge of the whirl. The islands are your songful, / The waterfall speaks in your tongue, /The infinite's eternal peace Comes to mind in a moment. (Translated by Author from a Bengali poem written by Rabindranath Tagore)

II. Asian efforts to understand peace and citizenship

The “Asian Debate” in Peace Studies

In the late 20th century, a contentious discourse known as the "Asian debate" first surfaced following the Cold War and the Asian economic miracle. The Asian values proponents assert that most Asian nations and cultures share a unique set of values and approaches and that these values and approaches are distinct, or even incompatible with the Western values that serve as the foundation for the concept of universal human rights. Respect for authority, social peace, communal responsibility, familial loyalty, and pragmatic progress are some of the qualities that are frequently regarded as being Asian, and outside the western human rights discourse. The legitimacy of the argument for Asian values notes differences in essentialism, relativism, selectivity, distortion, and instrumentalism. They contend that the Asian values argument is based on a false dichotomy between Asia and the West, ignores the diversity and complexity within and across both regions, overlooks the historical influences and interactions between them, and serves as a pretext to justify authoritarian regimes and human rights violations in Asia (Bell & Patapan, 2004; Sen, 1997, Kim, 1994).

Questions emerging from the Asian Debate

The topic of whether certain specific values or norms define Asian civilizations and cultures, as well as how they relate to the universal ideals of human rights, democracy, and peace, is a key issue. According to the argument, most Asian countries have several common values, including respect for authority, social harmony, teamwork, and loyalty to one's family and community. Instead of the individualism, liberalism, and contentious politics of the West, they argue that these ideals are more supportive of social stability and advancement. Typically, the response from the west is that such values are a mask for sullen compliance, dictatorship, and a form of ‘false consciousness.’ Irrespective, from the Asian perspective Western values are incompatible with the historical, cultural, and religious traditions of Asia and that forcing Western principles upon Asian nations would amount to cultural imperialism or neo-colonialism.

The argument is that Asian countries like China, Japan, and India have certain modalities or techniques that define their approach to managing international conflicts (Acharya, 2010; Amer, 2012; Oishi and Zartman, 2018). These include a preference for dialogue and consultation over coercion or intervention, respect for sovereignty, and non-interference over humanitarianism and ‘the duty to protect.’ There is also an emphasis on economic development and cooperation over political reform or democratization, and reliance on regional or multilateral mechanisms over unilateral or bilateral actions. These academics contend that these modalities represent the legacy of historic encounters, strategic considerations, and cultural assumptions of Asian governments. They also claim that such approaches are alternative or additional methods of fostering peace processes.

The legitimacy and consistency of this assertion, however, is disputed by scholars noting that Asia is ethnically and linguistically varied and diversified region that is home to a wide range of social and political

assumptions. They question if there is such a thing as a monolithic or homogeneous Asian identity or culture, and whether it is possible to describe or assess Asian values in a way that is both precise and consistent. Additionally, they contend that authoritarian governments or elites frequently use the "Asian values" defense to cover up for the repression of dissent, abuses of human rights, or lack of responsibility. They contend that human rights, democracy, and peace are not merely Western ideas but are global objectives that people from all backgrounds and locations share (An-Na'im, 1995).

Asian debate and peacebuilding

Adhikari (2022), De Coning & Friis (2011), Keethaponcalan (2019) and others point out that Asian governments frequently choose between their regional and global responsibilities, their interests and beliefs, and their rhetoric and conduct, just like western societies do. In addition, they note that depending on their geopolitical location, economic standing, security concerns, or ideological leanings, Asian states have different goals, approaches, and agendas for promoting peace and resolving disputes. They bring attention to the potential for conflict or cooperation among Asian countries, particularly for example the efforts being made by Japan and India to counterbalance China's growing influence in the region.

"Peacebuilding," has many different aspects, seeking to deter, lessen, or end violent conflicts while fostering global peace over the long term. However, peacebuilding is not a one-size-fits-all strategy but rather a context-specific and culturally-sensitive one that necessitates the involvement and collaboration of numerous actors and stakeholders. The Asian values debate has important ramifications for peacebuilding because it describes better how Asian government's view and carry out governance and peacebuilding internally, and internationally. For example, some argue that Asian values encourage a more inclusive and all-encompassing definition of peace that encompasses not just the absence of violence and preservation of individual property and human rights; but also the existence of justice, harmony, growth, and human dignity. A sense of citizenship based on responsibilities, camaraderie, and loyalty is also encouraged by Asian belief systems, such as that described by Tagore.

Why Asian concepts are different than western concepts

Global citizenship and peacebuilding are understood and practiced differently by people from different regions and cultures. This is because these concepts are not fixed or universal, but rather depend on the historical and cultural context of the people who use them. It also points out some of the possible differences and similarities between the Western and Eastern perspectives, such as how they view individual and collective rights and duties, rationality and intuition, democracy and sovereignty, formal and informal institutions, human rights and cultural diversity, legal and dialogical mechanisms, and secular and religious values. The text also acknowledges that these perspectives are not absolute or static, but rather general and dynamic, and that there are many variations and complexities within each region or culture. Western scholars in particular object to Asian ideals, claiming that they legitimize oppression, corruption, and inequity (Khong, 1997; Tang, 1997). A related point of contention is the notion that Asian ideals make it harder to uphold and respect democracy, diversity, and human rights as they are defined in presumably 'universal' lists of individual rights (Hasa, 2016; Sharma, 2018; Robson, 2017; Michelin, 2021). This essay explores global understanding in this regard while looking at the role that Asian states play in peacebuilding. This paper concludes by emphasizing the importance of avoiding stereotypes and prejudices, and of engaging in respectful and constructive dialogue with people from different backgrounds and viewpoints, in order to foster a more peaceful and inclusive global community.

III. Global Understanding and Asian Philosophy

Global Understanding

In Tagore's reasoning, there is an assumption that participants can live a peaceful, moral, and fulfilling life in a global society with the aid of global awareness and Asian philosophy. Furthermore, "*global understanding*" refers to the recognition and respect of the diversity and interdependence of the various environments, cultures, and populations around the world and assumes it is global, and not just national. Recognizing the shared potential and difficulties that mankind faces in the twenty-first century, such as climate change, poverty, human rights, democracy, and peace, is also a part of this process. It points out that a person's identity and duties extend beyond their nation-state or local community to encompass the entire planet (Fraser, 2015). The United Nations core values and tenets, including respect for human dignity, equality, justice, solidarity, and collaboration, are assumed to be complete, and promoted by all members of the international community.

Asian philosophy and global understanding

But in fact, Asian philosophy provides new insights and viewpoints on the ideas of power and citizenship that conventional western philosophy focused on property rights, human rights, and the sovereign Westfalian state miss. Asian philosophers highlight issues of hierarchy, collectivism, harmony, balance, order, and morality in

social and political life that are missed in western approaches (Kao, 2011). These principles influence how society's resources are used and distributed, as well as how people interact with one another and their leaders. Some Asian thinkers disagree with Western views that democracy, capitalism, and individual rights are the only viable options for societal organisations. They make the case that these models are culturally prejudiced and might not be appropriate for the historical, cultural, and environmental settings of Asian societies. Of course, these are only some generalizations and simplifications of complex and diverse topics. There are many variations and nuances within global understanding and Asian philosophy that cannot be fully captured in a short answer. Global understanding and Asian philosophy also share some commonalities and convergences that can mutually strengthen communication and cooperation. A Canadian philosopher who specializes in Confucian philosophy, Daniel A. Bell, for instance, claimed that many "*values in Asia*," as opposed to "*Asian values*," can strengthen global human rights theory and practice and be applied to better the dignity and well-being of modern Asians (Henders, 2003)².

Asian debate, global understanding

In political philosophy, there are disagreements on whether or not human rights may serve as the cornerstone for universal justice and equality, which are related to discussions about Asian values. It also has an impact on international affairs, particularly when it comes to discussion and collaboration between the West and Asia on a range of topics, including security, commerce, development, democracy, and human rights. The debate also poses questions about the role of civil society, media, education, religion, and art in fostering cross-cultural understanding and respect³.

² According to Lenin "*The 50-year expansion of the global economy and all of its ties and links has led to the war*" (Enfu & Baolin, 2021). Large nations cannot end a conflict fast; it is also impossible to achieve a just and peaceful peace without removing money's influence and transferring it to another group, such as the working class." (Lenin, 1917; Kundu 2010). Interestingly, Tagore agreed with some of Lenin's criticisms of big countries and money, but he had a different way to get peace. He thought that peace could not be reached by force or fighting, but by respect and working together among countries. He was very upset by the British and Western people who took over other places during the Boer War in South Africa (1899–1902) and the Boxer uprising in China (1899–1901), which he wrote about in some of his political essays and poems (Kundu, 2010; Godrej, 2014). He also wrote in his essay "*The Eastern and the Western Civilization*," which was published in *Banga darshan* (May 1901), that when the national interest, which is the reason for European civilisation, is too big and does not care about what is right, it makes a hole for the bad to come in. Self-interest always makes enemies because of how it is. Now, this hate can be seen as sharp things on the side of European civilization. It is a bad sign of the war that the European countries will have for control of the world. (Cruz, 2016) Thus, in this essay, we examine Rabindranath Tagore's contribution to the discussion of Asian values. Tagore is one of the most significant and multifaceted figures in contemporary India and Bengal history. We contend that Tagore offers a humanist viewpoint that transcends the dichotomy between Asia and the West and that his understanding of human rights is founded on a creative synthesis of many traditions and sources of wisdom from both regions. We also argue that Tagore's humanist perspective is relevant and inspiring for the contemporary world, as it challenges the dominant discourse of human rights that often assumes a Western or Eurocentric perspective as universal or superior, and invites us to recognize and appreciate the plurality and diversity of human rights perspectives that exist in different cultures and civilizations.

³ What specific values and norms shared by Asian cultures and societies, and how they relate to the universal human rights principles and standards that are often perceived as Western in origin and nature? Some advocates of Asian values assert that Asian cultures emphasize collective welfare, social harmony, respect for authority, and loyalty to family and community, while Western cultures emphasize individual rights, freedom, democracy, and human dignity. They claim that Asian values are more suited for the historical, cultural, and economic realities of Asia, and that forcing Western values on Asian countries would damage their sovereignty, identity, and development. Some opponents of Asian values question the validity and uniformity of such a concept, noting the diversity and dynamism of Asian cultures and societies, as well as the impact of colonialism, modernization, and globalization on their formation. They also argue that Asian values are often exploited by authoritarian regimes to rationalize their suppression of dissent, opposition, and minority rights, and that human rights are not a Western invention but a universal aspiration that crosses cultural boundaries.

Why this is different than western concepts

Power and citizenship are important theoretical concepts in social and political studies. They reflect on how people organize themselves in society, and how they interact with each other and with the state. Different cultures may have different values and beliefs that influence their understanding and practice of power and citizenship. For example, some Asian leaders and intellectuals advocate for a set of Asian values that they claim are distinct from Western values. Asian values place a strong emphasis on self-control, diligence, thrift, academic success, balancing personal and societal requirements, and respect for authority.

Some argue that these values have contributed to the economic development, social stability, and national identity of many East Asian countries. However, others argue that these values undermine democracy, human rights, and global understanding in Asian societies which are assumed to be universal. They claim that these values discourage critical thinking, individual expression, and civic engagement. They also claim that these values create a sense of cultural superiority and insularity that hinders dialogue and cooperation with other cultures. However, it is important to note that Asian values are not monolithic or static, any more than western values are. They are diverse, dynamic, and contested within and across Asian societies. Moreover, they are not necessarily incompatible or irreconcilable with Western values. There may be areas of convergence or complementarity between them.

IV. Concepts of power and citizenship

Tagore's views on the power structure and citizenship

Rabindranath Tagore is remembered as being an articulate proponent of global humanity, and a critic of British India. He was awarded the 1913 Nobel Prize in Literature for his role in the "Bengali Renaissance" which occurred across what is today India and Bangladesh. His Nobel Prize (December, 10, 1913; and 1921) speech reflected his vision of global citizenship, human solidarity and peace. The award was for his novels, poems, and other literary writings. But forgotten perhaps, is his Asian vision of the human being which animated his writing. He asserted that it is not the duty of man to engage in conflicts with other nations or individuals, but to work together for the sake of harmony and love. He rejected the violence and selfishness that pervaded the world creating political and commercial rivalries. He urged all to overcome the crisis of civilization with his inspiring words and deeds.

Tagore found an exemplary university 'Shantiniketan' which embodied his immense desire and achievement for world peace and humanity. This institution is not only an educational hub but also a sacred site for the harmony and coexistence of people of diverse languages and cultures from all over the world. Tagore believed that without the connection of love with knowledge, and respect with achievement, there is no possibility of development or expression of human qualities. He noted too that this was missing from western concepts of peace. Tagore represented the Bengalis in the world court with his humanistic desire and aspiration for peace (Van Hanh, 2019). He received the support of everyone in his endeavors for education, peace and humanity, and also extended his support to everyone (Samuel, 2010). The words we know for salvation from the crisis of civilization, he wrote, are only the manifestation of his special recognition. Notably this is different than the left-wing politics of writers like Mario Vargas whose Marxist approach assumes that human progress comes from conflict between the social classes.

“...যতটুকু অত্যাৱশ্যক কেবল তাহাৰই মধ্যে কাৱাৱুদ্ধ হইয়া থাকা মানবজীৱনৰ ধৰ্ম নহে। আমাৰা কিয়ংপৰিমাণে আৱশ্যক-শৃঙ্খলে বদ্ধ হইয়া থাকি এৱং কিয়ংপৰিমাণে স্বাধীন। আমাদেৱ দেহ সাড়ে তিন হাতেৰ মধ্যে বদ্ধ, কিন্তু তাই বলিয়া ঠিক সেই সাড়ে তিন হাত পৰিমাণ গৃহ নিৰ্মাণ কৰিলে চলে না, স্বাধীন চলাফেৰাৰ জন্য অনেকখানি স্থান রাখা আৱশ্যক, নতুবা আমাদেৱ স্বাস্থ্য এৱং আনন্দেৰ ব্যাঘাত হয়। শিক্ষা সম্বন্ধেও এই কথা খাটে। যতটুকু কেবলমাত্ৰ শিক্ষা, অৰ্থাৎ অত্যাৱশ্যক, তাহাৰই মধ্যে শিশুদিগকে একান্ত নিবদ্ধ রাখিলে কখনোই তাহাদেৱ মন যথেষ্ট পৰিমাণে বাঢ়িতে পাৰে না। অত্যাৱশক শিক্ষাৰ সহিত স্বাধীন পাঠ না মিশাইলে ছেলে ভালো কৰিয়া মানুষ হইতে পাৰে না – বয়ঃপ্ৰাপ্ত হইলেও বুদ্ধিবৃত্তি সম্বন্ধে সে অনেকটা বালক থাকিয়াই যায়। [শিক্ষাৰ হেৰফেৰ-ৰবীন্দ্ৰনাথ ঠাকুৰ]...”

Human life is not meant to be constrained by the boundaries of necessity. Rather, it requires a balance between the discipline of necessity and the freedom of creativity. The human body is limited by its physical dimensions, but this does not imply that the human habitat should be equally restricted. Adequate space for movement is essential for maintaining health and happiness. Similarly, education should not be confined to the minimum requirements of knowledge and skills. If children are subjected to a rigid and narrow curriculum, their mental development will be stunted. A holistic education must incorporate free and independent learning, which fosters the growth of personality and intellect. Otherwise, the child will remain immature and underdeveloped even as an adult. - Tagore, R. (1915). Shiksha [Education]. Prabasi. [Rabindranath Tagore – Shikshar Herfer; translated from Bengali by the author.]

Tagore's concept of global peace and global citizenship

What Tagore called global citizenship education (GCE) aims to cultivate a sense of belonging and responsibility towards the world and its people. However, different perspectives exist on the definition and implementation of GCE. One of these perspectives belongs to Rabindranath Tagore, the 1913 Nobel laureate in Literature, and a visionary thinker from India. Tagore's perspective differs from the mainstream or dominant views of GCE, which often follow Western or neoliberal paradigms. Tagore emphasizes the spiritual, moral, and aesthetic aspects of GCE more than other frameworks, such as the UN Global Education First Initiative or the Sustainable Development Goals, which both emphasize economic development. He proposes a pluralistic and diverse understanding of global citizenship that respects the autonomy and identity of each individual and culture, rather than a universal or homogenous national citizenship⁴. Tagore instead advocates for a bottom-up or horizontal understanding of global citizenship that empowers the grassroots and local communities, rather than a top-down or hierarchical one. Furthermore, he envisions a creative and active view of global citizenship that fosters creativity and invention, rather than a passivity or conformity. Tagore's perspective on GCE is thus an alternative way of looking at the world and its problems.

Tagore's perspective on GCE was influenced by his own experiences and experiments in education. He founded Visva-Bharati University in Santiniketan, West Bengal, as an institution that would promote international understanding and cooperation through cultural exchange and dialogue. He also established Sriniketan, a rural reconstruction center that aimed to improve the lives of the villagers through education, health care, agriculture, and handicrafts. He travelled extensively around the world and interacted with various thinkers, artists, and leaders, such as Albert Einstein, George Bernard Shaw, Mahatma Gandhi, and Franklin D. Roosevelt. He wrote prolifically on various topics, such as literature, philosophy, religion, politics, and education, in both Bengali and English, as well as the sacred language of Sanskrit. His collection of poems earned him the 1913 Nobel Prize in Literature. He was the first non-European and the first Asian to receive this honour. His perspective also encourages us to think critically and creatively about our own roles and responsibilities as global citizens. His perspective also inspires us to learn from other cultures and perspectives, while also contributing to the common good of humanity. Tagore's perspective on GCE is not only a concept but also a practice that can be applied in various contexts and settings.

Tagore's concept about the 'World is one nest'

Tagore travelled extensively, visiting more than thirty countries in Asia, Europe, Africa, and America. He met many influential figures and gave lectures and participated in conferences and events on topics of global significance. He established cultural and educational institutions in India and abroad, such as Visva-Bharati University, Santiniketan School, Sriniketan Rural Reconstruction Centre, and Darington Hall School in the UK.

Tagore's vision of global citizenship and peace was based on his belief in the unity of humanity and the diversity of culture. He saw it as something separate from human rationality, or the inviolability of the nation-state. Indeed, he saw nationalism as a divisive force that led to violence and oppression. He criticized colonialism and imperialism of the West and the exploitation and degradation of the East. He also denounced materialism and militarism because it threatened the harmony and balance of nature. He envisioned a world where people could live together in mutual respect and cooperation, where knowledge and wisdom could flow freely between the East and the West, where spirituality and science could complement each other, and where creativity and beauty could enrich human life. He sought to go beyond the dualism that is inherent to a citizenship which is assigned to just one nation-state.

“সীমা আছে এ কথা যেমন নিশ্চিত, অসীম আছেন এ কথা তেমনি সত্য। আমরা উভয়কে যখন বিচ্ছিন্ন করিয়া দেখি তখনি আমরা মায়ার ফাঁদে পড়ি। তখনি আমরা এমন একটা ভুল করিয়া বসি যে, আপনার সীমাকে লঙ্ঘন করিলেই বুঝি আমরা অসীমকে পাইব – যেন আত্মহত্যা করিলেই অমরজীবন পাওয়া যায়। যেন আমি না হইয়া আর-কিছু হইলেই আমি ধন্য হইব। কিন্তু, আমি হওয়াও যা আর-কিছু হওয়া যে তাহাই, সে কথা মনে থাকে না। আমার এই আমির মধ্যে যদি ব্যর্থতা থাকে তবে অন্য কোনো আমিত্ব লাভ করিয়া তাহা হইতে নিষ্কৃতি পাইব না। আমার ঘটের মধ্যে ছিদ্র থাকাতে যদি জল বাহির হইয়া যায়, তবে সে জলের দোষ নহে। দুধ ঢালিলেও সেই দশা হইবে, এবং মধু ঢালিলেও তথৈবচ।”- সীমার স্বার্থকতা- রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর।

The concepts of finitude and infinity are often regarded as mutually exclusive and incompatible. However, this dualistic view leads to a distorted perception of reality and self. A common fallacy is to assume that transcending one's finite boundaries will grant access to the infinite realm - a metaphorical suicide that promises immortality. Another fallacy is to deny one's finitude and aspire to become something other than oneself. These fallacies overlook the fact that one's finite self is already an expression of the infinite reality. Therefore, changing one's self-identity will not solve the problems inherent in one's finitude. A simple analogy is that if a pot has a hole, the

⁴ See George Orwell's cynical comparison of western concepts of citizenship in [Notes on Nationalism](#), in which he compares western concepts of national citizenship to the classification of insects.

liquid inside will leak out regardless of whether it is water, milk, or honey. - Tagore, R. (1913). *The problem of evil. In Sadhana: The realisation of life* (pp. 87-105). Macmillan. [Sadhana; Simar Swarthokota- The Realisation of Life; translated by the author from a Bengali novel]

Tagore's view about global peace.

Tagore narrated how he "*woke up to the call of the spirit of my nation*" and felt the need to devote his life to "*furthering the mission that lies in the core of her history*" in the preface of W. W. Pearson's *Shantiniketan* (The idea of Rabindranath Tagore, 2019). The views of some western philosophers on rural life and its relation to modernity and industrialization were influenced by their historical and cultural contexts, as well as their theoretical perspectives.

For example, Marx, Weber and Durkheim were three prominent thinkers who had different opinions on rural life and its transformation under the forces of capitalism and industrialization (Halewood, 2014). Marx idealistically regarded rural life as a primitive and communal form of human society, where people lived in harmony and shared the land. He believed that capitalism and industrialization would destroy this way of life and create a class struggle between the rich and the poor. He hoped that the poor would overthrow the rich and create a new society where everyone would own and manage the means of production. Marx admired rural life for its perceived simplicity, equality and solidarity, and contrasted it with the alienation, exploitation and conflict of urban life (Horii, 2022).

Weber viewed rural life as a traditional form of social organization, based on family, custom and religion. He argued that modern society would weaken the authority and legitimacy of these traditional factors. Weber was interested in how different religions affected the development of capitalism and modernity in different parts of the world. He famously studied the Protestant Ethic and its offspring capitalism as a factor of rationalization and economic development in the West (Weber 1904). Weber admired rural life for its perceived meaning, charisma and enchantment, and criticized the disenchantment, rationalization and impersonality of urban life (Kalberg, 2005).

Durkheim conceived rural life as a mechanical form of social solidarity, based on similarity, cohesion and collective conscience. He differentiated between mechanical solidarity, which existed in simple and homogeneous societies, and organic solidarity, which appeared in complex and heterogeneous societies. He claimed that the division of labor, which grew with industrialization and urbanization, was the main source of organic solidarity in modern society. Durkheim was concerned with how to maintain social order and cohesion in a society that was becoming more diverse and individualistic. He examined various social phenomena, such as religion, suicide, law and morality, as signs of social integration or disintegration. Durkheim valued rural life for its unity, stability and morality, and warned against the anomie, egoism and conflict of urban life (Peyre, 2023).

But Tagore had a different perspective on rural life than such western philosophers. He did not idealize or glorify rural life, but rather sought to improve it through various initiatives. He felt a deep connection with its history, and dedicated his life to furthering the mission that lies in the core of its history. He was a modernist who rebelled against the belief that poverty could be reduced by promoting basic education, empowering peasants, applying scientific methods in agriculture, creating cottage industries, and establishing cooperative banks, and that the division of labor was really tangential. These efforts were motivated by his awareness of the profound social and political changes that were happening in his own country. Tagore's concept of rural development was holistic and grass-roots, aiming to enhance the material and spiritual well-being of village communities through education, training, healthcare, sanitation, modern and scientific agricultural production, revival of traditional arts and crafts and organizing fairs and festivities in daily life. He wished to see the *atmoshakti* that might bind the hearts of all Indian society's citizens—a feeling of group power and independence—recover in village communities.

Tagore's vision of rural development was not romantic but realistic, pragmatic and optimistic. Tagore was a modernist who believed that poverty was alleviated by promoting basic education, encouraging peasants' independence, using scientific methods in agriculture, creating cottage enterprises, and creating cooperative banks which emerged from the global nature of the citizenry.

The profound social and political changes he saw taking place not just in his own country but also throughout the world were the fundamental cause of Tagore's decision to take such an inclusive attitude. In his later years, he was disillusioned by history as he looked through the "*crumbling ruins of a glorious civilization strewn like a vast mound of folly,*" but he steadfastly maintained his unwavering optimism to declare: "*I shall not commit the dreadful sin of losing trust in Man*" (Shubho, 2013). Instead of becoming discouraged, he grew more and more receptive to the huge stream of labourers who toil from age to age on the "*ruins of hundreds and hundreds of empires.*" He eagerly expected the down-to-earth poet to give voice to the hearts that had no voice by being honest about his shortcomings in this regard. Intensely hoping for the day when "*unvanquished Man will retrace his road of conquest, against all obstacles, to regain back his lost human birthright,*" he had set high aspirations. (Rabindranath Tagore, 2021).

V. Understanding citizenship and peace through Tagore's eyes

Tagore's views about peace through his writing

Tagore expressed his spiritual and humanistic worldview in his works. In his collection of poems, "Gitanjali", which was cited in his Nobel Prize award, he celebrates the universal human connection, the divine presence, and the social and political issues that affect humanity. In his novel, "The Home and the World", he explores the conflict between tradition and modernity, the theme of nationalism, and the ideas of self-identity, global understanding, and the pursuit of peace (Collins, 2008). His works reflect his global citizenship as he challenges the boundaries of identity, nationality, and loyalty, and calls for global solidarity and partnership. This he hopes will be the basis for a peace education which acknowledges that every human connection, and dialog. In an acknowledgment of the universal nature of religion in, "Sadhana: The Realization of Life", he examines several facets of Indian philosophy and spirituality, drawing on the teachings of Buddhism, Christianity and the Upanishads.

Tagore emphasized a universal and humanistic vision of life that goes beyond national and cultural boundaries, emphasizing the need for harmony and understanding among different peoples and religions.

“...যতটুকু অত্যাৱশ্যক কেবল তাহাৰই মধ্যে কাৱাৱুদ্ধ হইয়া থাকা মানবজীৱনৰ ধৰ্ম নহে। আমাৰা কিয়ৎপৰিমাণে আৱশ্যক-শৃঙ্খলে বদ্ধ হইয়া থাকি এৱং কিয়ৎপৰিমাণে স্বাধীন। আমাদেৱ দেহ সাড়ে তিন হাতেৰ মধ্যে বদ্ধ, কিন্তু তাই বলিয়া ঠিক সেই সাড়ে তিন হাত পৰিমাণ গৃহ নিৰ্মাণ কৰিলে চলে না, স্বাধীন চলাফেৰাৰ জন্য অনেকখানি স্থান রাখা আৱশ্যক, নতুবা আমাদেৱ স্বাস্থ্য এৱং আনন্দেৰ ব্যাঘাত হয়। শিক্ষা সম্বন্ধেও এই কথা খাটে। যতটুকু কেবলমাত্ৰ শিক্ষা, অৰ্থাৎ অত্যাৱশ্যক, তাহাৰই মধ্যে শিশুদিগকে একান্ত নিবদ্ধ রাখিলে কখনোই তাহাদেৱ মন যথেষ্ট পৰিমাণে বাঢ়িতে পাৰে না। অত্যাৱশ্যক শিক্ষাৰ সহিত স্বাধীন পাঠ না মিশাইলে ছেলে ভালো কৰিয়া মানুষ হইতে পাৰে না – বয়ঃপ্ৰাপ্ত হইলেও বুদ্ধিবৃত্তি সম্বন্ধে সে অনেকটা বালক থাকিয়াই যায়।...” [“...in so far as it is essential not only is the religion of human life imprisoned in it. To what extent are we bound by necessity and to what extent are we free? Our body is enclosed in three and a half cubits, but so it is not possible to build a house in that three and a half cubits, it is necessary to leave a lot of space for free movement, otherwise our health and happiness are disturbed. This also applies to education. As long as children are confined to only education, that is, essentials, their minds can never be sufficiently occupied. A boy cannot become a good man unless independent reading is mixed with vital education - he remains very much a boy intellectually when he reaches adulthood... translated by Author from the context of this Bengali novel].

Tagore urges the readers to pursue their spiritual realization through personal purity and service to others. In his collection of poems, "Fruit-Gathering", Tagore envisioned a universal and humanistic vision of life that transcends national and cultural boundaries. He believed that love is the common bond that connects all human beings, regardless of their differences. He also expressed his sense of freedom and openness to explore and appreciate the diversity and beauty of the world, without being confined or restricted by any artificial or imposed barriers; thus, he said, "I am the guest of the world, not its tenant. My love is my passport, and it is good for all lands. I do not need any other visa. [translated by Author from the context of this novel]". He employs fruits and flowers as metaphors for his reverence and loyalty to the divine. He reveals his perspectives on life, nature, and spirituality, illustrating his opinions on the common values, ties, and goals of humanity. His works reflect his global citizenship and peace education, as he challenges the boundaries of identity, nationality, and loyalty, and calls for global solidarity and partnership.

“চোখ কতটুকুই দেখে কান কতটুকুই বা শোনে স্পৰ্শ কতটুকুই বোধ কৰে। কিন্তু মন এই আপন ক্ষুদ্ৰতাকে কেবলই ছড়িয়ে যাচ্ছে।” "As much as the eye sees, as much as the ear hears, as much as the touch feels. But the mind is only spreading its smallness." translated by me from the context of this novel. (author's translation from Bengali Novel)

Tagore asserts that awareness and concern for the complex and interrelated challenges that humanity faces, such as violence, suffering, ignorance, selfishness and injustice. This leads him to offer solutions that are based on wisdom, compassion and cooperation, rather than the economic development focused on by the West. He focuses on creativity and exploring the beauty and wonder of nature, art, music, literature and human relationships. This leads to expression of awe and gratitude for God's presence and grace in all creation. His works are masterpieces of spiritual wisdom that can inspire and enlighten anyone who reads them. They are some of the most profound books on spirituality. In Tagore's short story, "The Parrot's Training", he uses a metaphor of a wild and free parrot that is captured and caged by a king who wants to educate it. He critiques the colonial education system that tried to impose a single culture and worldview on the diverse and pluralistic Indian society.

Peace and citizenship through Tagore's viewpoint in the context of education

Tagore believed that education should foster a sense of universal humanism and respect for all cultures and civilizations. He contrasted this with the narrow and aggressive nationalism that leads to war and violence. Tagore advocated for dialogue and exchange between the East and the West, where both sides could learn from each other's wisdom and experience, and create a harmony of diversity. He envisioned a world where people

could transcend their boundaries of race, religion, class and nation, and realize their common humanity and spiritual unity. His works reflect his global citizenship and peace education, as he challenges the boundaries of identity, nationality, and loyalty, and calls for global solidarity and partnership (source). He offered solutions to the complex and interrelated challenges that humanity faces, such as violence, suffering, ignorance, selfishness and injustice, by pointing to the cultivation of wisdom, compassion and cooperation. He showed his inspiration and creativity by exploring the beauty and wonder of nature, art, music, literature and human relationships, by expressing his awe and gratitude for God's presence and grace in all creation. His works focused on a spiritual wisdom that sought to inspire and enlighten anyone who read them. Notably the focus was fundamentally different than the focus on power, Realpolitik, and nationalism that the British brought to India.

Tagore's view and critics on global citizenship

Tagore's vision of global citizenship and peace is ultimately based on his idea of a harmonious and inclusive world, where different cultures and religions coexist without domination. He was critical of the aggressive and materialistic nationalism that he witnessed in the West, especially during the World War. He believed that nationalism was a source of violence and oppression and that it alienated people from their true human nature (Shani, 2022). He also believed the colonial rule of the British in India and the exploitation and injustice that it caused. Tagore advocated for a universal humanism that transcended the boundaries of nation, race, class, caste, gender, etc. (Tandon, 2020). He believed that all human beings were connected by a common spirit and that they should respect and love each other as members of one family. Tagore believed that India had a unique role to play in the world, as a country with a rich and diverse cultural heritage, and a spiritual wisdom that could offer a balance to the materialism of the West. He hoped that India could become a leader in promoting peace and harmony among nations, by sharing its knowledge and values with the rest of the world. One of the ways he expressed his vision of India was through his novels, such as "*Gora*," which explicitly explored the complex issues of identity, religion, and society in colonial India.

Gora is a novel that explores how different people in India cope with the issues of religious tolerance, social reform, and identity formation in a changing and diverse society (Singh, 2021). It also questions the conventional ideas of belonging and advocates for a more inclusive and compassionate worldview. The Bengali novel '*Gora*' depicts the emotional growth of the characters against the backdrop of the social and political challenges that India faced at the time, such as colonial rule, nationalism, caste, class, gender, feminism, tradition versus modernity, etc. It has a surprising twist at the end, when *Gora* finds out that he is not a Hindu by birth, but an Irish orphan who was adopted by a Hindu family. He criticized the imperialism, nationalism, and militarism that caused wars and violence in his time. He showed how the *Cabuliwallah* (Bengali short story) was a human being with a family, a homeland, and a heart, not a stereotype or an enemy. He also showed how the narrator, a Bengali writer, learned to empathize with *Cabuliwallah*'s situation and helped him reunite with his daughter.

The suggestion is that peace is achieved through understanding, compassion, and dialogue, not through the force and dominance of the colonizer. He also reflected his vision of a harmonious relationship between the East and the West. He wanted both sides to learn from each other and appreciate each other's contributions to humanity. He hoped that the East would not lose its spiritual and cultural identity in the face of Western materialism and modernization and that the West would not impose its values and interests on the rest of the world. He believed that both sides had something to offer each other and the world.

VI. Rabindranath Tagore as a Representative of Bengal and South Asia

Tagore's outlook on peacebuilding and his literary works

Tagore was a Hindu Bengali, and his approach reflected this. In this context, Tagore believed in the metaphysical queries in philosophy relating to the existence and nature of God. Hinduism has an extremely diverse and intricate view of God. Hinduism is not a monolithic religion, but a collection of various traditions and philosophies that share some common themes and concepts. Hinduism also has a multitude of other deities that are worshipped by different sects and traditions. Some of the most popular ones are Ganesha (the elephant-headed god of wisdom and success), Hanuman (the monkey-God of devotion and courage), Durga (the fierce goddess of power and victory), Lakshmi (the goddess of wealth and prosperity), Saraswati (the goddess of learning and arts), Kali (the goddess of time and death), Rama (the ideal king and hero), Krishna (the playful god of love and joy), and many more. Hinduism allows its followers to worship God in many ways according to their personal preferences and inclinations. Some Hindus may worship one or more deities as their personal Gods (*Ishta-devata*), while others may worship the formless Brahman through meditation or philosophy. Some Hindus may practice devotion (*bhakti*) to express their love and gratitude to God, while others may practice action (*karma*) to perform their duties and obligations to God. Some Hindus may seek liberation (*moksha*) from the cycle of birth and death (*samsara*), while others may seek fulfillment (*dharma*) in their worldly life. In its ideal form Hinduism respects the diversity of human experiences and aspirations, and does not impose a single way of understanding or worshipping God. This is reflected in the verse of Vedas and Upanishads.

Tagore's view on South Asian Culture and its reflection in peacebuilding

Rabindranath Tagore's life is notable for the significant transformation of his persona from a narrow one as an eastern romantic mystic to a broad one as a concerned global citizen. In his early attempts as a poet to understand the mystery surrounding the unique human soul and the divine, he tried to combine spiritual and romantic ideas. As time went on, however, he increasingly started to give voice to the thoughts of the colonised and oppressed people and expressed his passionate desire to be recognised as one of them. The modernist and nonconformist attitude of his later works demonstrates this change. (Sen, 1997; Das Gupta, 2004; Bhattacharya, 2017). Quite obviously, this aspect of his life was somewhat overlooked by his ostensible admirers who imposed upon him the title 'Gurudev' (Mentor) and converted him into a sacred idol.

This criticism came from both the west, and India. For example, W B Yeats, who was primarily responsible for forming the synthetic image of Tagore as a mystic poet in the West found problems with his later works (Hurwitz, 1964). Amartya Sen in his brilliant essay "Tagore and his India," has rightly pointed out that the "neglect and even shrill criticism" that Tagore's later writings received from these early admirers arose from the "inability of Tagore's many-sided writings to fit into the narrow box in which they wanted to place and keep him". According to historian Tapan Roychoudhury, Tagore is only known as a writer or a mystic to people who do not read Bengali. The fact that around two-thirds of his writings are serious essays, largely on the political and socioeconomic issues in India and the crisis of civilisation, has been more or less neglected in Tagore research, the author continues.

Tagore's outlook for peacebuilding and his literary works

Tagore's works reflect both his global outlook and his quest for peace. His poetry, songs, stories, and dramas express his deep love for nature, his compassion for the suffering masses, his appreciation for the diverse traditions of the world, and his hope for a better future. His novels, such as *Gora*, *Ghare Baire*, and *Jogajog*, explore the complex issues of identity, religion, politics, and social change in colonial India. His essays, lectures, and letters address various topics of global significance, such as education, freedom, democracy, humanism, internationalism, and disarmament. His paintings, which he started to create late in his life, show experimentation with different styles and techniques from both Eastern and Western art. Tagore's legacy as a global citizen and a peacemaker continues to inspire people around the world today.

VII. Tagore's concept taken from Vedas

Tagore's view from Indian philosophy on global peace

The ancient Indian philosophical traditions had a profound impact on Tagore led him to believe that Truth, Love, and Bliss were the three pillars of the ultimate reality. According to Sen (2017), he held the view that "Indian philosophical traditions teach of the training of Mukti, the release of the soul" (Tagore, 1931). The *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Upanishads*, which emphasised the ideals of *ahimsa* (non-violence), *satyagraha* (truth force), and *Advaita*, had a profound influence on Tagore's worldview (non-duality).

Tagore respected Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent struggle against British colonial rule in India, but he also questioned Gandhi's overdependence on tradition and religion. He asked India to adopt modernity and science, but without sacrificing its spiritual and cultural legacy—this being a direct challenge to western writers like Marx and Durkheim who predicted that the "modern" and "pre-modern" could not mix. He also asked India to offer its wisdom and creativity to the world, not by forcing its agenda or interests on others, as the British did in their global empire. Tagore conveyed his vision of global citizenship and peace through his literary works, such as his poems, essays, novels, plays and songs.

Tagore's view from Vedic tradition.

Tagore as a poet-philosophe explored the metaphysical unity of all beings, which he called the Supreme Man. He believed that humans have a dual nature, similar to what Durkheim (1912) described as the individual and the collective self. The individual self is our limited and personal expression, while the collective self is our awareness of the universal and eternal reality (Sen, 2017). He argued that we can achieve freedom and happiness only by transcending our individual self and realizing our collective self through love, knowledge and creativity. He used various poetic images and symbols to express his metaphysical vision, such as light, flowers, boats, flutes, palaces, etc. These symbols represent different aspects of God's creation, human life, spiritual enlightenment and divine joy. These views e borrowed from the Vedic traditions which emphasize the importance of Global peace and universal citizenship.

For example, he saw light as a symbol of love, particularly God's love for humanity which animated the core of human life. The flower is a symbol of vitality, freshness, joy, love, devotion and affection, as well as the cycle of life and death. The boat is a symbol of a human journey across the ocean of life, which can be calm or turbulent. The flute, he said, is a symbol of God's music, which fills the heart with bliss and harmony. Tagore's metaphysical outlook also influenced his idea of global peace and global citizenship, which he articulated through

his concept of “*Visva-Bharati*” or “*the communion of the world with India*” (Bhattacharya, 2013). He established a university with this name in Santiniketan, West Bengal, where he aimed to create a place of learning that fostered intercultural dialogue, universal humanism and cosmopolitanism (Gupta, 2010). He imagined a global community of people who would see themselves in others and respect and appreciate the diversity and beauty of life and culture on Earth. He called this ideal person “the universal man” or “the man who has the magnanimity to realize himself in others”. According to the great poet,

“মানুষ যে কেবল নিজের মধ্যে আছে তা নয়, সকলে তাকে যা জানে সে জানার মধ্যেও সে অনেকখানি আছে। ... তাই ‘আপনাকে জানো’ এই কথাটা শেষ কথা নয়, ‘আপনাকে জানাও’ এটাও খুব বড়ো কথা।”

“A person is not only what he is within himself, but also what others know him to be. ... That is why ‘know yourself’ is not the final word, ‘make yourself known’ is also a very big thing.”. [translated by Author from Bengali text]

Tagore in short was the apostle of Truth, Virtue & Beauty (Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram), the main theme of those ancient texts, i.e., Vedas and Upanishads. He viewed the Supreme Being as being all-powerful, all-present, and all-knowing, and he had a great deal of faith in Him. Tagore claimed that Brahma shows Himself to mankind and the natural world. He was an advocate for teaching about the intimate kinship that existed between God, Man, and Nature.

Tagore’s view about truth, virtue and beauty

In Tagore’s view, a person’s inner spirit and moral principles, rather than their place of origin, ethnicity, religion, or nationality, constitute their genuine identity. The greatest education, in his opinion, goes beyond merely imparting knowledge and helps us live in peace with the rest of creation. Tagore had the utmost respect for the Vedas, the canonical Hindu scriptures. For him, the Vedas represented the universal harmony and truth that transcends all other religions and all nations. In his article “The Religion of Man,” Tagore asserted that the Vedas are more like a never-ending stream of learning than a book (Hellal, 1971). Tagore advocated for a world culture that would recognize and honour the diversity of human civilizations. In this respect he goes beyond what in the west is known as phenomenology and social constructionism Tagore asserted that “we are the verses of the world’s grand poetry” (Watson, 2008). He desired to foster communication and cultural exchange so that people of other cultures may share successes and failures and grow from them. To foster an environment where people from all nations and backgrounds could interact and share their knowledge and creativity, he founded Visva-Bharati University (Gupta, 2010).

He also urged people to take action and responsibility for creating a better world, as he said, “You can’t cross the sea merely by standing and staring at the water.” Tagore’s concept of global peace and global citizenship faces many challenges and opportunities in our interconnected world. On one hand, Tagore’s concept has been interpreted, appropriated, or co-opted by different actors and agendas in the past and present. For example, some colonial or nationalist forces have used Tagore’s concept to justify their domination or resistance over others. Some religious or secular forces have used Tagore’s concept to promote their dogma or ideology over others. Some elitist or populist forces have used Tagore’s concept to advance their interests or agendas over others.

On the other hand, Tagore’s concept has also been inspiring and influenced many people and movements in the past and present. Most obviously, his vision is central to modern Bangladeshi identity where the national anthem is a song he wrote, and there is a holiday in his honor, and university chairs explore his thoughts. Leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King Jr., and Dalai Lama have followed Tagore’s concept to fight for peace and justice in their contexts. Some educators like Maria Montessori, Paulo Freire, John Dewey, or Howard Gardner have adopted Tagore’s concept to innovate and transform their pedagogies. Some artists like Pablo Picasso, Ravi Shankar, Bob Dylan, and Satyajit Ray have expressed Tagore’s concept through their works (Bhattacharya, 2013). Where The Mind Is Without Fear, is a poem that expresses Tagore’s hope for a free and fearless India that transcends the boundaries of nation, religion, and gender. He writes:

“Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high

Where knowledge is free

Where the world has not been broken up into fragments

By narrow domestic walls

Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.”

– Rabindranath Tagore, “Gitanjali 35” from Gitanjali (Song Offerings, 1913)

Ekla Chalo Re (Walk Alone), is a song that encourages women to assert their independence and dignity in the face of oppression and adversity. He writes:

“If they answer not to thy call walk alone

If they shut doors and do not hold up the light when the night is troubled with storm,

O thou unlucky one

With the thunder flame of pain ignite thy own heart

And let it burn alone."

-Rabindranath Tagore - Verses - Poems - 40 (If They Answer Not), 2023

Such works illustrate Tagore's deep understanding of the complexities and challenges of citizenship and peace in India and the world (Munshi, 2011). They also demonstrate his humanistic and universalistic approach to these issues, which transcends the boundaries of nation, religion, and gender. Tagore's writings can inspire us to rethink our notions of citizenship and peace in the light of his insights and values.

Rabindranath Tagore was a remarkable thinker and leader who inspired many people with his vision of global citizenship and peace (Bhadury, 2021). His ideas and insights are still relevant and valuable today, as we face many challenges and opportunities in our interconnected world. He taught us to respect and appreciate nature, embrace diversity and creativity, transcend nationalism and violence, and act with courage and optimism. Tagore's concept of global peace and global citizenship is a valuable and relevant source of inspiration and guidance for the contemporary world.

VIII. Conclusion

Rabindranath Tagore explored the value of nature and the environment for human well-being. He was deeply influenced by the beauty and diversity of nature, and he expressed his admiration and reverence for it in his poems and songs. He also warned against the dangers of industrialization and urbanization, which he saw as threats to the natural balance and harmony of life. A third theme that Tagore addressed was the role of patriotism and nationalism in global affairs. He was a proud Indian who loved a country and culture which then spanned today's India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, but he was also critical of the narrow-mindedness and violence that often-accompanied any kind of nationalism. He advocated for a broader vision of humanity that transcended national boundaries and interests.

Tagore's works illustrate the richness of South Asian culture, particularly Indian culture, in contrast to Western culture. He was a multifaceted artist, who produced novels, poems, short stories, plays, essays, and songs, as well as paintings and music. He was also a visionary thinker, who advocated for social reform, humanism, nationalism, internationalism, and peace. He was the first non-European and the first lyricist to win the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913 for his collection of poems "Gitanjali," which was praised for its sensitivity, freshness and beauty (Varghese, 2020). His works express his profound insight and appreciation of the diverse and complex aspects of Indian culture, such as its languages, religions, philosophies, traditions, customs, arts, and history. He also addressed the modern challenges and opportunities that India faced in the early 20th century, such as colonialism, nationalism, industrialization, education, gender, caste, class, etc. He was a critic of the British Raj and a supporter of independence from Britain. Tagore's works also show his interest in and respect for other South Asian cultures, especially those of Southeast Asia. He travelled extensively to countries like Sri Lanka, Burma (Myanmar), Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, China, Japan, Iran etc. He established cultural ties and exchanges with the people and institutions of these countries. He also traced the Indian influence and heritage in these regions. He valued the diversity and uniqueness of each culture but also recognised the commonalities and affinities among them. He was an proponent of the Bengal Renaissance, a cultural and social movement that aimed to revive the glory of Bengal and India despite the context of British colonialism. Tagore's works are not only a testimony to the richness of South Asian culture, but also a contribution to it. He enriched and widened the scope and depth of South Asian literature and art by introducing new forms, styles, themes, languages, and techniques. He freed Bengali literature from the traditional models based on classical Sanskrit and used colloquial language instead. He also created new genres of music and dance-drama that blended Indian and Western elements. He also inspired and stimulated other South Asian writers and artists to express their creativity and originality.

His vision of a harmonious and humane society can inspire us to overcome our differences and work together for the common good. His message of universal love and compassion can guide us to respect and care for each other, and all living beings on our planet. His example of global leadership and creativity can motivate us to use our skills and abilities to make positive changes in the world. However, his concept also requires critical reflection and contextualization to avoid misinterpretation or misuse by different actors or agendas (Ghosh, 2015). His concept also requires further research and practice to address the current issues and conflicts that we face in our global society. Therefore, I suggest that future studies should explore how Tagore's concept can be applied to different domains such as politics, economics, environment, culture, or education. I also suggest that future practitioners should experiment with how Tagore's concept can be implemented in different settings such as schools, communities, organizations, or media. He was truly a global citizen who lived by his words, *"We live in the world when we love it."*

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