



Role Of E B Havell On Manifestation Of Indian Ideals In Art Education.

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Abstract: *Due to the attitudes of its officials and British Colony rule the art education in India and art practice by the beneficiaries were facing various problems of identity and originality. Many art schools were began to function with the inspirations received from the great exhibition of 1851 with initiatives of private individuals and collaborations for the enhancement of art activities in India but could not take any solid action towards improvement of prevailing situations. E B Havell, a British art official took initiatives to change the situations responsibly and challengingly with helps of Indian art enthusiasts. The career of E B Havell was cut short from British part, said to be due to mental breakdown and never returned to India after 1908. But the introductions of Indian ideals continued vigorously by his Indian friends following his objectivities.*

Key words: *Colonial Art, Abanindranayh Tagore, E B Havell, Sir Jamshetjee Jeejeebhoy, Calcutta School of Art, Ananda K Coomarswamy, Bengal School, Santiniketan . Great Exhibition,*

Research Paper:

Ernest Binfield Havell (16 September 1861 – 31 December 1934), who was well known in the name E.B. Havell, was a powerful Art administrator and Art Historian who was in India for more than two decades with connected activities. He was author of several books on Indian art and architecture. Belonged to Havell family of artists and art educators, he was the principal of the Government School of Art, Calcutta from 1896 to 1905, where, with companionship of artists in Tagore Family, specially with Abanindranath Tagore, he managed to develop a style of art and art education based on Indian ideals rather than then established Western models, which led to the foundation of Bengal school of art. Here this study focus on various elements supported him, evaluates the kind of modernism he could insist in art education and art practice, how he maintained the various relevant situations and tackled his involvement in a manner logically fit to a passionate Art Enthusiast.

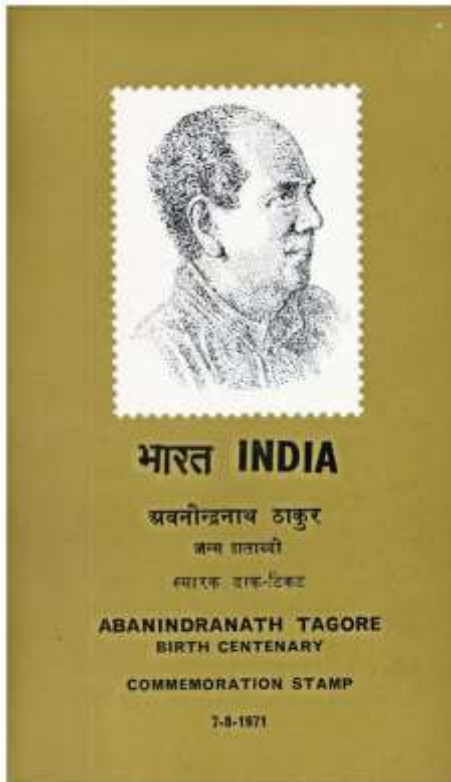
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The art situation in India which exposed and maintained the condition of art to the public being a colony of British, and then pathetic colonial political situations were always on discussions in meetings of British colonial administrators several occasions in the past. Art established in the name of Indian art had high influence of traditional Indian Art including miniature painting traditions of 15th the Century India. Same time even the exhibitions and other programs organized by Colonial Government were apparently failed to support and improve degrading situations due to the undependable management. “These surveys and exhibitions made decay of Indian Art manufacturers glaringly clear, which had already set in due to the free flow of cheaper European Machine made goods greatly in demand by the indigenous population” (Note-1). “The Revenue and Agriculture Department of the Imperial Government made a resolution in 1883 on Museums and Exhibitions with regard to the improvement of art manufacturers of India and promotion of trade in them within India itself as well as in foreign countries.” (Note-2). With notion to eradicate vulgar situations an exhibition was set up in 1883, which was organized with headship of T H Hendley and was assisted by principals of Art Schools Bombay and Lahore J Griffiths and J L Kipling respectively. J L Kipling was the editor for the journal which recorded and established related facts - started to issue from 1883. It included the details of the collections of Calcutta museum, which meant to act as an idealistic sample room for the materials collected in annual exhibitions at Calcutta in order to collect high quality materials for Indian

Section at International exhibitions. In this connection, the last major exhibition held in 1902 was at Delhi Durbar initiated by Lord Curzon under colonial government (*Note-3*).

“To maintain, restore and improve the application of oriental art to industry and manufacture” (*Note-4*) many arts schools were began to function with the inspirations from the great exhibition of 1851 with the initiatives of private individuals and collaborations, (*Note-5*) but Colonial Government did not took any direct management of the same. Even though four art schools at various cities - Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and Lahore were began to function before 1883 aimed to channelize art production where the cultivation of fine arts could not achieve a prime position but secondary. The art education in India was a matter of discussion and frank debate in a meeting of Royal Society of Arts, London in 1909, in which E B Havell was the principal speaker. In speech he focused on the anomalous and altering policy towards art teaching in India. It was noted that art grew as a part of their tradition in Europe but art in India could not maintain similar status. A reason for this failure was the establishment of art schools in India without necessary planning for any kind of such development and they followed the basics of British Pattern of art education which had a far away distance from Indian idealistic lineage . The artist studied in these art schools were not capable of tackling various issues impeding progress and no serious analysis were implemented since the inception of them until the situations went catastrophic. A number of art enthusiasts including Alexander Cunningham, Lord Curzon, John Marshal, Lady Herringham, T. H Hendley, J Griffiths, J. L Kipling, Green Wood, Cecil Burns, Gladstone Solomon, Robert Chishom, Dr. Hunter, Higgins, Terry, H.H Locke, Annoda Prasad Bagchi, Lord Norhbrook, Percy Brown, Colonel E. Goodwinn, Justice Hodgson Pratt, Rajendralala Mitra, and several other British/Europen/Indian (*Note-5*) trained people were working in India as gods men for the enrichment of India’s art education and though the salvation of Indian Art. It should be noted that after many decades of said to be highly involved art practice and teaching, the above mentioned personalities could not even make a progressive result after thirty years of Great Exhibition held in 1851, other than institute regular course of drawing in South Kensington Model in 1880 (*Note-6*) at Bombay National Art School. It later established as J J School of Art, (*Note-7*) on remembrance of Sir Jamshetjee Jeejeebhoy, who



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offered Rs. 100000/-to East India Company in 1854 for the materialization of establishing the school. It reflects how seriously and generously the Indians notion to progress art situation in India hungered and the how the situation was penetrated by Western art enthusiasts to build their art dreams in the land of Miniature schools. It points out that how mindlessly the British Empire who had only calculations of economical and lucrative business terms stood feeling less in such cultural matters.

Abanindranath the nephew of poet Rabindranath, was friendly with E B Havell and Dr. Ananda K Coomarswami (*Note-8*) due to various cultural reasons, the intellectual exchange between them were philosophical, aesthetic, logical and much more than any kind of camaraderie. Abanindranath Tagore was taught western art practice by various teachers like O Khiladi and others in his studious period. The family traits at Jorasanko family house of Tagore considered learning art and practicing culture the most effective and sensitive education a thoughtful human being can acquire. When Western educated but sincere open personality like E B Havell began to appear in Indian Scenareo, it was not only the Tagore family artists but a whole Calcutta genius were welcomed the initiatives against practices of an out dated European School in the land of miniature tradition.

It was in 1896, E B Havell, took over the charges of Principal at Calcutta School of art, and the art School and gallery moved over to its new and commodious premises near the Indian Museum. During his efforts as principal at

Madras school since 1884, with introduction of study of Indian Designs and decorative patterns, he tried his level best to establish it essentially as a school for craftsman. It was with great understanding he arranged the nearness of a museum to the art school. During the Principalship of E B Havell, Abanindranath Tagore was appointed to teach at Calcutta School and the bond with such personality began to make strong cultural initiatives in the art situation. With interaction of Philosophical genius Ananda K Coomarswamy and others Abanindranath Tagore was much maneuver to initiate Indian Style painting which announced the propaganda of Bengal School. When Nationalism, Indianism and Revivalism

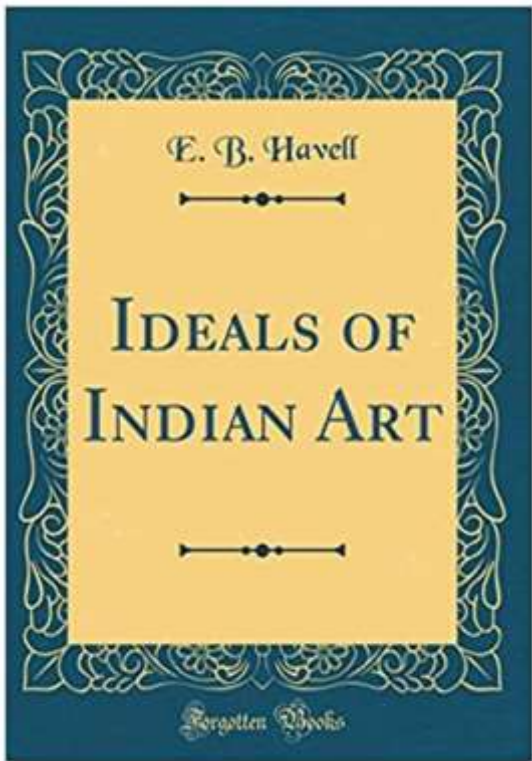


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were caught in to culturally nourished brains they began to act accurately without surrendering themselves to own personal limitations. Abanindranath Tagore tried to alter destiny of Indian artists by modeling himself as Indian Artist. It was with his all efforts and every sense through his art practice which had lineage with Indian Visual ideologies established in Indian corners such as Royal Kingdoms of Rajasthan, Pahari, and Mughal (Note-9) since centuries ago. E B Havell the employee of British Colony rule, was the personality who understood the necessity of changes in entire teaching system and began to act accordingly but limited by superiors.

E B Havell was really unhappy in the British style art education system, observed and noted the weakness that “The study of Design, The foundation of all art, was entirely ignored and throughout the general drawing and painting classes, the worst traditions of English Provincial art School forty years ago, were followed. There were no general classes for practical geometry, mechanical drawing, and perspective. Oriental Art was more or less ignored, there by taking the Indian art students in a wrong direction. Besides this there was besides, no regular examination system for the issue of certificates to deserving students” (Note-10). E B Havell was unhappy with new deliberate move to divide the school into two distinct divisions, 1. Industrial Arts, and 2. Fine Arts.

As an effort to correct the situations, E B Havell proposed teachings of Oriental arts in the first division of the school. According to his the establishers view “The object of having an art Gallery attached to an art school is to mould the taste and direct the imagination of the students by means of the works of art exhibited and yet though the students were Indian and the object of the school was, or rather should have been, the improvement of Indian Art and not the Introduction of European Art. The collection of Pictures which was got together for the Art Gallery consisted almost entirely of copies of the old Italian and early English School, while Indian Art was practically neglected” (Note-10) .With the spirit of recreating the system, E B Havel re-organized the Art Gallery of Indian Museum, he started to procure specimens of Industrial Art for the gallery to serve as samples for new style of education he planned to stage there. The art gallery was reorganized in three sections, 1.Art applied to industry, 2.Architecture and architectural decoration, and 3.Fine Arts. He made several introductions like teachings in several new craft techniques, fresco paintings, stained glass making for windows, lacquer work and stenciling - focusing employment opportunities for students when they complete their studies. New style let the teaching of figure and nature study continue in the Fine Arts section, here too he thought direct acquaintance of Indian examples would be beneficial. Due to sufferings from arrogance of people surrounded, E B Havell went on leave for a year in 1902. (Note-11). On his arrival after one year he continued his attitude for changing more forcefully.



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He tried to rewrite the entire teaching style of the Calcutta school and went even to sell off British Models brought from England to teach students the stylistic art the British planned for them, with approval from superiors. He established there a gallery of Indian art by replacing European pictures with fresh purchase of Indian Painting. He persuaded Abanindranath Tagore to join the staff and placed him as Vice Principal of the school in 1905. The changes he adapted made arrogance from various corners including agitation from own students and E B Havell was largely punished for crucial job he staged vigorously there (*Note-11*). The career of E B Havell was cut short from British part, said to be due to mental breakdown and never returned to India after 1908.

Abanindranath continued teaching at Calcutta school till 1915, until get strong differences with British Principal Percy Brown (joined after E B Havell) who did not liked the freedom enjoyed by students of Abanindranath Tagore. He resigned from Calcutta School but continued teaching at Indian Society of Oriental Art at Calcutta. Among his students at Calcutta School, Surendranath Ganguly, Nandalal Bose, Asitkumar Haldar, Samarendranath Gupta, Shailendranath dey, Hakim Md.Khan, Venkattappa, Promode Kumar Chakraborti famed as practitioners and propagators of Bengal School. Nandalal Bose becomes art faculty at Santiniketan, Asitkumar Haldar at Lucknow, Samarendranath Gupta at Lahore, Shailendranath Dey at Jaipur, and Venkattappa at Mysore (*Note-12*). The period of teachings by Abanindranath Tagore in Calcutta with premises of Indian Society of Oriental Art after resigning from

Calcutta school was also remarkable due to the establishment of Bengal School simultaneously with art activities of Nandalal Bose at Santiniketan with wishes of Rabindranath (Note-13) .

Conclusion: It was already noted above that E B Havell was relieved from his job of Principal at College of Art, Calcutta and the dispute at Royal society of Arts meeting in London in which the principal speaker had been E B Havell. As he was already out of the arena, he could courageously expose the disasters of the British Colonial Government Policy with regard to emphasis Indian Art Education. He rudely criticized against “double standards” (Note15) of British with which art manufactures and the conventional arts of painting and sculptures were viewed and projected. The disagreement of E B Havell was on policies that categorizes Indian artist to second rank by placing him as craftsman and not as an intellectual even after he proved his worth as an Individual artist of merit. He argued “if Indian Artistic Genius had found expression in producing articles of beauty for domestic use how could they have failed in the case of “Fine Arts”, as if they were guided by two separate aesthetic philosophies” (Note-16) . He questioned the logic of considering Indian artists as craft persons and guides him to respect their handicrafts, by imbibing only conventional forms in creation. He rebelled against policy of British to consider artists of colonies inferior and direct them to absorb Western ideals in the name of civilizing them (with great artistic ideals of the west) to make them capable for production of genuine outcomes. According to E B Havell, it was useless the art school studies remained in the schools, until unless link between the subjects taught in the schools are directly linked to industry. He directly announced his anguish towards the situation all pass outs of the art schools targets to maintain abilities to become portrait artists due to demand only focused on it. Surely this kind of argument from a highly considered personality of their own nation against conventional thoughts made reformatory results in their behavioral attitudes further.



Seven



Eight

List of Images.

1. Banaras Ghatts, Engraving by E B Havell
2. Abanindranath Tagore.
3. Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy.
4. School of art, Calcutta.
5. Ideals of Indian Art. Cover of book written by E B Havell.
6. "Apsaras in the air" Perfect application of self invented "wash" technique on paper. Painting by Abanindranath Tagore.
7. "The Queen of Asoka" Utilized historical revelations romantically. Painting by Abanindranath Tagore.
8. "Sati" Thoughtful use of social element in wide representation. Painting by Nandalal Bose.
9. "Maternal nursing to a God" wide expression of narrative qualities. Painting by Asit Kumar Haldar.
10. "Beauty in action" Working beyond cultural diversities gathered a national appreciation. Painting by A R Chughtai.
11. "The Finale" Rendering ideological friction. Painting by Samarendranath Gupta.
12. "Karthikeya" Hindu Puranic theme in wide representational use. Painting by Surendranath Ganguly.

Courtesy: Images' Common files widely available are on use.



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Notes.

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1. Dr. Ratan Parimoo, "Art of Three Tagores, (Abanindranath, Gaganendranath and Rabindranath) Page no. 34,
2. As per Journal of Indian Art, Vol.1, London, October 1883.
3. There were a number of exhibitions held. Great Exhibition in 1881, International Exhibition in Paris 1877, Jaipore 1883, Deli 1902 and so on.
4. The 1851 great exhibition is referred by various writers like Bird wood, E B Havell in 'Art Administration in India' Journal of Royal Society of Arts, Vol.LVIII, London and later by Ratan Parimoo in his book, Three Tagores. Page no. 35.
5. Imperial Gazetteer of India, the Indian Empire, Vol. IV, Administrative, Oxford, 1909: as referred by Dr. Ratan Parimoo Page no. 139, Three Tagores.
6. South Kensington is a district of West London which is a popular tourist destination due to its density of museums and cultural landmarks including Natural History Museum, the Science Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, Baden-Powell House and institutions such as the Royal Albert Hall, Imperial College London, the Royal Geographical Society, the Royal College of Art, the Royal College of Music . Here it means Royal College of Art.
7. The Indian business personal Sir Janshetjee Jeejeebhoy, who offered Rs. 100000/-to East India Company in 1854 for the materialization of establishing the Art school.
8. Ananda K Coomarswami: Ananda Kentish Muthu Coomaraswamy (Tamil: Ānanda Kentiś Muthū Kumāraswāmī; (22 August 1877 – 9 September 1947) was a Ceylonese Tamil metaphysician, pioneering historian and philosopher of Indian art who was an early interpreter of Indian culture to the West. In particular, he is described as "the groundbreaking theorist who was largely responsible for introducing ancient Indian art to the West
9. Royal kingdoms at Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Punjab, and Mughal encouraged Miniature traditions in India.
10. Gladston Solomone, The Bombay Revival of Indian Art, Bombay, 1923.
11. E B Havell kept himself away from India because of pressure from various sides. With acquired energy, he continued works more energetically.
12. Abanindranath based his Bengal School style on Miniature style of Rajasthan, Pahari and Mughal styles and Wash technique which they considered non European. Spread of his students all over India supported growth of Style of Bengal School.
13. Rabindranath appointed Nandalal Bose in Santiniketan when Abanindranath hesitated to leave Calcutta.
14. As stated by Jogesh Chandra Bagal. History of Govt. College of Art and Craft, Centenary, Calcutta College of Art and Craft, Calcutta, 1966.
15. E B Havell, Art Administration In India, Journal of Royal Society of Arts, Vol.LVIII London, 1909.

References: Selected readings only.

1. E B Havell, *Indian Sculpture and Painting*, London, 1908.
2. E B Havell, *Ideals of Indian Art*, London 1911.
3. Jogesh Chandra Bagal, *History of Government College of Art and Craft, Centenary*. Calcutta College of Art and Craft, Calcutta, 1966.
4. W. G Archer, *Bazar Paiontings of Calcutta. The Style of Kalighat Painting*. London, 1953.
5. E B Havell, *Art administration in India*, *Journal of Royal Society of Arts*, Vol.LVIII, London 1909.
6. Ananda K Coomaraswamy, *The aims of Indian Art*, Broad Campdon. 1908.
7. Dr. Ratan Parimoo, *The Paintings of three Tagores, Abanindranath, Gaganendranath and Rabibdranath Tagore*.
8. Jaya Appasamy, *Abanindanath Tagore and the Art of His Times*. Lalitkala Akademi, New Delhi.
9. K G subramanyan. *Moving Focus*, lalithakala Academy, New Delhi.

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