UNIT 7 RABINDRANATH TAGORE: NATIONALISM AND COSMOPOLITANISM

Structure

7.0 Objectives

7.1 Introduction
   7.1.1 His Life
   7.1.2 His Works
   7.1.3 His Thoughts

7.2 Tagore’s Views on the Concept of Nationalism
   7.2.1 Defining Nationalism
   7.2.2 Tagore’s Disillusionment with Nationalism
   7.2.3 Opposition to Eurocentric idea of Nationalism
   7.2.4 Misreading Tagore’s Thoughts on Nationalism

7.3 Tagore’s Cosmopolitanism
   7.3.1 Cooperation, Coexistence, Humanity and Spiritual Universalism
   7.3.2 Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism

7.4 Let Us Sum Up

7.5 References

7.6 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

7.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit deals with Rabindranath Tagore who is not only a renowned poet, but also one of the significant Indian philosophers. The main objective of this unit is to understand Tagore’s views on the concepts of nationalism and cosmopolitanism. Therefore, after reading this unit, you will be able to:

- know about the life, works, and thoughts of Rabindranath Tagore
- understand his contributions to the discourse of nationalism
- analyze his understanding of cosmopolitanism

*Dr Kiran Agawane, Assistant Professor, Dept of Political Science, SRM University Delhi-NCR
7.1 INTRODUCTION

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) is not only considered as an outstanding literary figure of India, but also a legendary figure in world literature. He is well acclaimed not only within India, but also in the world. Apart from his remarkable contribution in the field of literature, he has made a notable contribution to the discourse of nationalism and cosmopolitanism. However, before understanding his views and arguments regarding nationalism and cosmopolitanism, it is necessary to know insights of his life and works.

7.1.1 His Life

Rabindranath Thakur (popularly known as Tagore) was born on 9th May 1861 in Calcutta (now Kolkata), Bengal in an eminent and influential Bengali Brahmin family. He was the fourteenth and youngest son of Debendranath Tagore. Debendranath Tagore was a leader of the Brahmo Samaj which was a religious reform organization established by Raja Ram Mohan Roy. Rabindranath’s grandfather Dwarkanath Tagore was a rich landlord and social reformer. Dwarkanath was also a close associate of Raja Ram Mohan Roy. Tagore’s family was among the earliest to join Raja Ram Mohan Roy’s Brahmo Samaj. Under the influence of the liberal tradition of his family and the philosophy of the Upanishads, Rabindranath Tagore developed a positive view of life and love of humanity.

Rabindranath was educated at home and through his travels. He wrote his first verse in his eighth year. He made regular trips to Europe. He was admitted to a school in England, but soon he dropped out to resume his self-education. His marriage took place in 1883. He married Mrinalini Devi Raichaudhuri, with whom he had two sons and three daughters. In 1901, he settled down at Shantiniketan (meaning ‘Abode of Peace’) and began his educational experiment. He tried his Upanishadic ideals of education in this school. Most of his work was written at Shantiniketan. Tagore not only conceived there an imaginative and innovative system of education, but through his writings and his influence on students and teachers, he was able to use the school as a base from which he could take a major part in India’s social, political, and cultural movements. A major part of Tagore’s life was spent in developing the school at Shantiniketan. In 1913, the Calcutta University conferred on him a D.Litt. Degree. The Oxford University conferred a Doctorate on Tagore in 1940 at Shantiniketan. He died on 7th August 1941.

7.1.2 His Works

From 1880s Tagore started writing and publishing poems, stories and novels. His writings created a profound impact in his native Bengal, but it was not much popular outside. In 1912 he carried some translations of his poems to England; these were shown to the well known Irish poet W. B. Yeats, who helped to refine
them and, more importantly, gave them his endorsement. These poems were originally written in Bengali language, and were translated into English by Tagore himself. This collection of poems, published under the title *Gitanjali* (meaning ‘song-offerings’), were a great success, going into ten printings within six months. Tagore received the prestigious Nobel Prize in the field of Literature in 1913 for his work *Gitanjali*. He became the first non-European to receive this esteemed award. He achieved global acclaim and admiration for this work. The rationale for awarding Tagore with Nobel Prize was: “Because of his profoundly sensitive, fresh and beautiful verse, by which, with consummate skill, he has made his poetic thought, expressed in his own English words, a part of the literature of the West.” When Tagore received the Nobel Prize, India was still under the control of the British.

Tagore was a prolific writer and thinker who wrote poetry, novels, short stories, plays and essays. He is considered as India’s national poet, who has written India’s national anthem *Jana Gana Mana*, is also the writer and composer of the national anthem of Bangladesh *Amar Sonar Bangla*. His songs are popularly known as *Rabindra Sangeet* (meaning ‘Rabindranath’s Songs’), which have become an integral part of Bengal’s culture over a period of time.

Tagore has been revered by many in various ways for his works. For example, Ramachandra Guha, writer of a book *Makers of Modern India* (2010), described him as one of the “four founders” of modern India, along with Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar; Albert Schweitzer, another Nobel Laureate, called him “the Goethe of India”; and Ravi Shankar, a legendary musician, believed that had Tagore “been born in the West, he would now be as revered as Shakespeare and Goethe”; Jawaharlal Nehru in his book *The Discovery of India* (1946) praised Tagore as “India’s internationalist per excellence”.

### 7.1.3 His Thoughts

Tagore was not only a poet. He had expressed his thoughts on various subjects through his writings. He was an excellent thinker and philosopher. He reflected his philosophy through his poems. He did not write his philosophy in an academic manner. His philosophical thoughts are scattered in his literature. He was also a painter and musician. Tagore had expressed his views on various socio-cultural and political issues that are still pertinent to the present time. For example, he wrote on women’s oppression and empowerment, the importance of education, human dignity, environmental awareness, reason and freedom, the need for scientific and technological development, modernization, equal rights for all citizens, cultivation of fellowship and respect across race and religion, egalitarian relations among cultures and countries, the horror of violence and war and the necessity for establishing world peace. He also wrote about child marriage, child abuse, widow remarriage, the dowry system, and political and religious exploitation in society. Therefore, Tagore’s writings go beyond literature, and touch politics, culture, social change, religious beliefs, philosophical analysis,
Tagore was a passionate advocate of individual freedom, which is one of the cardinal principles of modern democracy. He believed that human beings were born free and had every right to freedoms of thought, belief and expression. He was of the view that personal freedom was essential for nurturing and developing the mind’s intelligence. Tagore always believed in the transformative role of education. For him, education is vital for the advancement of a society. He was of the view that lack of education is the main source of India’s social and moral problems. He was not just an enthusiastic proponent of education; he also established education institutions, including Visva-Bharati (meaning ‘India in the World’). It was an effort to show how India could be self-reliant and self-respectful in education. According to Tagore, “Viswa-Bharati represents India where she has her wealth of mind which is for all. Viswa-Bharati acknowledges India’s obligation to offer to others the hospitality of her best culture and India’s right to accept from others their best.”

He became the voice of India’s spiritual heritage for the world. In India, especially in Bengal, he became a great living institution. Tagore was a creative poet. He introduced new prose and verse forms and the used colloquial language into Bengali literature, thereby freeing it from traditional models based on classical Sanskrit. He was highly influential in introducing Indian culture to the West and vice versa, and he is generally regarded as the outstanding creative artist of early twentieth century India.

Mahatma Gandhi was his devoted friend. Tagore was the first person to call Gandhi a “Mahatma” (meaning ‘the great soul’) and invited him to take care of his alternative university Viswa-Bharati at Shantiniketan after his death. He made Mahatma Gandhi a trustee of Shantiniketan. Mahatma Gandhi also reciprocated these sentiments and was the first person to call Tagore “Gurudev”, (meaning ‘a revered teacher’). Mahatma Gandhi referred to him as “poet of the world”. However, it is important to note that though Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore were close to each other, they differed significantly in their worldviews. Like Mahatma Gandhi, Tagore also had a profound impact on Jawaharlal Nehru.

Tagore was knighted by the ruling British Government in 1915. It was considered as prestigious because knighthood is a title given to a person for his greatest achievements. However within a few years, Tagore resigned the honour as a symbol of protest against British policies in India. In 1919, following the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in which British soldiers fired on an unarmed crowd in Amritsar, Tagore renounced his knighthood.
Check Your Progress Exercise 1

Note:  

i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) Check your progress with the model answer given at the end of the unit.

1. What is the significance of Rabindranath Tagore’s *Gitanjali*?

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7.2 TAGORE’S VIEWS ON THE CONCEPT OF NATIONALISM

As mentioned earlier, Tagore was not only a poet. He was a philosopher who tried to engage with different concepts. During the period of Tagore, nationalism was one of the important concepts upon which many scholars were discussing and debating. During that time, India was under the control of the British. Thus, Indian people were also developing the sentiment of nationalism among themselves. Tagore understood the importance of nationalism, and observed it very carefully. After his careful analysis of nationalism, Tagore developed a critique of nationalism. However, it does not mean that he did not have affection towards India. However, his emotions were not limited to Indian territory and its population. He had a broader vision of world unity and cooperation. Let us try to understand his views on nationalism.

7.2.1 Defining Nationalism

Nationalism is a very difficult concept to define. Many scholars have tried to define the term. For example, Benedict Anderson, in his well-known writing, *Imagined Communities* (1983) defined nationalism as “a bond between people that comes to exist when the members of a nation recognize themselves and their compatriots to be part of a nation.” Another important scholar Ernest Gellner in his *Nations and Nationalism* (1983) argued that a nation is formed “if and when the members of the category firmly recognize certain mutual rights and duties to each other in virtue of their shared membership. It is their recognition of each other as fellows of this kind which turns them into a nation.” Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger in their seminal work *The Invention of Tradition* (1983) argued that “many traditions which appear or claim to be old are often quite recent in origin and sometimes invented. This is particularly related to the modern development of the nation and nationalism, creating a national identity promoting national unity, and legitimizing certain institutions or cultural practices.”
However, these are the ideas on nationalism mostly dominated by Eurocentrism. The conditions of non-European world were different. For example, nationalism in India grew in the wake of India’s national movement for independence against the British Rule. This nationalism was naturally an emancipator as it would be the rhetoric upon which the Republic of India would be founded. In our own history, there have been those who have provided us with alternative narratives. These alternative narratives on nationalism provide us broader understanding of and contribute significantly to the discourse of nationalism. It provides alternative to dominant understanding of nationalism which is mostly dominated by Eurocentrism. One of such alternative narrative can be found in the writings of Tagore, whose conceptualization and understanding of nationalism is important to study for our understanding.

Tagore had attempted to define his understanding of a nation and nationalism in his book *Nationalism* (1917). He also dealt with the idea of nationalism in several of his novels, short stories, plays, letters, lectures, essays and articles. Most of the scholars agreed that Tagore was firmly opposed to nationalism as defined in the Western sense and favoured a cosmopolitan worldview instead. He was one of those who sought an alternative to narrow aggressive nationalism.

### 7.2.2 Tagore’s Disillusionment with Nationalism

As mentioned before, Tagore was born in a period during which the nationalist movement in India against the British rule was developing and gaining momentum. In 1857, only four years before Tagore was born, the first military uprising for self-rule broke out in India. It was also considered as India’s first war of independence. In 1905, the *Swadeshi* (meaning ‘of one’s own country’) movement started as a response to the British policy of partitioning Bengal. This movement contributed significantly to the development of nationalism in India. Although apolitical by nature, Tagore at first was drawn to the movement and started giving lectures and writing patriotic songs. He participated in the Indian nationalist movement from time to time. However, he had his own non-sentimental and visionary way. But soon after, Tagore observed that the movement turned violent with the nationalists agitating against innocent civilians who were indifferent to their cause, and especially the Muslims who were in favour of the partition for practical as well as political reasons. A champion of *Ahimsa* (meaning ‘non-violence’), Tagore found it difficult to accept the insanity of the nationalists in their burning of all foreign goods as a mark of non-cooperation, although it was hurting the poor in Bengal who found homemade products more expensive than foreign goods. He was further disheartened to see that many of the impassioned youths started using bombs, hoping to liberate India from the British rule by violence and terror. Thus, finally, Tagore withdrew from the movement. The immediate reason for his withdrawal was that a young Bengali radical, Khudiram Bose threw a bomb, killing two innocent British civilians in 1908. It was these experiences with Indian nationalist movement that
disillusioned Tagore about the concept of nationalism, and raised some serious doubts about nationalism.

Gradually, Tagore had developed an understanding that nationalism is the organized self-interest of a whole people, thus it is, least human and least spiritual. According to him, “A nation, in the sense of the political and economic union of the people, is that aspect which a whole population assumes when organized for a mechanical purpose.” Tagore further argued that “When this organization of politics and commerce, whose other name is the Nation, becomes all-powerful at the cost of the harmony of the higher social life, then it is an evil day for humanity.” According to him, nationalism created a mindless hungering after material wealth and political power, undercutting the fundamentals of democracy and humanity.

7.2.3 Opposition to Eurocentric idea of Nationalism

Tagore had observed and analyzed the Eurocentric idea of nationalism. After seeing the Indian experience of nationalism and the influence of Eurocentric idea of nationalism on Indian nationalism, Tagore raised some serious questions and doubts. He then gradually developed his criticisms of the Eurocentric idea of nationalism. This is considered as a significant contribution of Tagore in the discourse of nationalism studies. He tried to move away from the discourse of nationalism from an Eurocentric form of nationalism, and focused on non-European countries’ form of nationalism. According to a renowned political thinker and Indian educationist Humayun Kabir, Tagore was the first great Indian, who defied the Eurocentrism introduced by colonialism into India and revived India’s ancient ties with Asia and Africa.

Tagore was concerned about anti-colonial resistance in India which transformed into chauvinistic nationalism. For Tagore, this has been the characteristic of Western nationalism. For example, referring to the burning of foreign goods by Indian nationalist leaders, during the freedom struggle, he said such acts were not only self-defeating, but also a mere imitation of Western nationalism. Tagore believed that Indian nationalism should not fall into the trap of Western or European nationalism. Tagore was aware of the risks of a nationalism that was rooted in the Western concept of a nation state. He had analyzed the European forms of nationalism, and he came to the conclusion that the West had turned chauvinistic. According to Tagore, nationalism in Europe was a sentiment that was being promoted in order for a nation to become more powerful, particularly commercially. His conception of nationalism sought to warn against this.

While studying Tagore’s critique of nationalism, we should not get a sense that Tagore had completely negated the idea of nationalism. Nationalism has certainly a good side, some ennobling and inspiring features. It undoubtedly possesses both cultural and spiritual value. Amartya Sen has argued that “It would be wrong to see nationalism as either an unmitigated evil or a universal virtue. It can be both, a boon and a curse – depending on the circumstances two sides of the same coin.”
Tagore was against the false, diseased, perverted, and exaggerated nationalism which has developed in the West. Tagore talked about the example of Japan which was trying to imitate Western nationalism in the East. Tagore at first admired Japan for demonstrating the ability of an Asian nation to rival the West in industrial development and economic progress. But then Tagore went on to criticize the rise of a strong nationalism in Japan, and its emergence as an imperialist nation. Tagore saw Japanese militarism as illustrating the way nationalism can mislead even a nation of great achievement and promise. According to him, “What is dangerous for Japan was not the imitation of the outer features of the West, but the acceptance of the motive force of the Western nationalism as her own.” In Tagore’s view, the chauvinistic nationalism that had developed in the West was responsible for the war in Europe, and Tagore pleaded with the Japanese to shun the path of violence. By referring to the example of Japan, Tagore warned non-European countries about dangers of Western or European nationalism. After encountering it in Japan, he was apprehensive of the militant nationalism in India.

Tagore was of the opinion that the term nationalism was derived from the term nation-state. It was the embodiment of Western ideas of capitalism and mechanization. For him the nation was an “organization of politics and commerce.” Therefore, he believed that this conception of nationalism was intrinsically against the Indian tradition of self-autonomy, pluralism and religious tolerance which one would find in what he termed as the Samaj (meaning ‘society’). Tagore refused to accept that the modern nation-state form developed in Europe should be universalized. Arguing that it was a product of the particular history of European countries, he insisted that the nation-state was utterly foreign and inimical to the cultural traditions of the East.

According to an eminent historian M. S. S. Pandian, Rabindranath Tagore’s disenchantment with nationalism was almost unconditional. If Tagore saw no merit in nationalism, it was due to the quest for power that was and is essential to any nationalist project. According to Tagore, “The spirit of conflict and conquest is at the origin and in the centre of Western nationalism; its basis is not social cooperation. It has evolved a perfect organization of power, but not spiritual idealism.” For Tagore, even the national movement for independence from the British colonial rule was an inadequate basis to justify the nation-form as a symbol of freedom.

Tagore was so critical about the deteriorated form of nationalism that he had even called nationalism “the worst form of bondage” – “the bondage of dejection, which keeps men hopelessly chained in loss of faith in themselves.” Tagore was so concerned about humanity that when nationalism goes against one’s humanity he was more vocal in arguing against such nationalism. His concept of nationalism is essentially rooted in the question of what it means to be human and humanity.
However, Tagore’s idea of nationalism was criticized by many of his contemporaries, especially in the West. For instance, the Marxist critic Georg Lukács and the English writer D. H. Lawrence criticized Tagore.

7.2.4 Misreading Tagore’s Thoughts on Nationalism

There are some scholars who believed that Tagore’s thoughts on nationalism are misread and misinterpreted. These scholars argue that Tagore has been wrongly presented as a thinker who vehemently criticized nationalism. For example, Sabyasachi Bhattacharya argued that “Tagore’s best-known work, Nationalism (1917), is often mistaken for the sum and substance of his thoughts on nationalism. However, a look at the evolution of his idea over different stages suggests that his thoughts on nationalism cannot be accommodated within the stereotypes of “internationalism” or “anti-nationalism” in which commentators cast him. To focus only on that is a reductionist over-simplification of Tagore’s evolving approach to the antinomies of nationalism as he perceived them.” Bhattacharya further argued that “It is important to take caution from Tagore against generalization too far on the basis of one or two texts like Nationalism (1917), and making a reductionist representation of Tagore. One can broadly distinguish several distinct stages in the evolution of Tagore’s approach to nationalism.”

There is a common misconception about Tagore. Many people argue that Tagore was too much of a cosmopolitan – too much of an internationalist – to be a sincere patriot. Scholars argue that such an estimate of Tagore is based either on ignorance or on prejudice. Those who are really familiar with his speeches and writings know well how intensely he loved his own country. He was not, however, prepared to sacrifice truth, justice, and humanity for so-called patriotism. He would not divorce politics from ethics. Three of his novels - Gora (1909), Ghare Baire (meaning ‘The Home and the world’) (1916) and Char Adhyay (meaning ‘Four Chapters) (1934) – were seen as direct attacks on hard-edged, masculine nationalism. In his celebrated novel Ghare-Baire he laid stress on this point again and again through some of its characters. The clash between patriotism and cosmopolitanism constitute a central theme of Ghare-Baire. This novel has much to say about this theme. Satyajit Ray’s film “The Home and the World” brilliantly brings out the novel’s tensions.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) Check your progress with the model answer given at the end of the unit.

1. Why did Rabindranath Tagore get disillusioned by nationalism?

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2. Why did Rabindranath Tagore criticize Eurocentric or Western nationalism?

7.3 TAGORE’S COSMOPOLITANISM

Tagore’s criticism of nationalism brings him close to the concept of cosmopolitanism which means a belief that all people are entitled to equal respect and consideration, no matter what their citizenship status or other affiliations happen to be. However, Tagore’s concept of cosmopolitanism is also unique, and does not fall into the traditional understanding of cosmopolitanism.

7.3.1 Cooperation, Coexistence, Humanity and Spiritual Universalism

Tagore’s cosmopolitanism is embedded with values of cooperation, coexistence, humanity and spiritual universalism. His cosmopolitanism transcends boundaries and is meant for humanity at large. He believed that the concept of citizenship should be based on a humanist ideal. Tanika Sarkar in her article argued that cooperation, coexistence and humanity are comprehensively reflected in Tagore’s work entitled Gora (1909). Tagore’s Gora overcomes the ethnocentricities that led to such a distortion, but, in it, the particular comes too close to the universal – patriotism dissolves into love for all the helpless peoples of the world, offering a radically new way of being an Indian patriot.

Tagore gave so much importance to cooperation, coexistence and humanity that while denouncing nationalism, he does not refute the humanist values inherent in European civilization since the Enlightenment. Tagore maintained his regard for that European humanist tradition, though he rued its debasement in the twentieth century in the form of nationalist imperialism. Based on his humanist thinking, Tagore argued that Modern India’s claim to nationhood was fundamentally flawed because India could not succeed in retaining the unifying spirits which kept diverse people together for centuries, and had allowed conflicts between faiths and caste division to countervail that spirit. Tagore’s cosmopolitanism wanted to extend humanist values from national territory to international. Therefore, he emphasized on universal humanism. It is such ideas of Tagore that even Jawaharlal Nehru called him “the great humanist of India.”
Tagore wanted to bring the ideals of the East and the West into harmony, and broaden the bases of Indian nationalism. He not only believed, but also worked for international cooperation, taking India’s message to other countries and bringing their message to his own people. According to Jawaharlal Nehru, “And yet with all his internationalism, his feet have always been planted firmly on India’s soil and his mind has been saturated with the wisdom of the Upanishads.”

Tagore’s cosmopolitanism also denounces the spirit of selfish nationalism. He believed in an international commonwealth based on disinterested and self-sacrificing nationalism. He believed in the ideals of a spiritual commonwealth of nations. In many ways, *Gitanjali* is a deeply cosmopolitan text in its spiritual universalism.

Tagore emphasized racial and religious unity throughout in his writings. He was of the view that such unity and plurality of consciousness could be achieved only through proper education of the people, eradication of poverty through modernization and cultivation of freedom of thought and imagination. He said, “Freedom of mind is needed for the reception of truth.”

### 7.3.2 Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism

Though Tagore criticized a narrow and aggressive form of nationalism, he was a highly patriotic poet. This is evident in the many patriotic songs and poems he wrote. However, he never placed patriotism above soul, conscience, and love for humanity. Patriotism is an *emotional* state, bonding or investment; it is a sentiment. Nationalism is an *ideology*. Tagore rejected the idea of narrow nationalism, but practiced anti-imperialist politics all his life.

The well known scholar Ashis Nandy has pointed out that, paradoxically, Tagore was already India’s unofficial *national* poet. Not only had he written hundreds of patriotic songs, these songs were an inspiration to many participants in India’s freedom struggle. According to him, “Tagore was a patriot but not a nationalist… He was seeking to clearly separate patriotism from nationalism so as to create an intellectual and psychological base that would allow the “natural” territoriality of a political community to avoid European-style nationalism. He knew the record of European nationalism within Europe and in the southern hemisphere and he foresaw the devastation towards which European nationalism was pushing Europe and the world.”

American philosopher Martha C. Nussbaum in her influential essay *Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism* (1996) invoked Tagore’s novel *Ghare Baire*, in which militant loyalties to nation are unfavorably contrasted with allegiances to what is morally good for the community of humanity. Nussbaum portrays Tagore as a champion of moral rationality. In her interpretation, Tagore is the great champion of a cosmopolitan vision. Nussbaum and others have argued for reading Tagore as a model of cosmopolitan ethics and pedagogy, suggesting that his novel *The Home and the World* in particular demonstrates a humanist ideal of citizenship.
Amartya Sen echoes Nussbaum’s main line of argument when he also claims that Tagore was a critic of patriotism.

Nussbaum, utilizing Tagore’s ideas of the *Universal Man* to promote an education where students are not taught that they are citizens of a particular nation, but they are, above all, citizens of a world of humans. She uses Tagore’s perspective of a Universal Man who is not bound by local/regional or national boundaries to urge us to transcend our petty provisional and ethnocentric views. For Nussbaum, Tagore’s idea of a Universal Man is similar to the concept of a *World Citizen*, or a *Cosmopolitan*, where we transcend the cultural boundaries that limit and impede our growth and development.

**Check Your Progress Exercise 3**

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) Check your progress with the model answer given at the end of the unit.

1. What are the main principles of Rabindranath Tagore’s Cosmopolitanism?

Rabindranath Tagore was not only a great poet who was awarded with a prestigious Nobel Prize for his *Gitanjali*, but also an original thinker who through his writings expressed his views on various social, cultural, and political aspects. As a philosopher, he also contributed to the existing discourse on nationalism of his time. Although *apolitical* by nature, he came close to nationalist movement and wrote various patriotic songs and poems. However, gradually he became disillusioned by nationalism due to various factors like use of violence by nationalist and freedom fighters, self-centeredness, hunger for material wealth and political power, and ignorance of humanism and spiritualism. He also criticized Western or the Eurocentric notion of nationalism for its chauvinism and greed for political and economic power. Tagore’s thoughts on nationalism are scattered in his literature. Tagore’s critique of narrow and aggressive nationalism brought him close to the idea of such cosmopolitanism which believes in universal humanism, spiritual universalism, cooperation, and coexistence.

**7.5 REFERENCES**


7.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

1. Your answer should highlight following points
   • Tagore received the prestigious Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913 for his work Gitanjali.
   • He became the first non-European to receive this award. He achieved global acclaim and admiration for this work.
   • It was the first Noble Prize for India, though at that time India was under the British Rule.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

1. Your answer should highlight following points
   • Tagore observed that the Swadeshi movement which was developing nationalism among Indians turned violent with the nationalists started agitating violently.
   • A champion of non-violence, Tagore found it difficult to accept the insanity of the nationalist in their burning of all foreign goods as a mark of non-cooperation, although it was hurting the poor in Bengal who found homemade products more expensive than foreign goods.
   • Also some freedom fighters were using violence and terror which resulted into killing of innocent civilians. It was these experiences with Indian nationalist movement that disillusioned Tagore about the concept of nationalism.

2. Your answer should highlight following points
   • According to Tagore, European or Western nationalism had transformed anti-colonial resistance in India into chauvinistic nationalism.
   • A mere imitation of European or Western nationalism during the freedom struggle of India is self-defeating.
• Tagore was against the false, diseased, perverted, and exaggerated nationalism which has developed in the West.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

1. Your answer should highlight following points
   • Tagore’s cosmopolitanism is based on the values of cooperation, coexistence, humanity, and spiritual universalism.
   • He believed that the concept of citizenship should be based on humanist ideal.
   • Tagore’s cosmopolitanism extended humanist values from national territory to international. Therefore, he emphasized on universal humanism