

School Going Adolescents Perception of Rabindrik Values

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Abstract

Rabindranath Tagore has left an indelible mark on Indian society as a whole, but more so for the Bengal culture. His music has been inspirational in showing the importance of human values for living a happy life. In line with this, 28 values were extracted from his songs called Rabindra Sangeet. These 28 values were incorporated into two separate sub categories consisting of 14 values each. The objective of the study was to find out which values were given importance by the adolescent population. The results revealed that there exists a significant difference in the values incorporated by males and females. They also differed in the degree to which they gave importance to the various rabindrik values.

Keywords: Rabindrik Values, Path-Oriented Values, Goal-Oriented Values, School Going Adolescents, Gender Differences

An integral part of human life constitutes human values. Values are beliefs. In reality, whenever someone contemplates on their values, they actually think of what is important to them in his or her life. It is on the basis of this thought people set their goals and strive to achieve the same. Values carry the connotation of ethics and morals that guide an individual to remain grounded to the qualities of humanity. Thus, it can be concluded that a value system forms the framework of ideas primarily present in all individuals which gives the direction in their daily life. Rokeach defined a value as "an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence."¹ In 1992 Schwartz defined value as "desirable states, objects, goals, or behaviours, transcending specific situations and applied as normative standards to judge and to choose among alternative modes of behaviour."² Each individual holds multiple values with their varying degrees of importance. The importance of a particular value is subjective; it differs from one person to another. Thus, value has a hierarchical structure or certain norms which form the value system.

Rabindrik values refer to the human values ingrained in the Rabindrasangeet, i.e., the songs composed by Rabindranath Thakur. Value preference varies with age and with maturity. Value preference in different period differs from the childhood or adulthood. In adolescence values are taking shape by testing and retesting. The paper explores the

¹ M. Rokeach, *The Nature of Human Values*, New York, The Free Press, 1973.

² S.H. Schwartz, "Universals in the Content and Structure of Values: Theoretical Advances and Empirical Tests in 20 Countries", in M. Zanna (Ed.) *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, New York, Academic Press, 1992, pp. 1-65.

differences among adolescent male and females in terms of the path and goal oriented Rabindrik values. The paper is divided into three sub-units – (1) Rabindrik human values, (2) Adolescence and human values and (3) Gender and human values.

Rabindrik Human Values

The revered Rabindranath Tagore composed several songs. In a word this is called the Rabindrasangeet. To him music is not an object rather a mediator to look at the inner and inner core of consciousness. Dutta Roy and Bandopadhyay in 2011 extracted 14 path and 13 goal oriented work values from Rabindrasangeet.³ Path oriented values are: (1) self-awakening (perception of self as stable and positive), (2) emotional control (controlling unwanted emotion), (3) systematic (following planned step), (4) non self insulting (not offending to self), (5) fearless (feeling of overcoming fear), (6) cleanliness (neat and tidy), (7) no work-family conflict (maintaining balance between family and work demand), (8) *niskam* principle (working without expectation of reward), (9) challenging (competing against one), (10) self-understanding (feedback to self about own success and failure), (11) doubtless (confidence and certainty in belief), (12) free from fear of failure (freedom from anticipated fear), (13) resolute (determined in purpose and action), and (14) active (avoidance of laziness).

The goal values are (1) peace (free from conflicts with others), (2) universalization (thinking for everyone), (3) enlightenment (having true understanding), (4) positive feeling (feeling of happiness), (5) family security (taking care of loved ones), (6) a sense of accomplishment (a lasting contribution), (7) pleasure (an enjoyable life), (8) inner harmony (freedom from inner conflict), (9) self-respect (pride in oneself), (10) salvation (saving self from bad effect), (11) self empowerment (sense of power over one's own life), (12) security (protection from attack), (13) significance in life (finding meaning in life) and (14) altruism (considering good of others before own).

Dutta Roy and Bhaduri noted that, in India there is value convergence and divergence between the genders.⁴ They noted high preference among females to cleanliness and resolute which was lacking amongst the males. Additionally, females prefer pleasure values in goal orientation, whereas males seek challenges.

These values are of utmost importance to all individuals, especially for the adolescence as adolescents is the transitional stage of physical and psychological development. It is a time of "internal turmoil, upheaval and psychological confusions". It is a stage of identity development. It is at this time that the essence of these values needs to be understood by the adolescents and adopted by them in order to lead a life with self-empowerment and with self-respect; a life that would not only help the individuals in making right choices but also aid them in bringing about the positive transformation of the society.

³ D. Dutta Roy and E. Bandopadhyay, "Exploring Work Values in Rabindrasangeet", *Asian Journal of Management Research*, Special Issue (1), 2011, pp. 34-38.

⁴ D. Dutta Roy and S. Bhaduri, "Gender and Rabindrik Value Orientation", *Psyber News*, V (1), 2014, pp. 46-54.

Adolescence and Human Value

The term adolescence is derived from the Latin word *adolescere*, meaning “to grow” or “to grow to maturity”. Adolescence phase begins with the onset of sexual maturity (puberty) and ends with the completion of physical growth. During adolescence an individual gets introduced as an integral part of the society of adults and it is at this age, the child does not feel that he is at lower level with the adults but equal with them as far as the rights are concerned. This integration triggers many affective aspects related with puberty. The society sends mixed signals to the adolescents.

This marks a major phase during the life span; the unique characteristics of adolescence distinguish it from pre-adolescence and adulthood. The rapid rate of change in attitude and behaviour is the most important characteristic of this phase and this is why this period is a period of “storm and stress”. The adolescence is characterised by heightened emotional tension due to the physical and glandular changes which are going on. The considerable emotional stress among both boys and girls can be attributed to the social pressures. The society expects the new entrant in the adult world to behave in a particular manner, however, for the adolescent it is a completely new condition and he/ she has no experience of handling it. The immense social pressure leads to the additional stress apart from a rapidly changing body. The adolescence is also the phase of the formation of value systems and moral development. The young people get influenced both by the personal and societal values. The value preferences are heavily dependent on the gender.

Gender and Human Value

Based on a study of 127 samples from 70 countries, Schwartz and Rubel found consistent cross-cultural sex differences for seven of the 10 basic human values.⁵ Men attributed more importance than women to power, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, and self-direction values. Women attributed more importance than men to benevolence and universalism values. Less consistently, women attributed more importance to security values, but there was no consistent sex difference for tradition and conformity values. Psychoanalytic theorists contend that women are more related and more affiliated with others than men, whereas men are more autonomous and more individuated.⁶ Harvard psychologist Carol Gilligan believes that differences in ethic perspective are related to gender – that is, that men and women follow different but parallel paths of moral development that lead them to make their ethical choice based on different ethical criteria.⁷

⁵ S.H. Schwartz and T. Rubel, “Sex Differences in Value Priorities: Cross-cultural and Multi Method Studies”, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 89 (6), 2005, pp. 1010-1028.

⁶ N. Chodorow, “What is the Relation between Psychoanalytic Feminism and the Psychoanalytic Psychology of Women?”, in D. Rhode (Ed.) *Theoretical Perspectives on Sexual Difference*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1990, pp. 114-30.

⁷ C. Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women’s Development*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1982.

According to Gilligan, some people base ethical decisions on principles of justice, equality, impartialities, and rights. This is the justice perspective. But others base their decisions on a care perspective, in which the need to preserve relationship and minimize hurt takes precedence over considerations of justice and rights.

Value preference varies with culture.⁸ Asian people prefer collectivistic to individualistic values. Most of the value theories are developed by western authors but some Asians did research on human value system.⁹ Dutta Roy related Rabindrik human values to psychological counselling.¹⁰

Objectives and Methodology

Within this conceptual framework, the paper has the following two broad objectives: First, to determine relative importance of path and goal oriented Rabindrik values by male and female adolescents; and second, is to determine relative importance of path and goal oriented Rabindrik values by male and female adolescents when age is co-variate.

The participants for the present study were selected from two schools of Kolkata, comprising of 304 adolescents; 198 males and 106 females. The age group of the population who were selected for the study varied from 13 to 19. Data was collected on gender, which was to understand the male female ratio and its impact on the attributes. The respondents having any psychiatric illness were rejected. Two instruments have been used in this research – first, personal information schedule and second, Rabindrik value scale.

The personal information schedule was used to collect individual information, specifically, name, age, sex, education etc. The second instrument, Rabindrik value scale, was used to assess the perception of the adolescents regarding the Rabindrik values. The scale consisted of 14 items for preference to path oriented values and 14 for goal oriented values. Respondents were asked to rate each value following 5 point Likert type scale. Response categories were 1= this is least important in my life, 2= this is less important in my life, 3= undecided, 4= this is more important in my life, 5= this is most important in my life. In the current study Cronbach's alpha in path oriented values was 0.44 while the same in goal oriented values was 0.73. But in earlier study, Dutta Roy and Basu found that cronbach's alpha was 0.79 for path and 0.71 for goal value orientation. High score indicates more preference.

⁸ G. Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-related Values*, Beverly Hills, Sage Publications, 1980.

⁹ A.Y.C. King, and M.H. Bond, "The Confucian Paradigm of Man: A Sociological View", in W. Tseng and D. Y. H. Wu (eds.), *Chinese Culture and Mental Health: An Overview*, Orlando, Academic Press, 1985.

D. Dutta Roy, "Rabindrik Psychotherapy in Stress Management", *PsyInsight*, I (3): 2010, p.10.

D. Dutta Roy, and D. Basu, "Rabindrik Work Value Preferences", *Psyber News*, IV (2): 2013, pp. 82-89.

¹⁰ D. Dutta Roy, "Rabindrik Psychotherapy", *Journal of Social Science and Welfare*, I: 2014, pp. 44-53.

After obtaining permission from the principals of the two participating schools, data were collected from several classes using Rabindrik value questionnaire. School teachers assisted in the distribution and collection of the questionnaire. Data was collected in a group setting and instructions were explained individually when asked for.

With the help of SPSS software, the results were analyzed statistically. Means and SD of all the groups (N=304) were computed for each variable. To analyze the gender difference, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) were computed for boys and girls for both path and goal values. It is a procedure for comparing multivariate sample means, and is used when there are two or more dependent variables.

Results and Discussion

The results were assessed for the path oriented values as well as the goal oriented values.

Trend of path oriented values: It is noted that disregarding gender difference, respondents gave more priorities on cleanliness, fearless, resolute, self awakening, self understanding, systematic, free from fear of failure and no work-family conflict values. However, out of the 14 values, on eight values there was a difference between the male and female adolescents (Table 1).

Path Oriented Values	Total (N=304)		Male (N=198)		Female (N=106)		F Value ¹	P Value ²
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Self awakening	4.45	0.80	4.34	0.87	4.67	0.61	12.20	0.00
Emotional control	3.44	1.49	3.43	1.48	3.45	1.51	0.02	0.90
	4.37	0.88	4.34	0.87	4.41	0.88	0.35	0.56
Systematic	4.37	0.88	4.34	0.87	4.41	0.88	0.35	0.56
Self insulting less	3.21	1.63	3.23	1.58	3.18	1.74	0.06	0.81
Fearless	4.61	0.76	4.61	0.74	4.62	0.80	0.03	0.86
Cleanliness	4.79	0.53	4.71	0.60	4.92	0.36	10.73	0.00
No work family conflict	4.19	0.83	4.02	0.89	4.51	0.56	26.89	0.00
Nishkam principle	3.49	1.29	3.41	1.33	3.64	1.21	2.15	0.14
Challenging	3.78	1.32	3.79	1.32	3.76	1.31	0.033	0.86
Self understanding	4.41	0.82	4.26	0.91	4.70	0.52	21.05	0.00
Doubtless	3.98	1.08	3.84	1.13	4.25	0.92	10.08	0.00
Free from fear of failure	4.27	1.06	4.14	1.11	4.52	0.93	9.19	0.00
Resolute	4.54	0.70	4.5	0.72	4.61	0.64	1.82	0.18
Active	4.06	1.11	3.96	1.13	4.25	1.07	4.61	0.03

Females were significantly higher than males in their values for self-awakening, cleanliness, no work family conflict, self understanding, doubtless, freedom from fear of failure and activity. Females preferred more in no work-family conflict, self-understanding, self-awakening, cleanliness, doubtless.

Table 2: Mean differences in goal oriented values between male and female

Goal Oriented Values	Total (N=304)		Male (N=198)		Female (N=106)		F Value	P Value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Peace	4.45	0.98	4.44	0.93	4.46	1.05	0.05	0.83
Universalization	4.25	0.9	4.12	0.93	4.5	0.78	12.43	0
Enlightenment	4.56	0.77	4.5	0.85	4.67	0.6	3.66	0.06
Positive Feeling	4.32	0.85	4.24	0.87	4.46	0.79	4.85	0.03
Family Security	4.72	0.64	4.66	0.68	4.82	0.53	4.48	0.04
A Sense of Accomplishment	4.5	0.77	4.41	0.83	4.68	0.59	8.97	0
Pleasure	4.33	0.92	4.25	0.97	4.47	0.81	3.88	0.05
Inner Harmony	4.22	0.98	4.13	1.04	4.4	0.84	5.28	0.02
Self-Respect	4.23	1.08	4.05	1.18	4.58	0.76	17.69	0
Salvation	4.59	0.91	4.46	1	4.82	0.64	11.1	0
Self-Empowerment	4.39	0.75	4.32	0.8	4.54	0.64	5.89	0.02
Security	4.64	0.73	4.57	0.82	4.76	0.47	5.04	0.03
Significance In Life	4.63	0.66	4.55	0.72	4.78	0.5	9.02	0
Altruism	4.13	1.11	4.05	1.12	4.29	1.08	3.06	0.08

Trend of goal oriented values: In case of goal values disregarding gender difference more priorities were given to family security, significance in life, altruism, self empowerment, and enlightenment, a sense of accomplishment, peace and inner harmony. However, there was a stark difference between male and female adolescents, and they differed in 11 out of the 14 goal oriented values (Table 2). Female adolescents were significantly higher in their values for universalization, positive feeling, family security, a sense of accomplishment, pleasure, inner harmony, self respect, salvation, self empowerment, security and significance in life.

Age adjustment: As values differ with age MANOVA and MANCOVA were computed in this study. Table 4 and 6 shows that when age was non-adjusted the Wilk's Lambda value was 0.83 in comparison to when age was adjusted the Wilk's Lambda value was 0.81 for path oriented values. Likewise, in case of goal oriented values, Wilk's Lambda value was 0.87 when age was non-adjusted and Wilk's Lambda was 0.86 when age was adjusted.

Table 3: Difference in F statistics in age non-adjusted and age adjusted condition for path value preference

Path Oriented Valued	F (ANOVA) Age Non-Adjusted	P Value	F (ANCOVA) Age-Adjusted	P Value	Difference in F-values
Self awakening	12.2	0	12.74	0	0.54
Emotional control	0.02	0.9	0.01	0.92	-0.01
Systematic	0.35	0.56	0.32	0.58	-0.03
Self insulting less	0.06	0.81	0.04	0.84	-0.02
Fearless	0.03	0.86	0.03	0.88	0
Cleanliness	10.73	0	10.89	0	0.16
No work family conflict	26.89	0	28.32	0	1.43
Nishkam principle	2.15	0.14	2.27	0.13	0.12
Challenging	0.03	0.86	0.03	0.86	0
Self understanding	21.05	0	21.23	0	0.18
Doubtless	10.08	0	10.04	0	-0.04
Free from fear of failure	9.19	0	9.93	0	0.74
Resolute	1.82	0.18	1.79	0.18	-0.03
Active	4.61	0.03	4.58	0.03	-0.03

Table 4: Differences in Wilk's Lambda for age non-adjusted and age adjusted condition for path value preference

Wilk's Lambda value	Condition	Value	F-value	Sig.
	Age Non-Adjusted	0.83	4.24	0.00
	Age-Adjusted	0.81	4.74	0.00

Table 5: Difference in F statistics in age non-adjusted and age adjusted condition for goal value preference

Goal Oriented Values	F (ANOVA) Age Non-Adjusted	P Value	F (ANCOVA) Age-Adjusted	P Value	Difference in F-values
Peace	0.05	0.83	0.03	0.87	-0.02
Universalization	12.43	0	12.34	0	-0.09
Enlightenment	3.66	0.06	3.6	0.06	-0.06
Positive Feeling	4.85	0.03	4.9	0.03	0.05
Family Security	4.48	0.04	4.42	0.04	-0.06

Goal Oriented Values	F (ANOVA) Age Non-Adjusted	P Value	F (ANCOVA) Age-Adjusted	P Value	Difference in F-values
A Sense of Accomplishment	8.97	0	9.18	0	0.21
Pleasure	3.88	0.05	3.82	0.05	-0.06
Inner Harmony	5.28	0.02	5.44	0.02	0.16
Self-Respect	17.69	0	17.96	0	0.27
Salvation	11.1	0	11.13	0	0.03
Self-Empowerment	5.89	0.02	6	0.02	0.11
Security	5.04	0.03	5.02	0.03	-0.02
Significance In Life	9.02	0	9.15	0	0.13
Altruism	3.06	0.08	3	0.08	-0.06

Table 6: Differences in Wilk's Lambda for age non-adjusted and age adjusted condition for goal value preference

	Condition	Value	F-value	Sig.
Wilk's Lambda value	Age Non-Adjusted	0.87	3.11	0.00
	Age-Adjusted	0.86	3.30	0.00

From the above findings it can be inferred that age plays a major role. Table 4 and 6 shows that when age was adjusted and non-adjusted, in both cases the values of Wilk's Lambda were higher for goal oriented values. The results can be explained in terms of the phase of life. As adolescent period is characterized by heightened emotional tension, they face many challenges of life. Adolescents are expected to prove their mettle. In this period they mainly focus on their future goals, but the pathway to reach their goal is not yet part of their concern.

Conclusion

The study provided an understanding on the value systems held by male and female adolescents. These values were extracted from Rabindranath Tagore's songs and converted into two major sub themes called path oriented values and goal oriented values. Male and female adolescents differed significantly on a few path oriented values while there were many goal oriented values in which they differed significantly. There are 14 path oriented values and 14 goal oriented values.

Females were higher in goal oriented values of universalization, positive feeling, family security, a sense of accomplishment, pleasure, inner harmony, self respect, salvation, self empowerment, security and significance in life providing evidence of the importance given to goal oriented values. The two genders gave importance to many path oriented values as adolescence is a time when these values become more

prominent and important to function normally. However significant differences were seen in path oriented values where females gave more importance to self-awakening, cleanliness, no work family conflict, self understanding, doubtless, freedom from fear of failure and activity, providing further evidence compared to males. The results provide evidence that females during the adolescent stage of development are much more aware of the values they inculcate and have values that are more complete than their male counterparts.

The results, however, were inconclusive in understanding the importance of many path oriented values and goal oriented values. This might be due to the many limitations of the study. The importance given to both sets of values were higher for females, this effect might be caused by the difference in the number of participants between the two genders. The questionnaire itself consisted of 28 items, where each item corresponded to one path or goal oriented value. This might cause an impact on measurement of each of the values and cause skewness in the results.

