

**Introduction to Modern Indian Political Thought**  
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**Lecture – 05**  
**Rabindranath Tagore: Nationalism**

Hello everyone. Today in this lecture we are going to discuss our next thinker that is Rabindranath Tagore.

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**RABINDRANATH TAGORE**

Key themes :

- Nationalism
- Cosmopolitanism
- Idea of man

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And we will be looking at his views on nationalism, cosmopolitanism and also his ideas on man. In today's lecture we will be basically looking at the intellectual or the historical political context in which Rabindranath Tagore, a moralist poet, a literary figure engaged with the major debates in the politics of his time. So, we will situate Rabindranath Tagore and his thought in the larger context of intellectual and political happenings debate and discussion taking place in the India of that time and some of the challenges that world as a whole was facing.

So, will situate Rabindranath Tagore in the larger intellectual political context and also then examined or describing in this lecture his views on nationalism. So, Rabindranath Tagore is a very prominent or intellectual giant in modern Indian political thought. But then, he is a very straightforward, simple articulation of many complex issues that India and world was facing, and he is very relevant even for our contemporary times. So, just

to understand his straightforwardness and clarity on many of the issues that he was engaged with in India and the world was facing. This comes from his unpretending news or in any theoretical magazine.

So, he saw the problem, largely through his own experience, through his own observation, through his widely he was perhaps the most traveled Indian of his generation in the words of Ramachandra Guha. So, through these experiences, he saw the problem as it is without using any theoretical pretensions or presumptions and that gives some clarity in his thought and thinking. And that is very significant about Rabindranath Tagore.

And why he is still relevant that we can understand from the contemporary debates that is going on in India on nationalism. What is nationalism? How far or on what ground we should all feel generally patriotic and have pride on a nation or a geographical territory? Is it a geographical territory or it is something more than that is it an idea? And if it is an idea of how that idea is very different from this geographical entity and on that basis, all kind of xenophobic populist, ideas or nation and nationalism.

So, many of you might be familiar that in last year there was a debate in India on nationalism or anti nationalism or you know patriotic or less patriotic or less nationalism. So, all kind of debates surrounds on nationalism which is which is a still very relevant, but Rabindranath Tagore was someone who was who provide or who provided the critique of not a kind of nationalism whether it is Indian or British or French or US or Japan or Chinese. But, he was he provided the theoretical critique to the whole idea of nationalism itself that is the something very significant in Rabindranath Tagore. And, yet he was someone who wrote the anthem for two nation India and Bangladesh and also his writings influence while there was composition of Sri Lankan National Anthem going on.

So, there is a kind of uniqueness about Rabindranath Tagore when it comes to nation and nationalism, we will discuss it in today's lecture. In contemporary times the way there is a projection of nation as a kind of a kind of powerful or all appropriating ideal which is very problematic right. And then once you make something too sacred to our power, then you deny you undermine some other alternative possibilities opinions and ideas or nation. So, that that we nation which has and why nation and nationalism remain a

powerful force in modern history precisely, because of its cultural roots one and second cultural psychological roots among the people among the communities. And second because of its liberating potentials. So, it transcends the other kind of descriptive identities beat caste raise family clan ethnicity language

So nation, try to bind people together to develop a kind of horizontal solidarity. So, that is them. So, there are different waves of nationalism started in Europe and also in Latin American countries, and then the third world anti colonial movements during that phase of nationalism. It provided the platform and potentialities to liberate the suppressed or colonized community from the oppressive rule of the colonized or imperialist power colonizing or imperialist power. So, nationalism has very powerful liberating potential in itself.

Now, the other side of nationalism was it also leads to violence, it also lead to imperial war which is also known as world war 1 and 2 largely, because of the competing or competitive imperialist power guided by their national narrow limited interest at the cost of larger global or interest of the humanity as such. So, Rabindranath Tagore and his engagement with nationalism through his travels through his observation was a result of looking at these both sides of nationalism and then he presented his in.

Again in contemporary times, there is this and there is this tendency to project nationalism as all powerful idea immune from all kinds of scrutiny's or challenges. That is something which is problematic and many people in contemporary times also arguing about such definitions such articulation of nationalism. Rabindranath Tagore was once which he wrote in 1917 when in India or in many third world Asian African countries nationalism was a very powerful idea. So, that makes Rabindranath Tagore a very powerful modern Indian political thinker. And, as I said his simplicity his unpretentious approach to the challenges and the problem India and world was facing makes him something even more fascinating to read and discuss.

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**A BRIEF INTRODUCTION**

- Period: 1861 -1941
- Rabindranath Tagore was the youngest son of Debendranath Tagore, himself a leader of the Brahmo Samaj. Tagore was mostly taught at home and was sent to England for formal schooling which he did not complete. In his mature years he started his experimental school at Shantiniketan and tried to impart education following the Upanishadic ideals.
- Tagore was a prolific and accomplished poet, novelist, essayist, painter, and playwright. He was an early success in his native Bengal and through the translations he soon attained great fame in the West and eventually embark upon the visiting, lecturing in different parts of the world. It is rightly said for the world he represent the voice of spiritual India – an Oriental Guru, and for India he became a great living institution.
- Tagore made significant contributions to the development of Indian philosophy in the early twentieth century. But he is lesser known as a political philosopher.

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So, now if we look at Rabindranath Tagore and his personal political involvement in the challenges of the India, he was the youngest among the fourteen's sons of; Rabindranath Tagore who himself was the leader of Brahmo Samaj. And if you remember, the Brahmo Samaj was established by Raja Ram Mohan Roy and it projected them monastic ideals of worship following the new or innocence modern interpretation of Upanishads. And Tagore's family was deeply engaged with such kind of reinterpretation of Vedas and Upanishads. Even is great grandfather work Debendranath Tagore was closely associated with Raja Ram Mohan Roy.

So, his father Debendranath Tagore was a leader of Brahmo Samaj and that enables him from the very beginning from his childhood to engage with many reformist ideals of modern Bengal. So, his learning was mostly done at home and when he was 17, he was sent to England for formal schooling which he could not complete and came back to India.

In later years he of course, continued with the German Zamindari that his family had and that enables him to understand the plights of the masses and also the oppressive nature of the zamindari system which he in his later years completely disassociated himself from. But what he also did after coming from England, and starting his family or associating himself with the family zamindari system, he started an experimental school in Shantiniketan which becomes the platform or site for many of his ideals. And he



experimented the schooling from the early childhood to the higher level and it continues to practice many of his teachings in when in contemporary times.

So, he experimented his mod model of education which is largely derived from Upanishadic ideals. As I was saying that Raja Ram Mohan Roy and his contribution to the religious reforms and interpretation of many Upanishadic text has a great influence in modern Bengali intelligentsia. And great grandfathers and father of Tagore was closely influenced and associated with Raja Ram Mohan Roy family. And, that allowed him to think about modern education by following the Upanishadic ideals which he started in Shantiniketan. What we find in Tagore is a very interesting combination or innocence is sensitive nature allowed him to understand different situations, human circumstances, human dilemmas more like a literary person as a poet, as a novelist. But he also engage with the many political challenges which we will discuss.

So, what we find in Tagore that, he was a prolific and accomplished poet and many scholars argue that Tagore was more like a poet philosopher and certainly a reluctant political philosopher. So, to say so he was a prolific and accomplished poet, novelist, essayist, painter and playwright. So, he combined all genres of literary creative exercise and he expressed his views in different platforms in different ways as a poet, novelist, essayist, painter, playwright or he composed many music's as well.

So, in his native Bengal he was an early success from the very early childhood he attained a great success in his native Bengal and through the translation of his words he soon attained fame in the west also. So, Elliott certainly played a very significant role in making his translation or his work available and widely read or familiar in the west as well.

So, this frame in the west eventually enabled him to visit and deliver lecture in different parts of the world and that is why it is also said that he was the widely traveled Indian of his generation. He traveled almost all continents all parts of the world and engage with the intellectuals, develop friendship, developed a kind of dialogue between East and West that he was envisioning. So, he visited and delivered the lectures in different parts of the world. And then there is a kind of representation through Tagore. So, for the world Tagore represented the voice of a spiritual India or what Ramachandra Guha called an oriental guru.

So, in the eyes of the world the way Rabindranath Tagore is received in the world is more like a spiritual wise man from India or an oriental guru. But for Indians and especially for his native Bengali, a speaker he became a great living institution in himself.

So, he did a lot of experimentation not just in his literary works, but also in actual practical challenges that his country or the world was facing. So, the Shantiniketan, Sriniketan are some of the great visionary works that he did. So, that is the kind of representation of Tagore for the world he is a spiritual voice representing India and seems as an oriental guru. But for Indians and for his natives he was a kind of institution in himself.

Now, this makes all this situate Rabindranath in a very unique situation where he was engaging deeply with the political debates, but reluctant to participate in the active politics of his time. So, he has a kind of very specific location even within his own country and if he generates in many of his autobiographical or letters to his friends. So, he understood his position especially, when he is criticizing the whole idea of nationalism even when, nationalism was becoming a mass politics or taking a form of mass politics under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi which we will discuss later. So, Tagore has a very unique location within India and also for the world.

Now, what we find is Tagore made a significant contribution to the development of Indian philosophy in the early 20th century. But he is lesser known as a political philosopher. As I was saying that he is more in the world of poetry, novels, paintings, composing music's and other kind of expression experimentation and all and less of a reluctant kind of political philosopher. But whatever he has written certainly his essay on nationalism is a very profound writing and very fascinating read to understand.

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- In 1913 he became the first non-European to win the Nobel prize in literature.
- Some of his works are- **Gitanjali** (song offerings), **Gora** (Fair-faced), **Ghare-Baire** (The home and the world)
- His compositions were chosen by two nations as their national anthems: India's '*Jana Gana mana*' and Bangladesh's '*Amar Shonar Bangla*'. It is said that Sri Lankan national anthem is also inspired by his work.

Now, to give his personal achievement: in 1913, he was the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize in literature which was given to him for his composition which we called Gitanjali. And Gitanjali a text which is widely read and it forms the consciousness, not just for modern Indian consciousness or self-food, but also many other individuals. In many parts of the world continue to learn, continue to read his Gitanjali and it is cited as one of the most widely read texts of modern time. So, for Gitanjali, he was given this Nobel Prize in 1913 and his other words which is innumerable. There is more than 18000 pieces of his writings in Bengali and in his translation in English and mediated since one can well understand the influence or the geographical reach of Rabindranath Tagore in different parts of the world.

So, the other important works for our purpose is Gora and Ghare-Baire. So, through the novel, also he was engaging with the political situation and political challenges India facing. Now as I was saying that his compositions were chosen by the two nation for the National Anthems in India, the Jana Gana Mana. He composed in 1911 and there is a controversy, but this some many people are arguing many people have argued that this he composed for George Vth visiting India.

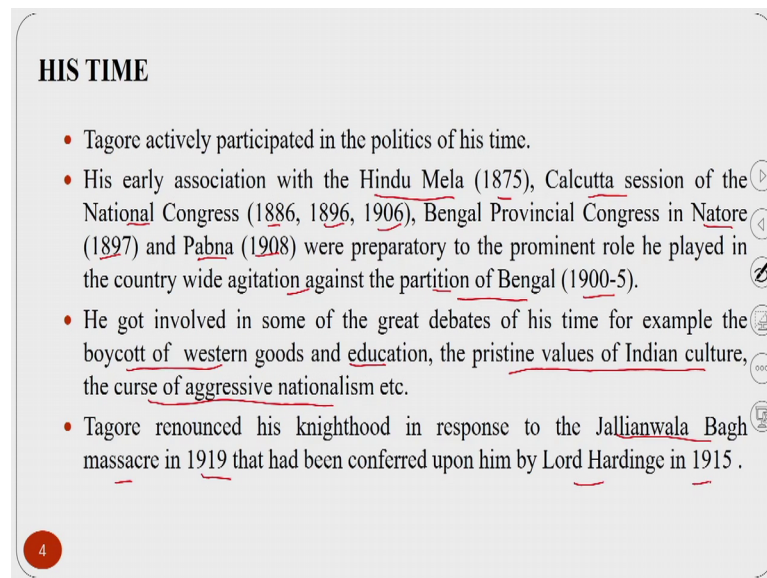
But that is not the case and he himself clarified such apprehension in his later to his friends that he has written it as he has written many other poems or songs and that was something which came out of his sensibility his understanding the kind of engagement he was having in his own intellectual mind escape. And then it comes as a kind of

spontaneous utterance from his deeper psychological, mental engagement with some of the challenges that he was facing.

In Rabindranath Tagore many of his composition is that is why very simple full of clarity without any kind of theoretical presumptions or assumptions.

So, Jana Gana Mana which becomes the National Anthem of India was composed by Tagore. Even when he is very critical of nationalism be it Indian or any other kind of nationalism and Bangladesh, Amar Shonar Bangla. So, these two anthem is composed by Tagore himself and he influenced the composition of national and Nawab Sri Lanka as well

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**HIS TIME**

- Tagore actively participated in the politics of his time.
- His early association with the Hindu Mela (1875), Calcutta session of the National Congress (1886, 1896, 1906), Bengal Provincial Congress in Natore (1897) and Pabna (1908) were preparatory to the prominent role he played in the country wide agitation against the partition of Bengal (1900-5).
- He got involved in some of the great debates of his time for example the boycott of western goods and education, the pristine values of Indian culture, the curse of aggressive nationalism etc.
- Tagore renounced his knighthood in response to the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in 1919 that had been conferred upon him by Lord Hardinge in 1915 .

So, if we look at basically his time, what we find is Tagore although was a poet continuing with his family zamindari; Zamindari System yet he was taking active participation at least in the initial years of in the politics of his time. So, way back in 1875 in Hindu Mela or Mark Mela, he had active participation and also in the Calcutta session of Indian National Congress in 1886, 1896 and 1906 he was actively associated and take active participation in that listen. Even in the Bengal Provincial Congress in Natore in 1897 and prominent 1908 becomes the kind of preparatory ground for him to play a prominent role during the agitation against the Partition of Bengal, 1905 1900 to 1905.

And this is the Swadeshi movement which actually which was the beginning of his understanding his engagement with some of the powerful ideas such as nationalism and politics is combined with religion. And way back in 1875 itself through a very lesser non princely state in Tripura, he narrated he engaged with this powerful or unholy alliance between state power and the religion and that alliance enables a lot of on desired on intended problem and challenges for the society.

So, he was intellectually deeply engaged with this idea of combination of politics with religion and this xenophobic tendency in any popular movement. And from Swadesi also he gradually distend himself and Ghare Baire or whom and the world is a text which narrates his support as well as disenchantment with the whole political movement. And then he gradually enables him to distance himself with the actual practical politics of his time. And he engaged with those issues intellectually through his essay and through his other intellectual works like novels, Ghare Baire and other things.

As he was saying that even when distancing himself physically from the active politics of his time, intellectually he was deeply engaged with the great debates of his time and certainly in one of our lecture we will discuss his debates with Gandhi and mass politics or non cooperation movement that was happening in India will touch here some part of it. But we will discuss in detail in one of our lecture

So, many debates he engaged with was the boycott of western goods. So, many Swadeshi reporters were arguing about or Gandhi certainly boycott foreign goods, foreign clothes, foreign textiles and other things or western education, pristine value of Indian culture and the curse of aggressive nationalism. So, these are some of the debates which occupied him intellectually for the long time.

And he although not directly involved in the day to day politics of practical mass politics or anti colonial a struggle, but he was very critical of the foreign rule foreign rule in India, and that kind of attachment with the nationalist cause. And yet critical of many evil or what he considered irrational practices in nationalism makes him a unique modern Indian political thinkers which was regarded by all the nationalist thinkers. And yet he remains critical to many of their policies and political agitations.

So, and he remain a strong critic of British rule in India, he wanted India to decide its own destiny to decide its own faith without any dependence on any foreign rule, British or other countries.

So, especially when in 1919 and the Jallianwala Bagh massacre happened, he renounced his knighthood which was given to him by Lord Hardinge's in 1915.

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Conditions that pushed the poet into the political arena :

- He belonged to one of the leading and most affluent Zamindar families of Bengal. As a practitioner of Zamindari he could sense the cruelty associated with the system and this made him genuinely apologetic and embarrassed. Therefore, he was also critical of zamindar's claim to represent the interest of the people.
- He also criticized the narrow opportunism and utter slavishness of the so called intelligentsia within the Congress. According to him, this group within the Congress had no constructive ideal. So he took upon himself a moral responsibility or patriotic duty to save the country from the political deception of the self-styled political leaders of his time.

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And along with his countrymen, he joined the protest against this brutal act of or completely unjust act or on defensible act of British administration in India. So, that shows a kind of relationship Tagore had with the practical political challenges that India was facing where he was aloof or maintained a distance from the active practical political agitations. And yet associated himself with condemning some of the brutal activities of British like Jallianwala massacre in 1919. And intellectually he remained deeply engaged with some of the challenges of India and the world as well.

So, some of the condition that pushed the poet, as I was saying the Tagore was more a kind of poet philosopher to the politically arena is one, he belong to one of the leading and most affluent Zamindari families of bengal. So, starting with Debendranath Tagore and Rabindranath Tagore and their household was involved in not just the social religious reform movement that was started by Raja Ram Mohan Roy. But, they also had a stake in many business including zamindari and money lending or other similar activities.

So, Rabindranath belong to a leading and affluent Zamindari families of Bengal and as a practitioner of Zamindari, he could sense because of the sensitivity he had developed from his childhood, the cruelty that is associated with the system and this made him genuinely apologetic embarrassed about the whole system of Zamindari. And which he gradually come to believe and asserted in many of his writings and he believed that Zamindari's claim to represent the interest of the people was simply flawed.

Because there cannot be a zamin or proper dialogue or understanding of each other in a relationship of master and slave. So, he was very critical of an apologetic about the whole Zamindari System. And he gradually and eventually gradually become critical of it and eventually dissociated himself with the whole system of Zamindari. But that comes much later, but he developed the criticism as he continued with the continued to look after the Zamindari's that his family whole.

So, he was very critical of Zamindari's system and he was also very critical of the narrow opportunism and utter slaveshness that he found in many so, called intelligentsia within the congress. He was very critical of their opportunism and also slavishness and he believed that this group the so, called intelligentsia within the congress really had no constructive ideal. And therefore, he took upon himself and considered it his moral responsibility and patriotic duty to save the country from the political deception of this self styled political leaders of his time.

So, this opportunistic and slavish nature of many political leaders or self designated political leaders of his time makes him more critical of the activities of the congress.

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- He was against the idea of revolting against the symbolic, sporadic and short lived promise of 'self sufficiency' held out by 'Charkha' movement of Mahatma Gandhi.
- He was equally critical of the tendency of uncritical acceptance demanded of the people in Gandhiji's programme for non-cooperation. He was skeptical of leaders like Gandhiji's call for boycotting the foreign goods or clothes in the belief that western textiles were impure. Tagore believed that if may influence public mind by using untruth to sustain a political agitation
- He opposed the non-cooperation movement launched by Gandhi in 1920's as it was based on blind national pride. He argued that parochial anti-west tendencies within the national movement can not develop India's cooperation with the international community.

And many of the techniques and the form of political agitation adopted by congress and its many leaders including Gandhi. Rabindranath has serious difference with such political agitation and political tactics

So, he was against the idea of revolting is the symbolic sporadic and short lived promises of self sufficiency held out by the Charkha movement of Mahatma Gandhi. So, the reason for his critique was the economic viability. So, without providing an alternative and that he explained and expressed in different ways at different platforms. So, during the Swadeshi, when many young students came to him asking for his permission to allow him to leave their schools to leave their school to join the political agitation; and he did not give such permission. And that makes them agitated agitated about or apprehensive about his genuine love for the motherland for the nation as such. And Ghare Baire is a kind of depiction of such inner tension that Rabindranath Tagore was having.

So, he was supportive of it and yet his method his techniques was very different from the many leaders many political leaders argue, but certainly Mahatma Gandhi his symbolic use of charkha and other things to counter and to revolt against the British was very problematic for Rabindranath Tagore. He was also equally critical of the tendency of uncritical acceptance demanded of the people in Gandhi's his program of non cooperation here one thing is interesting to know that when Gandhiji was articulating about non cooperation in India, Tagore was in West and he wrote a letter to his friend



C.F. Andrews where he explained his irony or his understanding of this ironical situation in which he himself find in. That ironical situation is when Rabindranath Tagore was preaching about the east west dialogue or interaction or genuine interaction as a two to self defining entity or tradition and that dialogue will help in solving a lot of the challenges that humanity as a whole is facing. So, when he is preaching such things in the West in his own homeland in India, Gandhi was discussing or mobilizing for the non cooperation against the British and that he finds very ironical very contradictory very problematic in agitation to a sense.

So, more than that, so this may be the tactical understanding and there is a response of Gandhi to such kind of understanding of his and his program of non cooperation which he believed is not really about setting ones window or whom from any kind of outside ideas, but to use it as a tool for political liberation and independence. These we will discuss in the lecture when we will discuss this dialogue between Gandhi and Tagore. But here the point he is making is that many of the Gandhian of principles and ideals, we are followed by a number of Indians millions of Indians on his face value. And this uncritical acceptance of Gandhi and his ideals make Rabindranath Tagore very apprehensive of this whole populism or gino fabric tendency in such kind of mass politics or nationalism.

So, he was skeptical of leaders like Gandhis is called for by quoting the foreign goods or clothes in the belief that western textiles were impure. Now these kinds of symbolic religious terms used for political agitation or sustaining a political agitation Tagore found a kind of element of true. So, similarly when flood was happening in Bihar and Gandhiji's response to such flood was like it is the curse of god to wipe out the sins committed by the people that kind of irrational response on the part of Gandhi or simply untruth was very problematic and Tagore was very critical of such political agitation and political tactics.

Now, he also opposed the non cooperation movement lost by Gandhi in 1920's at it was based on the blind national pride he argued that the parochial anti-west tendencies within the national movement cannot develop India's cooperation with the international community. So, that that is the point I was saying when he wrote his later to C.F. Andrews while he is arguing for interaction genuine dialogue between East and the West

India. And the West this none of non cooperation attitude or non cooperation movement, he find the philosophy behind such cooperation very problematic.

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**ON NATIONALISM** *3/11/20*

- Rabindranath Tagore wrote an essay in 1917 titled “Nationalism in India,” in which he considers the specific challenges faced by India in developing a national self-consciousness as well as the need for that consciousness to be grounded in Indian cultural sensibilities.
- According to Tagore, the real problem of India was not political, but it was social. It was a condition that he says prevails not only in India but among all nations i.e called race problem.
- India has acknowledged the real differences between races but yet seek for some basis of unity through our saints like Nanak, Kabir etc.

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Now, if we discuss on nationalism and his views on nationalism, what do you find these and that is essay or nationalism which he wrote in 1917. And that is in between the First World War, 1914 to 1918 he and as I was saying from 1875 onwards, he was deeply engaged intellectually with this combination of state power with the religion, ideals of nation or nationalism. And he expressed that articulation in this essay called Nationalism in India in which he considers the specific challenges faced by India in developing in national self consciousness as well as the need for that consciousness to be grounded in Indian cultural sensibilities.

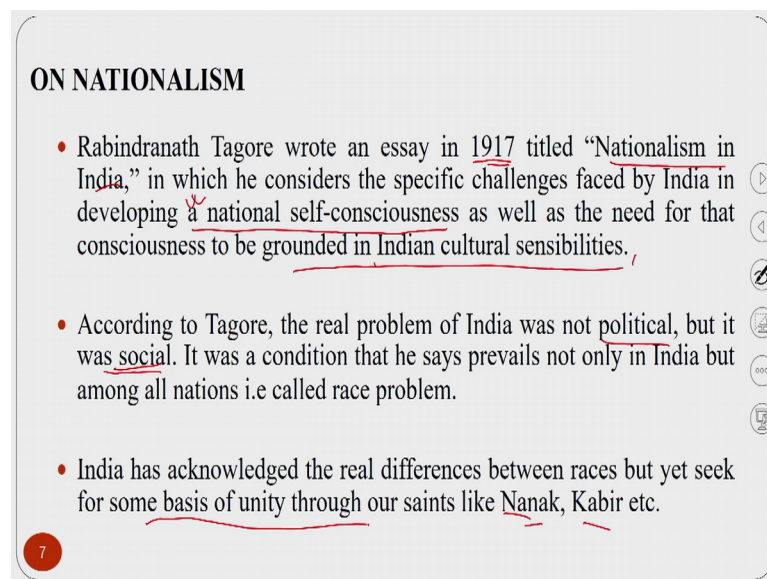
So, two things here which we need to keep in mind that India needs to develop a national self consciousness that feeling of solidarity the brotherhood. Now how this solidarity and brotherhood among the Indians will develop? Should it develop by following or imitating the western notion of nation? And he find it very dif difficult including Gandhi and some of his tendency. The word nation, he do not find any Indian equivalent to this word.

So, even in his Bengali writings he used its nation and wrote it like nation and not differently. So, what we find in Tagore that he wanted India to develop in a national self consciousness, but that self consciousness should be grounded in the Indian cultural

sensibility. And the many challenges that India was facing Tagore believed was a result of the cutoff that we modern Indian selfhood have developed due to their break from their own insane civilizational, cultural heritage. And he wanted that connection to be built to be made stronger. And only then, India can genuinely develop its own national self consciousness, and will be grounded in the cultural sensibilities of India not by merely imitating or accumulating the idols and that makes Rabindranath Tagore unique in many ways also.

So, unlike many other modern Indian thinkers, he was not just following or imitating or accumulating the ideas that was there in the modern western text through their thinkers, but his understanding of many modern challenges was based on his observation, his experiences or his connection with the new ways of interpreting about the instant Indian texts such as Vedas and Upanishads. And he wanted India to have that connection unbroken to develop its national self consciousness and that is that makes Tagore original and unique in many ways in terms of theorizing about the politics and nationalism.

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**ON NATIONALISM**

- Rabindranath Tagore wrote an essay in 1917 titled "Nationalism in India," in which he considers the specific challenges faced by India in developing a national self-consciousness as well as the need for that consciousness to be grounded in Indian cultural sensibilities.
- According to Tagore, the real problem of India was not political, but it was social. It was a condition that he says prevails not only in India but among all nations i.e called race problem.
- India has acknowledged the real differences between races but yet seek for some basis of unity through our saints like Nanak, Kabir etc.

So, for Tagore the real problem for India was not political, but it was social. And that without the whole idea of nationalism national self consciousness cannot be sustained, cannot be constructed by nationally bringing together different ideas sustaining any political agitation. But it should start from social level, from the society itself rather than some leader some top level understanding or articulation of Indian nationalism and then

percolating that idea to the ground level. He wanted this idea of nations' nationalism to be grounded in the social.

So, he founded this problem of social is not just in India, but in other parts of the world as well. And how that social can be constructed in Indian context? He wanted the leaders and his fellow countrymen to follow the examples from Kabir, Nanak, Chaitanya, and many others and sages who talked about the social harmony, solidarity, fellowships, companions that or the love for each other that makes any society any country strong. And that one can learn from them saints like Nanak, Kabir and got this and that he thought as the basis of unity one can develop in India which is a divided society based on cost and any other things.

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- He says that there is a need to prove our humanity by solving the internal differences through mutual help and finding some true basis for reconciliation.
- Rabindranath Tagore's reflections on the concepts and practices of civilisation, nationalism, and community are directly concerned with the nature of modern political power and its underlying assumptions about human life.

So, now he says that there is a need to prove our humanity by solving the internal differences through mutual help and finding some true basis for reconciliation. It should not be any artificial political construct, it has to have social grounding and that helps in creation of true reconciliation rather than just a kind of political construct of nationalism without a complementary social solidarity needs to be developed. So, the internal differences can be solved only through the mutual help and finding some true basis for reconciliation and that true basis is something which becomes very central in his thought on nationalism. And we Indian nationalism was projected by many of his contemporaries.

And we also find that in many of his thought whether it is on nation, civilization or community; the idea of individual the idea of men or idea of modern men modern moral men is very central and that is also connected with as I was saying in my introductory lecture. Many of the modern Indian thinkers we are not just arguing or responding to the challenges that India was facing and articulating about Indian nation and nationalism in isolation. But they were they were intellectually or morally or spiritually in cases of in cases like or windows idea nation and national you will discuss, they were also connected with the larger global challenges as well.

So, the humanity the causes of humility is some something much more bigger than a narrower limited understanding of nation and nationalism. And in all of that the role of human individual is more significant and so is with the case of Rabindranath Tagore. So, the modern political power, and its underlying assumptions about the human life and what should be the ideal human life, what should be the ideal humanity what should be moral or morality of that individual if something is there in Rabindranath Tagore; and his thinking also when he is terrorizing about the nation civilization or international global cosmopolitan community.

And at this point one needs to connect with the previous thinker we have discussed, Raja Ram Mohan Roy he wanted modern Indian self to develop a morality and ethics which is based not on irrational practices and customs, but their self belief. That self belief is based on their scientific rational inquiry with the scriptures with the practices. And if they are convinced, then that will lead to that would be the basis of their through ethics or morality.

So, similarly is the case with Rabindranath Tagore, we will discuss this point when we will discuss his idea on men.

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**Tagore on Nationalism :**

- “I am not against one nation in particular, but against the general idea of all nations. What is the Nation?...the wisdom of the Nation is not in its faith in humanity but in its complete distrust...Yes, this is the logic of the Nation. And it will never heed the voice of truth and goodness It will go on in its ring-dance of moral corruption, linking steel unto steel, and machine unto machine; trampling under its tread all the sweet flowers of simple faith and the living ideals of man.”
- “Nationalism is a great menace. It is the particular thing which for years has been at the bottom of India's troubles.”
- “Patriotism can't be our final spiritual shelter. I will not buy glass for the price of diamonds and I will never allow patriotism to triumph over humanity as long as I live.”

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Now, I wish to quote Tagore to understand his definition of Nationalism and why he is critical of nationalism. So, to quote Tagore what he says on nationalism is "I am not against one nation in particular, but against the general idea of all nations". As I was saying that he is not about against Indian nation or Chinese nation or French nation so to say, but the very general idea of nation as such. Now he defends what is the nation. The wisdom of the nation is not in its faith in humanity, but in its complete distrust. Yes, this is the logic of the nation and it will never need it will never heed the voice of truth and goodness.

So, what is saying is that the nation the wisdom of the nation that he has seen over two three decades. And certainly, during the First World War enables him to draw this conclusion that the wisdom of the nation is not in its faith in humanity or to heed the voice of truth or goodness, but the complete distressed or mistress that is the sign kana, a very organization of nation and national self interest

Now, it will go on its ring dance of moral corruption, linking steel unto steel and machine into machine, trampling under its trade all the sweet flower of simple faith and living ideals of men. So, he considered us ideals of nation and nationalism innately inherently problematic, because it leads to moral degeneration, moral corruption, mistrust and that is contrary to the simple living or the moral ideals of the individual and that makes him very proper very critical of this whole idea of nationalism note a

particular form of nationalism that is something very important to note. And the other explanation, one can give on this quotation is that nationalism teaches something which we do not want to see in the individual.

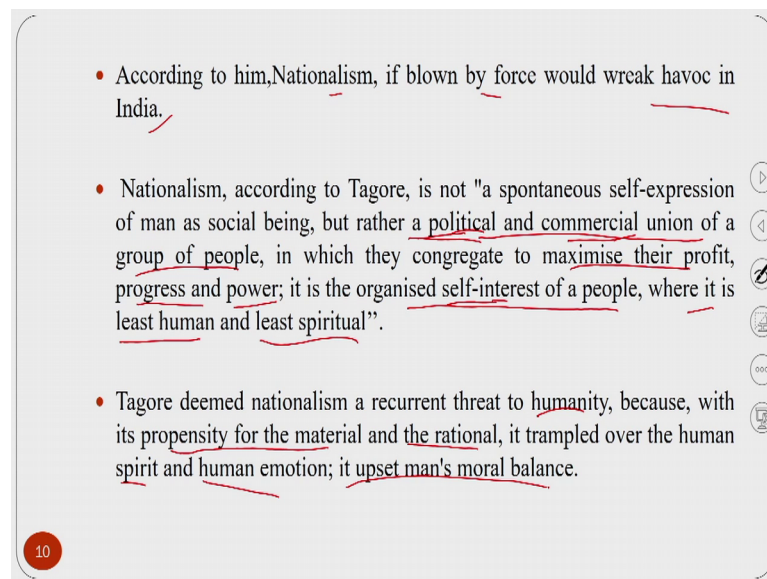
So, we want to have an individual which is moral which is a compassionate which is self sacrificing for the larger causes of humanity or the community nation is contrary to that kind of teaching which teaches self interest or selfish interest. So, the nation compete with each other to maximize their self interest. They teach to mistrust each other and that is something which he finds utterly unacceptable, because it teaches something in something and celebrate something which it do not want to see in the individual and that is the moral problem the intellectual bankruptcy of the whole idea of nation and nationalism that he finds very very problematic. So, nationalism he considered. Therefore, is a great meanness for the humanity as such because it do not allow the sweet flowers of simple faith and the living idols of the men.

Now, he also goes on to explain that is the final quote that is patriotism cannot be our final spiritual shelter. So, he was a patriotic, you he had sympathy for the cause of Indian nation to fight the operation of the abilities. Of course, he had some a criticism against the method and the political agitation that was followed, but nonetheless he was very sympathetic to the Indian cause for freedom a struggle. So, but he also understood the limitation of such patriotism and in many of his writings he has expressed this point that the nationalism the love for nation cannot be equated with love for love for god because to improve the society, to improve the community, one need to intellectually engage or understand or explain many of the challenges that is obstructing such improvement and empowerment.

So, what he writes is that patron patriotism cannot be our final spiritual shelter; I will not buy glass for the price of diamonds. And I will never allow patriotism to triumph over humanity as long as I live. So, that is a very powerful, emotional, moral response to the to the jingoistic or xenophobic understanding or explanation of nationalism that he was finding all around himself that lead to a lot of violence that perpetuate violence, mistrust among and between the communities or between the nation. So, he took refuge in the humanity and which he considered as the diamond and he do not want to substitute that with the narrow understanding of patriotism as defined by many of his contemporary.

So, what we can understand from this? These quotations from Rabindranath Tagore is his constant search for greater and greater interaction communication dialogue with other tradition, other culture and that cannot happen if it is done combined with mistrust or in pursuit of purely materialistic selfish interest. So, his us for spiritual unity or understanding of other is to be guided by love, respect, mutual trust and which he thought nationalism in the way it was practice is inherently, incapable of developing such mutual trust, love, respect which he was cherishing.

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- According to him, Nationalism, if blown by force would wreak havoc in India.
- Nationalism, according to Tagore, is not "a spontaneous self-expression of man as social being, but rather a political and commercial union of a group of people, in which they congregate to maximise their profit, progress and power; it is the organised self-interest of a people, where it is least human and least spiritual".
- Tagore deemed nationalism a recurrent threat to humanity, because, with its propensity for the material and the rational, it trampled over the human spirit and human emotion; it upset man's moral balance.

So, he thought that nationalism if blown by force would wreak havoc in India. And nationalism according to Tagore is not a spontaneous self expression of men as social being, but rather a political and commercial union of a group of people in which they congregate to maximize their profit progress and power. It is the organized self interest of a people where it is least human and least spiritual.

So, that is the problematic he had with the whole idea of nation where he do not consider he did not consider it as a kind of spontaneous or truthful self explanation of a group of people or men as social being, but a kind of political and commercial union of a group of people to maximize their power to maximize their profit and it is a kind of organized self interest. So, you do not want individual to be selfish, but you celebrate the selfishness in the nature. So, that kind of moral contradiction was deeply problematic for Tagore. And therefore, he considered this whole business of nation and nationalism as a least human

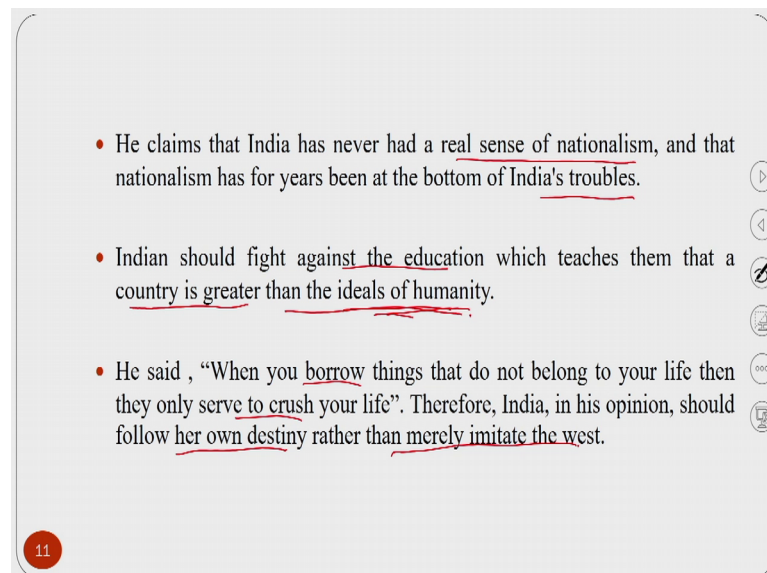


and least spiritual in his search was to greater and greater truth that can only be accomplished through moral, compassion, trust and humanity. The compassion for the humanity and that was the lifelong project of Tagore in search of Tagore through his writings be poetry novel, paintings, music's, traveling's interaction his latest to his friends and others.

So, that search for truth or spirituality is something which he considered desirable and in this organized political form of nation world there is inbuilt assumption about maximizing the self interest at the cost of other or the larger cause of humanity which he find very problematic. So, Tagore dim nationalism a recurrent threat to humanity because with its propensity for material and the rational, it trample over the human spirit human emotion and it upsets the men's morale balance. So, that is the kind of inner contradiction that is there with the nationalism.

So, he consider it a kind of great meanness or threat to the humanity because its focused on the rational or rationality at the cost of human emotions human a spiritual eyes. And also the moral fabric of individual is in contrast with the moral fabric of nation which is about maximizing the material interest and that he find very contradictory

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- He claims that India has never had a real sense of nationalism, and that nationalism has for years been at the bottom of India's troubles.
- Indian should fight against the education which teaches them that a country is greater than the ideals of humanity.
- He said , “When you borrow things that do not belong to your life then they only serve to crush your life”. Therefore, India, in his opinion, should follow her own destiny rather than merely imitate the west.

So, he claims that India has never had a real sense of nationalism and that nationalism has for years been the bottom of Indias troubles. So, for him the real problem for India is not nation or nationalism, but it is a list of the challenges for India for him the real

challenge is to develop a kind of social unity. And what should be the basis of social unity? Should it be the political construct of nation or it should be on the basis of some inner connection with the inner self of India to understand that inner a spiritual or inner self if a society or a community or a nation cut itself off from such inner self will it succeed as a nation will their will is true solidarity, true reconciliation. That is something he was more interested in rather than this problem of nationalism and defining the true meaning of nationalism for India.

So, what he believed was India should fight against the education which teaches them that a country is greater than the ideals of humanity. So, his refuse is always to the larger cause of humanity as one of his quote was stating that he do not want to trade off the patriotism as a glass for the causes of humanity which he considers a diamond. So, he wanted Indians to fight against the education which teach them that the country is greater than the larger cause of human.

So, he perfectly understood the moral or ethical location of nation in the larger community of the world. So, in contemporary times in fact, when you see many of the leaders arguing about their country first and their country prior to the other countries that gives you a kind of reflecting time to understand some of the inherent flawed of such pretensions about can we think of his country in isolation from the other countries in the times of certainly the contemporary globalized, world economic world which is more interdependent than when Tagore was writing.

So, certainly in his time also, the ideal of humanity comes always prior the idols of our nation and that he wanted Indians to learn and fight any kind of education which teach them that their country is greater than the ideals of humanity. He said when you borrow things that do not belong to your life, then they only serve to crush your loves and that he is critiquing against those leaders who wanted India to follow the path of Britain or to some other countries and for Tagore that was very problematic. And these tendencies they are in Gandhi and thought as well and we will discuss his views on Swaraj.

So, therefore, India in his opinion should follow her own destiny rather than merely imitating the wish. And that is the originality in his thinking which place him in a very distinct situation than many of the contemporary modern Indian thinkers.

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- Nationalism was the breeding ground for imperialism. Tagore also found the obsession with nationalism as a source of war, hatred and mutual suspicion between and among the nations. Tagore viewed nationalism as a danger to humanity.
- Tagore was opposed to the idea of the nation; he was even more fiercely opposed to India joining the bandwagon of nationalism. According to him, this would compromise India's history and identity as a culture and bring it under the shadow of the West.
- Tagore's animosity to nationalism is not that he was not patriotic or that he was anti-West. He believed in a symbiosis of the East and West, a 'deep association' or a living relationship between the two cultures; a creative unity that was possible only when the East had discovered its soul and its own identity.

So, Tagore nationalism was the breeding ground of for imperialism that resulted in world war one. So, Tagore also found the obsession with nationalism as a source of war hatred or mutual suspicion between among the nation. And Tagore viewed nationalism as a danger to humanity which we have just discussed. So, Tagore was opposed to the very idea of nation and note just a form of nation. And he was even more fiercely opposed to India joining the bandwagon of nationalism. So, there are many thinkers intellectuals thinking about India as a nation and Indian nation place in the community of nations including Gandhi, Nehru and many others and that a deeply distressed Tagore and his understanding of nationalism which he believed as the source of war, hatred and mutual suspicion which cannot help innocent or certainly not the ideals of humanity.

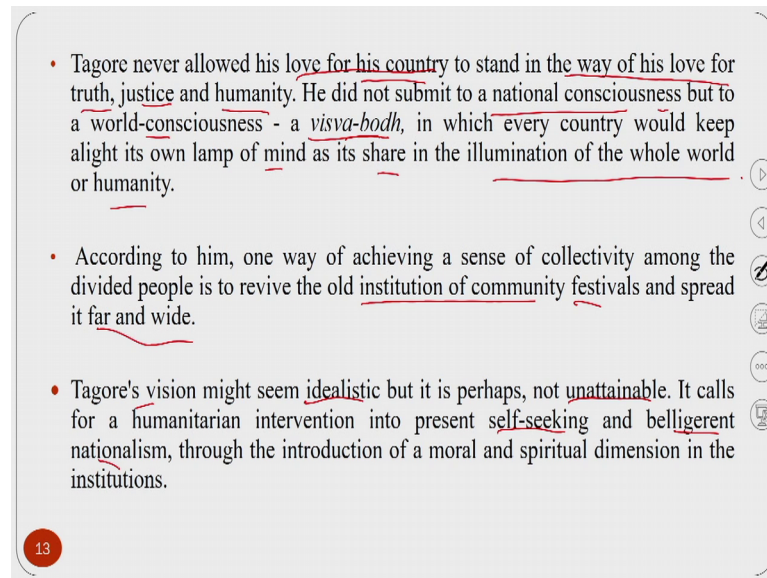
So, according to him this would compromise India's history and identity as a culture and bring it under the shadow of the way. So, this kind of blind imitation of waste and western path, Tagore believed will not allow India to develop its true character or its true identity and it will perpetually keep India in the shadow of the west and that he foresaw and many others would not see in that time. And that is why he was self conscious of this fact because of the popularity of nationalist movement nationally anti colonial struggle in India that it is difficult for Indians to understand his views, but he believed it at some point Indians will understand the larger ideals that he was thinking about and project for India that he has had.

So, Tagore's animosity to nationalism is not that he was not patriotic. So, that would be a mistake to understand Tagore and then consider him as a kind of you know unpatriotic or in contemporary vocabulary within quote and the national. So, his understanding of a nation and a national community is very different and he wanted India to develop its natural self consciousness which is based on its own cultural sensibilities and not on the basis of mere imitation of the western path.

So, Tagore animosity to nationalism is not that he was not patriotic or that he was anti west and that is also something which we need to understand when we say that he has some original contribution some original articulation about nation or national identity that does not make him anti west. In fact, he believed in his symbiosis of east and west the Shantiniketan is the experiment in that kind of engagement and dialogue between and across the civilizational and cultural heritage.

So, he wanted a deep association or a living relationship between the two culture that is India or the west or east and the west a creative unity that was possible only when the east had discovered its soul and its own identity. That discovery of its soul and its own identity cannot happen if that country is following or blindly imitating the west. So, it has to connect with its own self it is on cultural civilizational self and that is the whole focus of Rabindranath Tagore. And on the basis of that he was not someone arguing for anti west kind of rhetoric's, but a kind of deeper engagement in living relationship or interaction between or among different cultures especially between east and west or India in the west.

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- Tagore never allowed his love for his country to stand in the way of his love for truth, justice and humanity. He did not submit to a national consciousness but to a world-consciousness - a *visva-bodh*, in which every country would keep alight its own lamp of mind as its share in the illumination of the whole world or humanity.
- According to him, one way of achieving a sense of collectivity among the divided people is to revive the old institution of community festivals and spread it far and wide.
- Tagore's vision might seem idealistic but it is perhaps, not unattainable. It calls for a humanitarian intervention into present self-seeking and belligerent nationalism, through the introduction of a moral and spiritual dimension in the institutions.

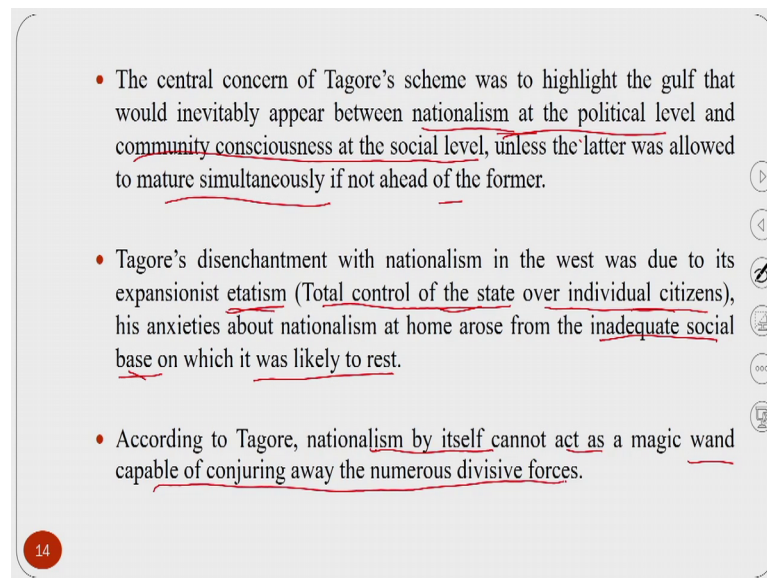
So, in Tagore what we find is that he never allowed his love for country; so, that that is one thing, he remains a very patriotic gively sympathetic to the Indian cause. So, his love for country he did not allow it to extend in the way of his love for truth justice and humanity that is the ultimate search for a individual, for a community, for a nation, for a civilization, for a humanity as a whole. So, the search for truth search for truth justice is something which remains ultimate or uncompromised for Tagore as if with the other modern Indian thinkers.

So, he did not submit to a national consciousness, but to a world consciousness what is called visva-bodh, the consciousness of the larger entity than your own narrow limited self in which every country would keep alight its own lamp of mine and its share to the illumination of the whole world or humanity. So, that is the whole purpose of nation and nationalism according to Tagore that all the nation or nationalities should understand its own culture, its own identity and develop itself according to its own cultural sensibilities, cultural heritage. And that will lead to a kind of more deeper living dialogue between and among the cultures and that ultimately illuminates the whole world or humanities. And many of the global challenges can be resolved through that kind of interaction among and between the committees.

So, according to Tagore one way of achieving a sense of collectivity among the divided people is to revive the old institution of community festivals and spread it far and wide.

So, the role of festivals and that he experimented in Shantiniketan to develop a kind of community or collectivity or the true basis of unity among and between the community. So, what we find is that Tagore's region might seem idealistic, because he remains a poet a poet philosopher, but it is perhaps not unattainable, and considering the war a trade militarization regimentation of thought that we see largely due to, or because of has harmonious definition of nation and nation whole. It can be resolved and it is resolvable if one follows the vision that Tagore has had about the humanity it calls for a humanitarian intervention into the present self seeking and belligerent nationalism that we see all across through the introduction of a moral and spiritual dimension of the institution and that we will discuss when we discuss his more ideals of men.

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- The central concern of Tagore's scheme was to highlight the gulf that would inevitably appear between nationalism at the political level and community consciousness at the social level, unless the latter was allowed to mature simultaneously if not ahead of the former.
- Tagore's disenchantment with nationalism in the west was due to its expansionist etatism (Total control of the state over individual citizens), his anxieties about nationalism at home arose from the inadequate social base on which it was likely to rest.
- According to Tagore, nationalism by itself cannot act as a magic wand capable of conjuring away the numerous divisive forces.

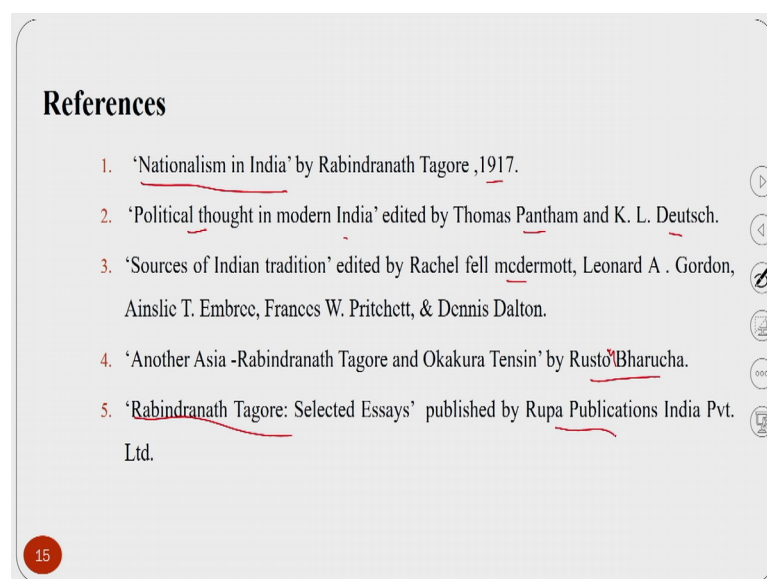
So, finally, what you see the central concern of Tagore a scheme was to highlight the gulf that would enable inevitably appear between nationalism at the political level and community consciousness at the social level. So, especially in India so, he was saying you cannot solve the social cleavage is a social hierarchies, social mistress. If you just have the political notion or political ideals of nationalism. So, unless the later was allowed to mature simultaneously, if not ahead of the formal; so this gulf between political nationalism and the community consists cannot be filled unless it is simultaneously allowed to grow and that has to be the true basis of unity and solidarity not merely the political nationalism.

So, Tagore's disenchantment with nationalism in the west was due to its expansionist etatism. Etatism is total control of the state over the individual citizens. He is anxieties about nationalism at home arrows from the inadequate social base on which it was likely to rest. So, Tagore criticism of the general idea of nationalism was because it tries to control tries to rezameant the individual opinions and individual thought by the estate. So, estate becomes the supreme, state becomes the ultimate and individual his thinking theorization comes secondary.

So, the whole structure whole artifice of such idols of nationalism for Tagore who was very problematic and in back especially in India he thought that this in need equate social base. That means, the social community conciseness and the cleavage due to the social cleavages will not allow the political nationalism to sustain for long and the focus should be then to develop the social unity the social trust or mutual trust among and among and between the crust.

According to Tagore nationalism by itself cannot act as a magic when capable of conjuring away the numerous divisive hosted that is there in India. So, for them the real task is to develop the social solidarity based on true love, compassion or mutual trust and not on this selfish desired to maximize once all ones self interest. And that is true with the individual so, is with the community and only on that basis one can have true dialogue. We will discuss such things in his views on cosmopolitanism

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### References

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4. 'Another Asia -Rabindranath Tagore and Okakura Tensin' by Rusto Bharucha.
5. 'Rabindranath Tagore: Selected Essays' published by Rupa Publications India Pvt. Ltd.

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So, for the reference on this lecture, you can look at his text which is available widely or Nationalism in India and other texts are from Thomas Bentham and K L Deutsch, Political thought in modern India, Sources of Indian Tradition and Rusto Bharucha, Another Asia Rabindranath Tagore and Okakura Tension and also collected essays published from Rupa called Rabindranath Tagore: Selected Essays. So, from there you can read some of his ideas on nationalism and understand it in the broader context.

So, in the next lecture we are going to discuss critique of Rabindranath Tagore views on nationalism and cosmopolitanism. And then finally, we will conclude Rabindranath Tagore by looking at his ideals on men. So, at that is all for today

Thank you.