

Therapeutic Element In Rabindra Sangeet

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Abstract

This research paper Therapeutic Element In Rabindra Sangeet, the discussion draws on literature which has dealt with the identification of the **universally accepted therapeutic nature of music, relevance and growing importance of the upcoming field of ‘holistic healing’ and the power of Rabindra Sangeet.** This research provides important pointers on **how Rabindra Sangeet has the power to influence our state of feelings, evoke emotional responses and how Tagore composed music which has seen innumerable number of people sail through very difficult times in their life. Rabindra Sangeet** has therapeutic effect on them and provided them with strength and courage in the trying times of their life – when their sense of faith and hope were low. Tagore stressed the need to possess compassion in ourselves as humans. He also stressed the need to be close to nature. ‘Being human’ is the key. Feelings and emotions are important, but to be used positively and managed as strengths, not allowing them to break us when faced with setbacks and traumas in life. **Rabindra Sangeet assists a person in developing an internal self-mechanism to be able to insulate oneself from the traumas and various setbacks in life.** It gives people the power to deal with the stuff that just happens and which we are not sometimes prepared for in life. Hence, Rabindra Sangeet can be seen as a very important tool to heal an individual through music therapy. I have tried to define and explain each of these themes in the Paper and also illustrate my arguments with my interviews. Millions of people actually derived strength from Rabindra Sangeet in India and abroad and this is how art influences life. For Tagore, it was life influencing his art and for people like us it was art influencing our life. In fact, when we talk about therapeutic element in Rabindra Sangeet and look carefully, actually, the art is being used to heal life.

My research aims to find a therapeutic element in Rabindra Sangeet. The focus would be to look at why and how, Rabindra Sangeet is therapeutic and how and why it has helped people to emotionally wade out of cruel stroke of events thrown on them by God, in their life, by healing them. The choice of my methodology also developed itself as I interacted with people who have

understood Tagore, Rabindra Sangeet, his philosophy and applied it to their life. The research questions have also developed in this manner. I have discussed the therapeutic element of Rabindra Sangeet in different settings. I have also discussed literature on the therapeutic qualities of Rabindra Sangeet by drawing out recent interdisciplinary scholarship combining literature from different sources.

Keywords: Therapeutic, Rabindra Sangeet

“Tagore had a special love for music. He structured and planned almost everything in his university around music. At Shantiniketan, music was always the centre of everything that Tagore wanted to be done. He wanted things to revolve around music. It is because of this he introduced music as a discipline. He stressed on the spiritual development of every individual and because of this he wanted the atmosphere of his university to be composed of music so that every student at the university could develop himself spiritually. “It is only when you see the world through music that you know it” – Tagore had written in 1918 (Som, 2009, p.131).

The special quality of *Rabindra sangeet is that it* has its unique evoking flavour. Celebrating Tagore through his songs is a tradition in the formal gatherings of Bengalis - whether in India, Bangladesh or amongst Bengali population abroad. A rare image of intuition and understanding can be felt in Tagore’s songs. Every song seems to be participating in the moment whether when the skies darken with the monsoon clouds or when spring begins. The different songs in ‘*Gitan*’ celebrate and rejoice each of these moments with utter joy. When it comes to Tagore, the mention of a ‘spiritual bliss’ is a must because this is what gives his songs the place that they have attained. Tagore stressed the need to possess compassion in ourselves as humans. He also stressed the need to be close to nature. ‘Being human’ is the key. Feelings and emotions are important, but to be used positively and managed as strengths, not allowing them to break us when faced with setbacks and traumas in life. In simple words, Tagore expresses profound meaning, not only for people in the most exclusive drawing rooms but also for the people in market places, countryside or for someone taking a break from tiring routine of life. His songs are for everyone to take solace and comfort from. Emotions and feelings make us ‘human’.

The period from 1902 to 1907 was the most traumatic phase in Tagore’s life. He lost his wife Mrinalini Devi in 1902, he lost his 2nd daughter in 1903 followed by the death of his father in 1905 and he lost his youngest son in 1907 (Tandon, 2006). Death visited him almost every year. He was shaken by all these deaths of his near and dear ones leaving his life to an empty landscape to look at but he was determined to coin a philosophy for life in the form of self-

healing through his own songs which the rest of the world could need to deal with any crisis in its life. Who knew his personal tragic experiences would make him a religion for millions of people who begged for his work to be translated into different languages .

The aim of this Research paper is to discuss the therapeutic element in Rabindra Sangeet. The purpose is to look at the reasons as to why it is therapeutic and throw a light on the elements, qualities in Tagore's music which make it therapeutic for mind and the soul. In this paper, I shall present the main findings of my interviews with people who are connected with Tagore's work, music and have themselves experienced the power of Tagore's music. The three main themes which I have traced in my interviews and which I aim to discuss here are:

- 1 Power to heal in Rabindra Sangeet making it a religion for many people**
- 2 The great importance of mental and emotional well-being as the foundation of our living life**
- 3 How Rabindra Sangeet assists a person in developing an internal self-mechanism to be able to insulate oneself from the traumas and various setbacks in life.**

It gives people the power to deal with the stuff that just happens and which we are not sometimes prepared for in life. Hence, Rabindra Sangeet can be seen as a very important tool to heal an individual through music therapy. I will define and explain each of these themes in the following sections and will also illustrate my arguments with my interviews.

Tagore's music as a religion to deal with setbacks in life

Tagore's music is a religion for many people. It is a tool that helps them and assists them in being able to deal with the various setbacks in life. One of my interviewee, Prof. Debashish, a trained *Rabindra sangeet* artist at Kolkata shared with me that at one point of time, Tagore's music is all that his mother had, to be able to hold and gain strength from. My mother had to relocate to Kolkata at the time of great disturbance in the country. Terrible communal riots had surfaced at that time. My mother had rented a house in an area which was not very safe for her to stay during the riots. She was a single woman, living with two more elderly women and a child. She had her mother, her sister and her child living with her and the responsibility of their well-being and safety was on her. She was in a government job. She had to leave her job as a headmistress in East Bengal and come to Kolkata and find another job. It was a very trying time for her. She

had to cross the river on a steamer, standing on the deck of the steamer figuring out the situation and the place she was heading to. So many problems were peeping into her face at the same time and she was the sole person to solve everything but did not have the knowhow to do them all. My mother was finding it so difficult to tie so many loose threads together during this time. She was so unsure of even making a living for herself and the dependents. It was at this critical juncture she remembered the words of Tagore's songs, *Dipode More Rukho karo* which gave courage to her tired, broken soul.

Further sharing about his experiment regarding Rabindra Sangeet on his daughter, Prof Debashish exclaimed, "At one point of time when my only daughter had her board exams (UK equivalent – GCSE), she had a heartbreak. She was in an absolute emotional mess. She would not study at all. We were very nervous as a family. After all, we are a middle-class family and giving good education to the child is the only tool of growth for us. It was of utmost importance that she performed well and get good grades. My wife and myself, were very nervous about her result and murmured what if she fails! It will be such a shame! My mother i.e my daughter's Daadi (grand mother) had topped the university and how her soul would feel when she learns that her grand-daughter had failed, we thought to ourselves. In this crucial time, I taught my daughter, the words of Tagore's song, *Dipode More Rukho Karo*. It was with this song that she began to show signs of recovery from the mess she was in. She would sing this like a prayer – morning and evening. I explained her the power of the lyrics and this made all the difference as it worked like a medicine for her. She continues to rely on this song even today when she faces any challenging situation and needs some source to draw strength from".

This is how millions of people actually derived strength from Tagore's songs and this is how art influences life. For Tagore, it was life influencing his art and for people like us it was art influencing our life. In fact, when we talk about therapeutic element in Tagore's Music and look carefully, actually, the art is being used to heal life. Somebody has produced a piece of music which is a piece of art and we are employing that piece of art to heal the real life of a person. In times of distress, what do you do? Where do you go?

You try and look for relief from a place where you can draw strength from and for people like my mother, it was all about drawing strength from Tagore's songs. In fact to this specific song, *Dipode more rukho karo*, when Tagore was on his death bed and he asked someone to recite the words of the song and that lady fumbled after a few lines, he said, "never forget the lyrics of this song because these are like mantras",— Tagore himself had said that. See how he could distance himself from his work as if it is by someone else and at the same time he could do the self-healing through his own songs. He understood the entire process of the mind, first to encounter a difficult time and then what are the natural reactions that we would have after that encounter. Either, we remain inert and go through a phase of depression and choose to let ourselves be destroyed or we fight back. This process happens on two levels, mental and physical. This kind of development of pain is addressed by Tagore in his songs. The power to fight back physically and psychologically can be found in Tagore's music. He had gone through this challenging process again and again. Tagore pronounced it with so much of affirmation that people may forget everything else that I wrote in my life, but the Bengalis will always have to remember my songs time and again. He had also said that his songs were for the Bengalis and the paintings for the West. He was way ahead in his modernity.

"The strong reason my mother wanted me to learn Bengali was to get me introduced to Tagore and his songs. This was because of her own personal experiences of being able to draw strength from his songs during very difficult times in life" (Prof. Debashish).

#You try and look for relief from a place where you can draw strength from and for people like my mother, it was all about drawing strength from Tagore's songs. In fact to this specific song, *Dipode more rukho karo*, when Tagore was on his death bed and he asked someone to recite the words of the song and that lady fumbled after a few lines, he said never forget the lyrics of this song because these are like mantras— Tagore himself had said. See how he could distance himself from his work as if it is by someone else and this is how he found self-healing through his own songs. He understood the entire process of the mind, first to encounter a difficult time and then what are the natural reactions that we would have after that encounter. Either, we would

try to destroy ourselves, we could go through a phase of depression or we have to fight back and this can happen in two ways, either physically or mentally. So this part is addressed by Tagore and his songs. The power to fight back mentally and psychologically can be found in Tagore's music. He had gone through this process again and again. He had said that even if they forget everything that I have written in my life, the Bengalis will have to remember my songs again and again. He had also said that his songs are for the Bengalis and the paintings are for the West. He was way ahead in his modernity.

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“Rudra yatte dakshinam mukham, ten mam pahi nithyam,” – Tagore believed in the philosophy of the Vedas. He specifically believed in this shloka---‘o the terrible one’ referring to the times when one is in a problem and in a lot of danger and one thinks that God is showing his terrible, wrathful face to him. And the person is desperately praying to God to show him the merciful kind face to him which is positive. He is begging for mercy to be shown to him and save him from all the dangers of this world. May God always remain in a pleasant mood with him! It is this kind of philosophy which Tagore has weaved into his music.

Tagore's philosophy evolved from the terrible shocks life gave him. The feelings he expressed after his son Shomi passed away: “The night after Shomi passed away, I was travelling by the train. I could see that the world was flooded with moonlight. There was not a loss of sign anywhere. I could realise that nothing else is lost. Everything is there and so will be my life and the work I need to do.”

Prof Debashish further asserted that every occasion in their home begins with a song by Tagore. Gitabitan is like our *Gita* (holy book of hindus). We sing Tagore's song, *Antara mamo bikashita karo, antaratarata he*. At the start of every occasion in their family, this song is sung like a prayer. Even when we perform, this is a song that we sing at the start

of every concert. Without any formal training in music, Tagore was one of the best composers in the world. His philosophy made him unique and very special in his work. (Prof. Debashish).

Some of the songs of Tagore, contain therapeutic element in abundance to the extent e.g : *Ami jokhon cheelem ondho, Aaro aaghaat shoinemaar, Antara mamu bikashita karo, Bipade more rokkha karo* which is beyond description. Tagore used these songs to heal himself. They were his tool for self-healing. He healed himself through his own words and music.

Bipade More Rokkha Karo

Bipade more rokkha karo e nohe mor praarthana -

Bipade aami naa jeno kori bhoy.

Dukhyotaape byathito chite naai baa dile santanaa,

Dukhyey jeno karite paari joy.

Sahaay mor naa jodi jute nijer bol naa jeno tute -

Songsaarete ghotile khoti, labhile shudhu bonchona,

Nijer mone naa jeno maani khoy.

Aamaare tumi koribe traan e nahe mor praarthana -

Tarite paari shakati jeno roy.

Aamaar bhaar laaghab kori naai baa dile santana,

Bahite paari emni jeno hoy.

Namrashire sukher dine tomaari mukh loibo chine -

Dukher raate nikhil dharaa je din kore bonchona

Tomaare jeno na kori songshoy. English Translation of the above song

Save me from all odds is not my prayer

That may I have the courage to face any event

You need not embalm the sad heart

That may I win over sadness

If aid is not in hand may my inner strength never break
In case of damage with the things around, subjected to humiliation
May I never take it as deficit.
You shall relieve me that is not my prayer
May I hold strength to relieve others.
You need not shed my burden and shower your empathy
May I always be capable of.
On the happy days my offerings to you submissively
On the suffering nights when the world is against
May I not lose faith on you. (*All about Rabindrasangeet, 2008*)

Antara mamō bikashita karo

Antar mamō bikashito karo antartaro he -
Nirmal karo. Ujjal karo, sundar karo he.
Jaagrata karo, udyato karo, nibhay karo he.
Mangal karo, niralas nihsanshay karo he.
Jukto karo he sabar sange, jukto karo he bandha.
Sanchar karo sakol karme shaanto tomar chando.
Charonpodde mamō chita nispandito karo he.
Nandito karo, nandito karo, nandito karo he.

English Translation

Help me thrive and upgrade my core, O my innermost one –
Cleanse, brighten, and make it adorable one.
Awaken, prepare, and make me audacious.
Bless, energise, and make me unambiguous.
Unite me with all others, break all closures. Inflict your mellow rhythm in all endeavours.
Affix my mind on your lotus feet, if you please.
Bliss, Bliss, make my life a Bliss.

In this song, Tagore expresses dual prayer to attain a spiritual bliss and also to have the power to stay connected with the realities in the public domain.

Aaro aaghaat shoinemaar

Aaro aaghat shoibe amar, shoibe amaro.
Aaro kothin sure jibon tare jhonkaro.
Je raag jagao amar praane baaje ni ta chorom taane,
Nithur murchonay se gaane murti soncharo.
Laage na go kebol jeno komol koruna,
Mridu surer khelay e praan byartho koro na.
Jwole uthuk shokol huthash ,gorji uthuk shokol baataash,
Jagiye diye shokol aakash purnota bistaro.

English translation

I will endure more blows, I will endure them, endure them.....I will endure more blows. (The Dust and the Sunlight, 2011)

Ami jakhon cheelem ondho

Aami jakhon chhilem andho
Sukher khelaay bela gachhe paai ni to aanando.
Khelagharer deyaal gnethe kheyal niye chhilem mete,
Bhit bhenge jei ele ghore ghuchlo amar bandho.
Sukher khela aar roche na peyechhi anando.
Bhishan amar, rudro amar, nidra gelo khudro amar -
Ugro byathaay nutan kore bnaadhle amar chhando.

Je din tumi ognibeshe sob kichu mor nile ese
Se din aami purno holem ghuchlo aamar dondo.
Dukkho sukher paare tomaay peyechhi anando.

English translation

I kept myself busy with amusement,
When you emerge through the foundation,
My barrier tumbles down.
The searching game fails to satisfy anymore,
Now content I am.
O my vicious, my vigorous,
You take away my sleep,
Re-establish my rhythm with pain.
Complete I am with vanished conflicts
When you arrived in flaming robes
To forfeit all that I had.
Content I am to have your company
For all my emotions.

Developing an internal self-mechanism to cope with setbacks

Setbacks will always come in life because the only constant thing in life is change and change at every stage can sometimes be stressful or rewarding at times. Being able to deal with everything around ourselves and maintain balance is the key. Developing an internal mechanism to deal with everything and still continue to behave in the right manner, acceptable to the society, is the key to survival in this world.

To establish my research methodically I conducted the interviews of almost 12 persons have been connected to Tagore for a long time, in different ways. Either they are themselves artists

performing *Rabindra Sangeet*, have studied Tagore or have been connected to Tagore and his music through generations in their families.

Speaking to Mr. Aniruddh Singha, who is a music therapist based at Kolkata, has been a true revelation into how Rabindra Sangeet is actually used to bring back rhythm and joy to the lives of people who have lost it all in them due to the circumstances, surroundings and the situations inflicted upon them. He practises Music Therapy at the Antara School of Psychiatry at Kolkata.

He explained, “we focus on music and dance therapy as both are complimentary to each other. In particular, we carry out these two forms of therapy with Tagore’s music. We have patients from every kind of socio-economic strata. one day while I was sitting down I found myself going through the symptoms which were found in a mentally challenged person, and surprisingly realised that I had all those symptoms in myself. The only difference between the two was that I could evolve an internal mechanism to be able to come out of that stage of depression and take care of myself whereas the other one ended up being taken to the asylum. These people who go below the rock bottom limit are the ones that their families are forced to take the step of sending them away.”

The importance of that internal mechanism plays a very vital role. People who are sensitive, suffer the most. Mr. Aniruddh Singha also shared that once he had invited a Professor of Economics, who also happened to be his close friend, to deliver a lecture at the hospital. In his lecture he explained that our society was full of distortions and anybody who could not put up with the distortions was considered abnormal and further added if one is too honest and too sincere, it is difficult to survive in this world.

“The reason why we are using Tagore’s music as a tool for music and dance therapy in particular, is because firstly, I have read a considerable amount of Tagore’s work since childhood and have also performed Tagore’s songs regularly. Secondly, Tagore has dealt with the mind, not only the human mind but everything around him, environment and himself. Thirdly, Tagore taught us to be compassionate towards everyone,” ----said Mr. Singha.

In spite of the difficult times and harsh treatment meted out by life to him, Tagore healed himself through his own works. And because of the power of his music and songs due to which Tagore's self-healing took place, led the world use his songs to heal itself. "Our heart beats at regular intervals. This is a natural process. There is a rhythm involved in the same. There needs to be harmony between the inner and the outer rhythms for us to feel well. Certain norms have been set by the society. Any person who does not conform to these norms set by the society or whose behaviour is causing disturbance to the society, is considered abnormal and is taken to the asylum. The simplest solution suggested by Gurudev Tagore, if we could stay close to nature, the better it is for all of us. This is what Tagore laid stress upon. We all are looking for solutions so that this world could become a better place to live and the propensity to get ill was reduced" (Aniruddh).

The beautiful three sisters that I interviewed shared with me how their personal experiences introduced them to Tagore and made sure that they listened to Tagore's music everyday and gain strength from that.

"I was a little child when I was introduced to Tagore's music by my mother. I find Tagore's music the most wonderful gift as it was with Tagore's music that I could give myself the strength that I needed at some very important crucial turning points of my life" (Dr. Deepika).

"Everything about Tagore's music is so special and so unique. It is impossible to ignore the beauty and the richness of the lyrics in *Rabindra sangeet*, which are the soul of the songs that have been created by Tagore. His whole philosophy is embodied in those songs" (Prof.Sushma).

"The way he dealt with the deaths of so many loved ones in his life is simply astonishing. The way Tagore kept himself consolidated as a man is extremely unbelievable and this requires huge amount of courage and strength. No wonder, the songs that he used to heal themselves with his deep and profound philosophy now heal millions of people in this

world. I, too am included in those people because I have felt the great enormous healing power in his songs” (Pratima).

“I lost my husband sometime ago. We were both very fond of Tagore’s songs. We would listen to the songs of Tagore almost every day because we know how powerful they have been in their meaning and made me feel relaxed. Now, I felt the compulsion of listening to the songs of Tagore to heal myself. *Rabindra sangeet* gives me the strength to cope and come to terms with the loss. Tagore’s music created a very peaceful environment for everyone. His songs were structured as Sthai, Antra, Sanchari and Abhog. The songs are like the four petals of a flower. It is very difficult to separate the lyrics and the tune from each other. His tunes link us with the force which is the centre of the universe. Tagore’s music is meant for peace and this is what Indian music stands for” (Dr. Gopa Dutta).

“While working for a music therapy organisation at Kolkata, one of my colleagues was performing music therapy. She was doing the therapy for a child with autism. The child had been crying for a very long time. He just would not stop inspite of her trying hard for quite some time. But the moment, she started singing one of Tagore’s songs, the child stopped crying. This was an experience that really made us wonder about the power in Tagore’s music and his songs, the melody and the rhythm which was embedded in the songs” (Avijeet).

“Tagore produced such a huge collection of wonderful work that every other composer of his time came under that shadow of his huge collection of work. Nothing else could be as noticed as his work for the nation. He is a rare gem” (Dr. Kundu).

“When I married my Indian husband, I was new to the music of Tagore but now I absolutely love the sound of music. It feels very comfortable and it is so soothing to the ear. It actually has become an antidote for any stress that I may face in life.” (Sylwia Dey)

“I was born and brought up at Kolkata. Ever since I was a child, we would listen to a lot of music of Tagore. Today, I am retired with grandchildren in London. I still find myself so dependent on Tagore’s music to be able to feel comfortable and healed inside.” (Dr. Rina Ball)

“My husband was a *Rabindra sangeet* singer at Kolkata. I sometimes find myself listening to Tagore’s music all the time. After my husband passed away, Tagore’s songs were the only thing that I had to be able to heal myself and release the pain from my body.” (Sunanda Mukherjee)

“Medical treatment obviously becomes the only possible option left in the case of major depression but in the case of managing and handling minor depression and preventing the ill effects of stress on the body, music therapy is a very helpful form of healing. Music therapy soothes, stimulates and relaxes the senses. I am myself working on researching the effects of art therapy and it is the power that music and art forms have the power to stimulate the senses that completes the process of healing” (Dr. Debashish).

As Chopra mentions in one of his lectures on Tagore, “how do biological organisms operate with simultaneity, the human body for example, has a hundred trillion cells, which is more than all the stars in the milky way galaxy. Every cell is performing a hundred thousand activities every second. And every cell instantly knows and correlates its activity with every other cell. How does a human body think, play a piano, kill germs, remove toxins, make a baby, all at the same time. And while a biological organism can do that, it tracks the movement of the stars and the planets because your biological rhythms are the symphony of the whole universe. Biology responds to everything that is happening in the whole universe instantly. So there is some deep music, some deep symphony in the music and all of us dance to it even though we can’t name the tune and in fact when you are not dancing to it, you get sick. There is something that is

transcendent, you might say trans-empirical about this reality.” (Dr.Deepak Chopra, 2011)

Chopra mentions how the activities inside the brain can be tracked and seen through different inventions in science. “Today I could go inside your brain. We have technology today. You can take a carbon atom, you can radio label it. You can put it in a sugar molecule, you can label it, inject it and then I can look inside your brain as you were imagining the sunset. When I look inside the brain, I don’t see sunsets. What I see is electricity and some chemicals that we see which are known as neuro-transmitters. But you are not experiencing electricity, you are experiencing a sunset. Now of course there is a correlation between the electricity in the brain and the experience that you have but what came first? (Chopra, 2011)

Tagore was a person who did not like formal schooling. He did not like so in any subject and his work is a very good example of the free flow of creativity in everything that he touched and created. Some of Tagore’s achievements and contributions can be listed as below:

- He was a creator of more than 2200 art songs. He was a leading tenor singer in his early days. He was an original composer of dance style. He liberated the dance styles from the traditional Indian classical influence. Since, Tagore did not like following too many rules so even when it came to dance, he focussed on the expression of emotions and the beauty of the movements of the human body. He ignored the rules which he thought were unnecessary.
- He was the author of poems and other writings for children. He identified very easily with the psychology of the children. He was also a great writer on the educational methods for children for learning with enjoyment.
- He was known as the father of the Indian short stories. Tagore was the one who gave a new direction to the Bengali novels.
- Tagore was a prolific correspondent. His published letters are over ten thousand in Bengali. In the English language, they are more than one thousand.

- According to Yeats, Tagore was a prose writer of ‘great beauty’. He had his own thoughts on almost every subject. There was no aspect of life that he had left untouched. He had his own very original reflections on nature, society, life and morality.
- He was a very deep and original literary critic.
- Above all, something that makes Tagore’s works so therapeutic is the fact that he had an astonishing capability to cope up with the death of his near and dear ones. Death struck him again and again, especially between the period of 1902 to 1907. Instead of falling apart, he surprisingly remained ever creative through these agonies and refused to give in to his personal grief. He, in fact, sought the meaning of death and one’s duty at a time when he lost his beloved ones. He showed a great sense of spiritual order and continuity in the universe. Death seemed as a punctuation in the eternal flow of life. He developed a philosophy through his work that pain brings people closer to the ‘divine’, like ‘pain bringing a child closer to his caressing mother. Tagore’s philosophy of life was very unusual and different from everyone or everything else.

“Believe it or not, also a homeopathic doctor who treated villagers for hours while land-lording his family estates, leaving unfinished writings of Tagore’s poems, novels, etc. to which he would return and pick up the threads as if in a continuity” (Rahman, 2011, p.103).

Here, I have presented an overview of the upcoming field of holistic healing and how because of this, music therapy has been gaining more and more importance. It has been attracting attention and has thus encouraged more and more reasons to research and study this topic. I also presented some important pointers on how sounds heal and soothe a person. The fact that there has been a transition from focussing only on the physical well-being to emotional and mental well-being is a crucial point here. I also discussed the growing importance and recognition of the need for an internal mechanism to combat life’s setbacks and situations. I focussed on presenting selected examples of music therapy being used for healing as in the example of the tie-up between Nordoff Robbins and Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. Another theme which emerged out of

the points that I presented was that Tagore's music was being used to bring back harmony, rhythm and cohesion in the lives of the mentally challenged people in a psychiatric hospital in Kolkata.

Also, I have presented my chosen method of analysis and my findings. I have elaborated on the three themes mainly, the power in Tagore's music which has made it a religion for people. As part of the research process, a very important point of the importance of the internal self-mechanism emerged out of all my discussions. This is the essence because it is only the internal mechanism within a person that saves him or her from going below a level where one loses control on oneself. And in such a situation, any person who is a disturbance to the society and is not able to conform to the rules and regulations set by the society, 'howsoever distorted those rules and regulations might be', ends up being sent to the asylum to be looked after by the authorities there. From there on, the entire life takes a different turn. The main point that emerges here is that the right things will not happen to us all the time but we need to have an internal mechanism to guard ourselves from anything and everything that life throws at us lest one ends up harming oneself.

My informants also stressed during my research process, by sharing their own examples of how some people have relied on Tagore's music and his lyrics using them as an anchor in the form of a prayer in trying times.

As part of my project, I also visited Jorasanko – Tagore's home. The environment and the set up of the home where Tagore was brought up, spoke everything about why he has been able to create art which gives strength and courage to people to keep consolidated in trying times. Spirituality was the centre of the Tagore home. The huge temple area occupies the central place of their home. One of the quotes by Tagore that I saw at Jorasanko expresses how art was so important for Tagore. "Love is kindred to art, it is inexplicable. Duty can be measured by the degree of its benefit, utility by profit and the power it may bring, but art by nothing but itself. There are other factors of life which are like visitors who come and go, but art is the guest that comes and stays. The others may be important but art is inevitable."

My informants gave me the understanding that there is something about *Rabindra sangeet* which people find very irresistible. Tagore was an expert when it came to portraying every sort of emotion in his songs and his work. The emotions that he has expressed in his songs are ageless and timeless. The creative visualisation that comes across with the mood of Tagore's music is also remarkable. He uses powerful moods for the expression of different seasons. Tagore expresses and describes the seasons along with matching the emotions in the human heart. His work tries to connect man with nature. (Som, 2009)

Thus, it is very clearly evident that Tagore's music is a religion for innumerable people of the world. One of my informant also emphasized to me that in times to come, when I understand Tagore more and the actual depth of his work, it would certainly become my religion. I found the following words most appropriate to how I would like to conclude my understanding of the therapeutic qualities in Tagore's music.

“The art with which he matched melody with each nuanced lyric or combined ragas and improvised novel musical expression, made each song a gem to be discovered, a new every time it is sung. So profound is the philosophical impact of Tagore's songs that their full impact is often felt not all at once, but gradually when one ponders on a term of phrase or expression in a song and discovers in it a mine of wisdom”. Songs which one has grown up with acquire a totally new character when discovered afresh with the new understanding that comes with one's evolution. From this point of view, *Rabindra sangeet* takes the role of a personal religion, a body of knowledge that is strengthening and nurturing in times of personal crisis, encouraging and inspiring in moments of weakness, passionate in moments of romantic bliss, healing in moods of romantic despair. This abiding relevance of *Rabindra sangeet* through the ages hallmarks them as masterpieces. The interactive quality in these songs makes the listener feel as though the songs have been only specifically composed especially for him, while the affective quality in them carries him to the same intuitive level of awareness as that of the creator itself. From the memoirs of Maitreyi Debi, it is apparent how Tagore's songs were relevant in day to day life, even for Tagore himself” (Som, 2009, p.189). Through his music, Tagore connects us with the cosmic world.

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