



## Influence of the Legacy of Kabiguru Rabindranath Tagore in Promoting Tourism in and around Santiniketan

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### INTRODUCTION:

Rabindranath Tagore holds a profound place in the cultural heritage of India and the world through his immense contributions to literature, music, education, and philosophy. As the first non-European Nobel Laureate in Literature (1913), Tagore elevated Indian culture on the global stage with his poetic works such as *Gitanjali*, which reflect a deep spiritual and philosophical ethos rooted in Indian tradition. He revived and redefined Bengali art and music, composing over 2,000 songs known as Rabindra Sangeet, which continue to form a vital part of Bengal's cultural identity. Additionally, Tagore founded Visva-Bharati University in Santiniketan, promoting a holistic and intercultural educational philosophy that blends Eastern and Western traditions. His efforts to preserve and reinterpret Indian art, folklore, and classical traditions affirm his role as a guardian and innovator of cultural heritage. (Robinson, 1995)

His writings reflected a deep humanism, philosophical depth, and an appreciation for nature and spirituality. His poetry often blended Indian and Western themes, introducing global readers to the rich cultural heritage of India. Tagore was a visionary educator who founded Visva-Bharati University at Santiniketan in 1921. He opposed rote learning and emphasized

creativity, freedom of expression, and learning through nature. His educational model was based on a synthesis of Eastern and Western philosophies and sought to create a space where people from different cultures could come together in the spirit of universal humanism.

Rabindranath Tagore's contribution to tourism is not direct in the way modern tourism is promoted through infrastructure or policy, but his influence is significant in cultural, literary, and spiritual tourism. Tagore's literary works, especially his poems, songs, and stories, have immortalized various places in India, inspiring travelers to visit these destinations. His works contributed to the cultural identity of places like **Shantiniketan**, turning them into major cultural tourism hubs. Today, Shantiniketan attracts thousands of domestic and international tourists interested in Tagore's legacy, traditional Indian education, and cultural festivals like Poush Mela. Locations associated with Tagore such as Jorasanko Thakur Bari in Kolkata have become heritage sites.

His travels to countries like Japan, China, Europe, and America created cross-cultural connections that encouraged inbound tourism to India by intellectuals and artists curious about Indian culture. The topic "Influence of Kabiguru Rabindranath Tagore in Tourism around Santiniketan" because in West Bengal,



Shantiniketan is not just a tourist destination—it is a unique cultural and educational landmark that reflects the life, philosophy, and contributions of Rabindranath Tagore, a globally revered literary figure and Nobel prize. His legacy continues to influence tourism in the region through festivals, institutions, architecture, and cultural practices. Studying this influence provides an opportunity to understand how cultural heritage can shape tourism development, promote sustainable practices, and contribute to the socio-economic growth of a region. Moreover, Shantiniketan's recent recognition as a UNESCO World Heritage Site has further increased its relevance as a subject of academic and field research, making it a timely and impactful area to explore for my field project.

## LITERATURE REVIEW:

### **Santiniketan, the Melting Pot of Culture in West Bengal**

**Santiniketan**, a neighborhood of **Bolpur** town of **Birbhum** district in **West Bengal, India**, and about 212 kms north of Kolkata, is consistent with Rabindranath Tagore, whose vision become the creation of Visva-Bharati University. Kabiguru's philosophy, literacy, and contributions to education, culture, and environment have made Santiniketan a significant cultural and heritage tourism destination.

### **Santiniketan as a Cultural Tourism Hub**

In West Bengal, Tagore's influence is most palpable. Santiniketan serves as a cultural pilgrimage site, attracting lakhs of tourists annually. Festivals like Poush Mela and Basanta Utsav offer immersive experiences of Tagorean culture. The Amar Kutir and Sriniketan rural development initiatives also offer tourists a glimpse into his vision of sustainable rural life.

Tagore believed in the integration of culture and everyday life. His emphasis on music, dance, literature, painting, and theater is embedded in the identity of Santiniketan. This cultural richness attracts tourists not just for sightseeing, but to immerse in a living heritage. Festivals like

Poush Mela and Basanta Utsav are vibrant examples where visitors witness performances of Rabindra Sangeet, Tagore dance dramas, and exhibitions of traditional crafts. His philosophy transforms tourism from mere consumption to cultural appreciation and learning.

### **Educational Tourism**

Visva-Bharati University, founded by Tagore, exemplifies his belief in learning without boundaries. The institution serves as a beacon of educational tourism, attracting scholars, artists, and students from across the globe. Tourists visit to explore the open-air classrooms, museums, archives, and the legacy of global intellectual exchange promoted by Tagore.

### **Eco-Tourism and Harmony with Nature**

Tagore's writings and actions reflect a deep reverence for nature. He advocated for a life in harmony with the natural world, which is evident in the rural aesthetics and ecological planning of Santiniketan. The trees planted by Tagore, the seasonal festivals celebrating the cycles of nature, and his poetry on forests, rivers, and seasons attract environmentally conscious tourists.

### **Community-Based Tourism and Rural Upliftment**

Tagore was a pioneer in promoting rural reconstruction and self-sufficiency. His work at Sriniketan focused on empowering villagers through education, health, and traditional crafts. Today, tourists can engage with rural artisans, witness indigenous crafts like batik, kantha, and pottery, and even participate in workshops. This form of community-based tourism directly aligns with Tagore's vision of inclusive development, allowing tourism to support local economies and preserve traditional knowledge systems.

Rabindranath Tagore's philosophy enriches tourism in Santiniketan and beyond by offering a unique blend of culture, nature, education, ethics, and community engagement. His legacy provides a holistic tourism model that respects

heritage while promoting personal and societal transformation.

### Tourism Components of Santiniketan:

#### Transportation:

Santiniketan is situated at a distance of around 212 km from Kolkata by road. Reaching Santiniketan is not so difficult. One can reach here by road, rail, or air.

**Air:** The nearest airport is Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport (Kolkata Airport). From here, Santiniketan is connected by road and rail.

**Rail:** Bolpur-Santiniketan is the railway station for Santiniketan. It is two and a half to three hours by train from Howrah and Sealdah stations. For schedules, please check the Indian Railways website. Also, there is another railway station named Prantik.

**Road:** Santiniketan is connected with Kolkata by an excellent road (around 60% of the road is an excellent 4-lane freeway). From Kolkata, travel to Dankuni and take the Durgapur Expressway. It is now part of NH2. It will bypass Saktigarh and Bardhaman. At Panagarh (Darjeeling More), turn right. After the highway crosses the Ajay River, take the road to the right at Ilambazar and proceed towards Bolpur. At the Santiniketan-Sriniketan junction (also called Surul More), take the road to the left. State-owned buses connect the nearest cities with Santiniketan. Many tourist service providers arrange package tours by AC deluxe buses to Santiniketan from Kolkata.

#### Accommodation:

Santiniketan offers various accommodation options catering to different budgets and preferences. From guest houses to hotels and homestays, visitors can choose from numerous options located close to the university and other landmarks. Example: **Resorts-** Mohor Kutir Resorts and Agoda.com suggests The Creek Boutique Resort & Spa for peaceful stays. **Hotels-** Hotel Royal Bengal and Agoda.com suggests The Garden Bungalow as top choices. **Homestays-** Raktokorobi Karugram and Agoda.com suggests Megh Balika Santiniketan Family Homestay. **Guest Houses-** Aappayan

Guest House & Restaurant is a popular option. These accommodations ensure easy access to the town's principal attractions, making your stay comfortable and convenient.

#### Tourism Attractions:

Uncovering an assortment of heritage, culture, and natural ceremony, Santiniketan beckons with a mass of attractions, each exuding its own distinct appeal. As we embark on a journey through this enchanting town, we are treated to a captivating array of remarkable spots that tell stories of the past and present. Santiniketan is adorned with landmarks that gesture exploration and reflection.

**Tagore Family Residences:** Immerse yourself in history as you step into the embrace of Santiniketan Griha, Nutan Bari, and Dehali – structures seamlessly woven into the legacy of the Tagore family. Amidst the embrace of the Amra Kunja mango grove, one witnesses school classes and grand events coming to life, while a serene hillock graced by a majestic banyan tree stands as a tribute to Maharishi Debendranath Tagore's enduring connection. (santiniketan.com, n.d.)

**The Rabindra Bhavan Museum:** A tribute to Rabindranath Tagore's life and work, houses an extensive collection of manuscripts, photographs, paintings, and relics that glimpse the poet's remarkable journey. The Uttarayan Complex, comprising Udayan, Shyamali, Konark, Udichi, and Punascha, is a picturesque haven designed by Rabindranath Tagore. These iconic homes were abodes for contemplation, creative pursuits, and intellectual exchanges. (santiniketan.com, n.d.)

**Amar Kutir:** Amar Kutir, meaning "my cottage," beckons as more than just a name. Once a haven for the stalwarts of the independence movement, this haven has seamlessly metamorphosed into a vibrant cooperative society that champions arts and crafts. Poised along the tranquil banks of the Kopai River, a mere 15 kilometres (9.3 miles) from the heart of Santiniketan, Amar Kutir radiates the spirit of artistic expression. With each brushstroke and every craftsman's touch, it

honours its historical roots while paving the way for a future enriched by creativity. (santiniketan.com, n.d.)

**Sonajhuri Haat:** An Enchanting Tapestry of Culture and Craftsmanship In the embrace of each Saturday and Sunday, the Sonajhuri Haat comes to life, nestled in proximity to Shantiniketan. This vibrant village market is more than just a place of commerce; it's a portal into the soul of the community. As you meander through the stalls, you'll encounter a vibrant mosaic of local handicrafts, each piece a testament to the skilled hands that brought it to life. The air resonates with the enchanting melodies of folk music, carried on the voices of tribal groups, weaving a symphony of cultural heritage. Sonajhuri Haat is not just a market; it's a kaleidoscope of tradition, a treasure trove of wooden crafts, terracotta wonders, raw metal ornaments, Dhokra artistry, and garments that hold stories within their very threads. It beckons those who seek to immerse themselves in the vivacity of Shantiniketan's living culture, inviting you to become a part of its enduring narrative. (santiniketan.com, n.d.)

**Cheena Bhavana:** Embark on a journey into the realm of Sino-Indian cultural studies, where the treasures of Chinese literature, journals, and Buddhist scriptures are unveiled within this hub dedicated to fostering historical understanding and modern connections. (santiniketan.com, n.d.)

**Gitanjali Rail Museum:** Beyond the realm of railways, this museum casts an illuminating spotlight on various facets of Rabindranath Tagore's life. Through its opulent displays, it pays homage to the multifaceted legacy of the celebrated poet. (santiniketan.com, n.d.)

**Kala Bhavana:** Step into a realm where fine arts and crafts flourish, with a college that boasts a museum brimming with sculptures, frescoes, and murals. Enriching the experience further is an art book library that adds depth to the artistic journey. (santiniketan.com, n.d.)

**Kopai River:** Nature enthusiasts and photographers converge along the picturesque

banks of the Kopai River, where every corner offers a canvas for countless captivating snapshots, capturing the river's serene beauty. (santiniketan.com, n.d.)

**Patha Bhavana:** Witness the evolution of education at this secondary school, where the traditional gurukula method harmonizes with contemporary nuances to shape young minds. (santiniketan.com, n.d.)

**Prakriti Bhavan:** Immerse yourself in the artistic marvels of nature at India's sole nature art museum. From enchanting driftwood sculptures to an open-air garden adorned with intricate rock formations, this sanctuary of natural beauty is a sensory delight. (santiniketan.com, n.d.)

**Rabindra Bhavana Museum:** Step back in time at this museum dedicated to honoring Rabindranath Tagore. Explore the world of original manuscripts, intimate letters, and cherished artifacts, while also tracing the footprints of Tagore's life through the five houses that nurtured his spirit. (santiniketan.com, n.d.)

**Santiniketan Griha:** On days other than Wednesdays, the cultural significance of Santiniketan Griha unveils itself, offering a glimpse into its charm and heritage. (santiniketan.com, n.d.)

**Shilpagram:** Embark on a journey to Shilpagram, located near the Wildlife Sanctuary, where the traditions of eastern and northeastern India come alive through meticulously crafted traditional handicrafts. Each art-adorned house encapsulates the unique heritage of its respective state. (santiniketan.com, n.d.)

**Fair and festivals:** In Shantiniketan, seasonal changes bring their own colors and beauties with various festivals. The emphasis in organizing these festivals is on traditional Indian forms and rituals. Numerous festivals range from Basanta Utsav and Barsha Mangal to Maghotsav and Rabindra Jayanti. Holi, the festival of colors, is celebrated in its own style at Santiniketan – it is called Basanta Utsav and welcomes the arrival of spring.

**Santiniketan in the list of UNESCO’s World heritage Site:** It has achieved a significant milestone by securing a coveted spot on the UNESCO World Heritage List. This recent inclusion marks a momentous occasion for the cultural heritage of India and the global recognition of Santiniketan’s historical significance. The announcement of this prestigious recognition was made by the UNESCO World Heritage body underlining the importance of this new inscription: “New inscription on the @UNESCO #WorldHeritage List: Santiniketan, #India. Congratulations!”

This UNESCO World Heritage recognition serves as a symbol of the profound cultural and historical significance of Santiniketan, a place where the legacy of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore continues to inspire generations and celebrate India’s diverse heritage. (santiniketan.com, n.d.)

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

### Background of the Study:

Santiniketan, founded by Rabindranath Tagore, is a unique destination where art, culture, education, and environment converge. Tagore’s philosophies permeate every aspect of the region—from the architecture of Visva-Bharati University to local festivals like Poush Mela and Basanta Utsav. Tourism in Santiniketan is significantly influenced by this cultural legacy. The background of this study lies in understanding how Tagore’s contributions continue to attract domestic and international tourists, influence socio-cultural development, promote local handicrafts, and inspire environmental conservation.

### Objective of the Study:

The primary objective is to explore the influence of Rabindranath Tagore on various aspects of tourism in Santiniketan.

Specific objectives include:

1. To analyze the role of Tagore in shaping cultural and educational identity in tourism.’
2. To examine his influence on environmental conservation.
3. To explore his impact on the promotion of

local handicrafts.

4. To evaluate tourist motivations and experiences.
5. To assess the socio-economic impact of Tagore-related tourism.
6. To study the role of Visva-Bharati and local institutions in tourism promotion.
7. To identify challenges and propose sustainable tourism strategies.

### Research Design:

This study utilizes a mixed-method research design, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods. **Quantitative methods** include analysis of tourism statistics, survey data, and secondary literature on economic and demographic impacts. **Qualitative methods** include observation and thematic analysis of tourist behavior, cultural activities, and local engagement.

### Research Hypothesis and Research Question:

#### Hypothesis Statements

**H<sub>0</sub> (Null Hypothesis):** Rabindranath Tagore’s influence has no significant impact on tourism in Santiniketan.

**H<sub>1</sub> (Alternative Hypothesis):** Rabindranath Tagore’s influence significantly impacts tourism in Santiniketan.

#### Research Questions

**RQ1:** How did Rabindranath Tagore’s vision shape the cultural and educational landscape of Santiniketan?

**RQ2:** How do Tagore-inspired festivals contribute to tourism in Santiniketan?

**RQ3:** What is the economic and socio-cultural impact of Tagore-related tourism on the local community?

**RQ4:** How were the local residents influenced by Rabindranath Tagore’s philosophy?

**RQ5:** How do visitors perceive the influence of Tagore in their tourism experience at

Shantiniketan?

**RQ6:** What role does Visva-Bharati University play in attracting academic and cultural tourism?

**Method of Data Collection:**

**Primary Data Collection**

**Survey Method:** Structured questionnaires distributed to tourists, local artisans, and residents.

**Observation:** Direct observation of cultural events, artisan markets, and tourist behavior.

**Secondary Data Collection**

Data collected from books, research journals, published articles, government reports, and tourism department statistics. Analytical data on tourism inflow, economic performance, festival participation rates, and environmental reports were also reviewed.

**Sample Size and Sampling Technique:**

**Quantitative Method**

The sample was selected used random sampling technique included tourists, local residents, artisans, and students of Visva-Bharati at

University area, Sonajhuri Hat, Amar Kutir etc. Estimated sample size is 99 respondents, based on accessibility and participation.

**Qualitative Method**

A convenience sampling technique was used during field observation, focusing on readily available participants and events around Santiniketan.

**DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:**

**Descriptive Analysis of Demographic Profile of Sample**

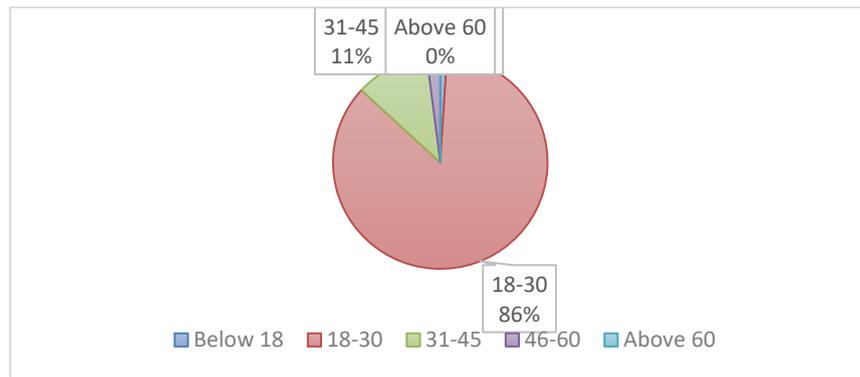
A descriptive analysis was conducted to profile the respondents who participated in the study. Key demographic parameters included:

**1. Age Group Profile of Sample**

Age Group is an important factor, which directly related to the level of physical and psychological activity that attracts people who deeply interested in Tagore’s educational philosophy, art, and culture. For this study age group distribution has been done to understand the different physical and psychological activities conducted by the tourist.

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below 18	1	1
18-30	85	85.9
31-45	11	11.1
46-60	2	2
Above 60	0	0
Total	99	100

**Table 1: Representation of Sample Age Group Profile**



**Figure 1: Graphical Representation of Age Group Profile of Sample**

The pie chart displays the distribution of age groups among a sample of 99 respondents. The key findings from the chart are, 18–30 years group is the dominant age group, making up 86% (85 individuals) of the total sample. This indicates that the majority of respondents are young adults, suggesting this age group is most engaged or represented in the context of the study. 31–45 years: This group represents 11% (11 individuals), the second-largest age group in

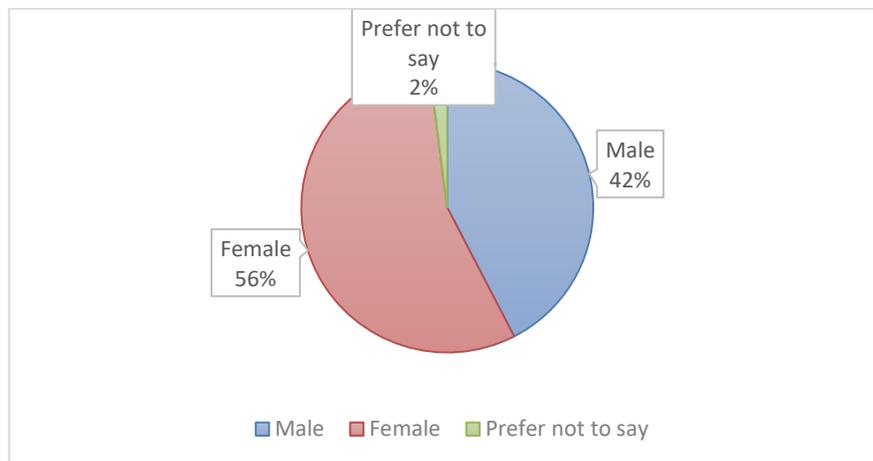
the sample. 46–60 years: Only 2% (2 individuals) belong to this age group. Below 18: Just 1% (1 individual) is below the age of 18. Above 60: No participants (0%) are from this age group.

**2. Gender Profile of Sample**

Gender is another important factor that represents who participated in the survey on Tagore- influenced tourism in Santiniketan.

Response Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	42	42.4
Female	55	55.6
Prefer not to say	2	2.0
Total	99	100

**Table 2: Gender Profile Representation of Sample**



**Figure 2: Graphical Representation of Gender Profile of Sample**

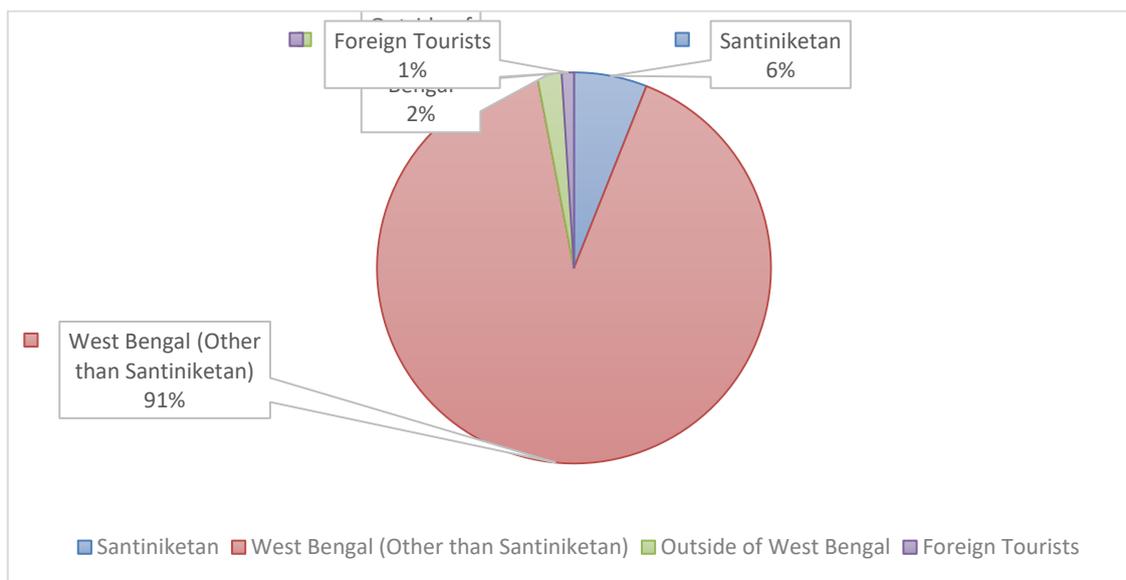
### 3. Place of Residence Profile of Sample

"Place of Residence" represents the residential distribution of respondents who participated in

the survey regarding Tagore-influenced tourism in Shantiniketan.

Response Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Santiniketan	6	6
West Bengal (Other than Santiniketan)	91	91
Outside of West Bengal	2	2
Foreign Tourists	1	1
Total	99	100

**Table 3: Place of Residence Representation of Sample**



**Figure 3: Graphical Representation of Place of Residence of Sample**

Representing 6% of the sample, this group includes residents of the area, who may have participated either as part of the local workforce involved in tourism or as visitors to specific cultural events. This category forms the largest group, comprising 91% of the respondents. Outside of West Bengal: This group, shown in yellow, is a very small fraction (around 2%), indicating that interstate tourism to

Shantiniketan is minimal. Representing just 1%, this group is the smallest among the sample. Despite Shantiniketan’s international academic and cultural reputation, foreign tourist presence remains limited, hinting at potential areas for growth in international tourism promotion.

### Descriptive Analysis of Influence of Kabiguru Rabindranath Tagore in Tourism around

**Santiniketan**

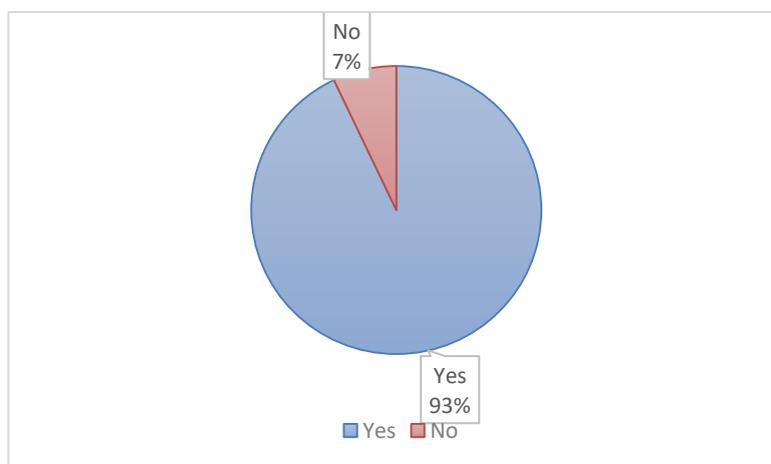
**1. Number of Tourist Aware of Rabindranath Tagore’s contribution to**

**Santiniketan**

This section presents a descriptive analysis of how many people are aware of Rabindranath Tagore’s contribution to Santiniketan tourism.

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	92	92.9
No	7	7.1
Total	99	100

**Table 4: Awareness about Rabindranath Tagore’s Contribution that Represent no. of Sample**



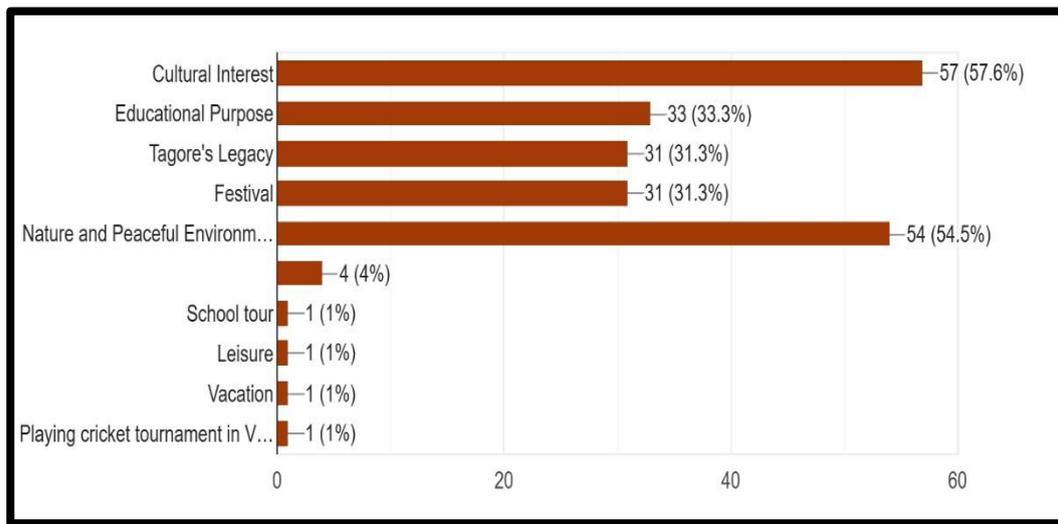
**Figure 4: Graphical Representation of no. of Sample Aware about Rabindranath Tagore’s Contribution**

A vast majority (92.9%) of the respondents were already aware of Rabindranath Tagore’s contribution to Shantiniketan prior to their visit. This reflects a strong pre-existing cultural awareness among tourists. It also suggests that Tagore's legacy is a major motivating factor for planning a visit to Shantiniketan. Only a small

fraction (7.1%) arrived without prior knowledge, indicating limited accidental or curiosity-driven tourism.

**2. Primary Reason for Visitng Santiniketan**

This section analyzes responses to the primary reason for tourists visit to Santiniketan.



**Figure 5: Graphical Representation of no. of Sample choose primary reason for visit Santiniketan**

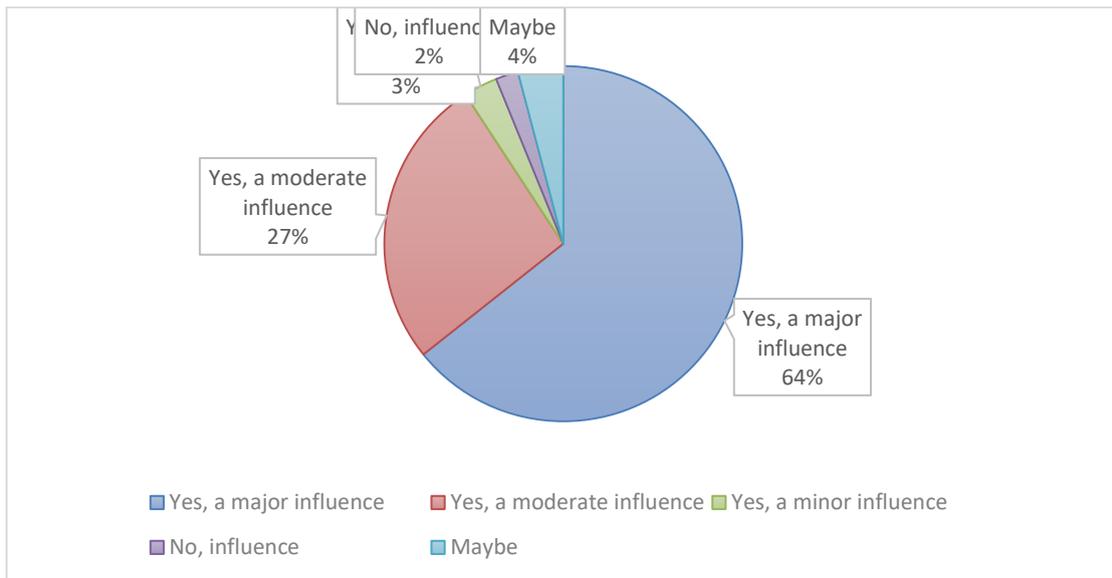
Cultural Interest (57.6%) and Nature and Peace (54.5%) were the top motivations for visiting Santiniketan, highlighting the place's appeal as both a cultural hub and a tranquil destination. Educational Purpose (33.3%) and Tagore's Legacy (31.3%) suggest that academic and historical significance continues to attract a

large segment of visitors. Festivals like Poush Mela and Basanta Utsav are significant attractions (31.3%). Minor reasons such as school tours, leisure, vacation, and sports contributed less than 5% collectively, suggesting these are rare motivations.

### 3. Rabindranath Tagore's Work Influence Tourists Decision

Influence Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes, a major influence	63	64.3
Yes, a moderate influence	26	26.5
Yes, a minor influence	3	3.1
No, influence	2	2.0
Maybe	4	4.1
Total	98	100

**Table 5: Representation of Sample who think Rabindranath Tagore's Contribution influenced to visit Santiniketan**



**Figure 6: Graphical Representation of no. of Sample who influenced by Rabindranath Tagore**

**Strong Cultural Pull of Tagore:** A combined 93.9% of respondents (major + moderate + minor) admitted that Rabindranath Tagore’s legacy influenced their visit, underscoring his continuing relevance as a cultural icon. **Primary Motivator:** For 64.3% of respondents, Tagore was a major influence, confirming that his life, philosophy, and works are central to Santiniketan’s tourism appeal. **Low Indifference:** Only 2% reported no influence, showing that very few visitors are neutral or unaware of Tagore’s contributions when planning their trip. **Uncertain Visitors:** The “Maybe” group (4.1%) reflects a small portion of tourists who were likely attracted by the overall cultural ambiance, where Tagore’s presence is implicit rather than explicitly motivating.

**Hypothesis Testing**

**H<sub>0</sub>:** Rabindranath Tagore’s influence has no significant impacts on tourism in Shantiniketan.  
**H<sub>1</sub>:** Rabindranath Tagore’s influence has

significantly impact on tourism in Shantiniketan.

**Test Method Used:**

Chi-Square test was applied to survey responses, particularly between tourist motivation and Tagore-related elements (education, culture, festivals).

From Table 5 and Figure 6, “Did Rabindranath Tagore's name or work significantly influence your decision to visit Shantiniketan?”, we have: Yes, a major influence -63, Yes, a moderate influence-26, Yes, a minor influence-3, No influence-2, May be-4, Total-98

**Step 1: Define the Expected Frequencies (E)**

Assuming no significant influence (i.e., all responses are equally likely), each category would have:  $E = \frac{\text{Total}}{\text{Number of categories}} = \frac{98}{5} = 19.6$

**Step 2: Apply the Chi-Square Formula**

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

**Now calculate each term:**

Response	O	E	$(O-E)^2 / E$
Major influence	63	19.6	$(63-19.6)^2 / 19.6 = 96.44$
Moderate influence	26	19.6	$(26-19.6)^2 / 19.6 = 2.09$

Minor influence	3	19.6	$(3-19.6)^2 / 19.6 = 14.01$
No influence	2	19.6	$(2-19.6)^2 / 19.6 = 16.13$
May be	4	19.6	$(4-19.6)^2 / 19.6 = 13.03$
Total	98		141.70

**Table 6: Calculation Table for Hypothesis**

**Step 3: Degrees of Freedom (df)**

$df = k - 1 = 5 - 1 = 4$

**Step 4: Significance Level ( $\alpha$ )**

Let's use  $\alpha = 0.05$

Critical value for  $\chi^2$  with 4 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level = 9.488

**Step 5: Decision**

Since:

$\chi^2_{\text{calculated}} = 141.70 > \chi^2_{\text{critical}} = 9.488$

**Result:**

We reject  $H_0$ . There is a statistically significant relationship between Tagore's legacy and tourism motivation.

=> Tagore's influence plays a key role in attracting tourists.

**Qualitative Data Analysis:**

For in-depth insight of the study, qualitative component of the study was based on field observation—a key tool for capturing the experiential and cultural aspects of Tagore's influence on tourism. The observation method followed an open-ended, narrative style.

**Observation Questions**

The following guiding questions framed the observation process:

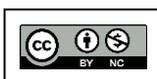
1. How are Tagore's philosophies reflected in the cultural events, performances, and tourist behavior?
2. How do tourists interact with local artisans and handicraft stalls.
3. What aspects of the environment or architecture do tourists appear most drawn to?
4. How is the cultural atmosphere preserved and presented during festivals like Poush Mela or Basanta Utsav?
5. How do local guides, performers, and artisans incorporate references to Tagore in their activities?

**Observation Narration:**

During Poush Mela and Basanta Utsav, the cultural vibrancy of Shantiniketan was evident. Observations revealed tourists engaging enthusiastically with folk music, baul performances, and open-air classes at Visva-Bharati. Artisans selling batik prints, leather crafts, and handwoven textiles frequently mentioned Tagore's vision of rural upliftment and self-reliance.

Tourists were seen photographing murals depicting scenes from Tagore's works and visiting his residence, "Uttarayan" with a sense of reverence. Informal interactions showed that many were drawn to Shantiniketan not only for its artistic allure but because of a spiritual or philosophical connection with Tagore's legacy.

The environment was serene, with greenery and open spaces echoing Tagore's emphasis on learning in nature. Observations confirmed that visitors were deeply influenced by the atmosphere of tranquility, creativity, and simplicity that pervades the town—hallmarks of Tagore's ideology.



## RESEARCH FINDINGS:

### Cultural and Literary Magnetism:

The survey clearly indicates that Rabindranath Tagore remains a central figure in attracting tourists to Shantiniketan. A majority of the respondents acknowledged that Tagore's name and work had a major influence on their decision to visit. This demonstrates that his literary, philosophical, and educational legacy continues to shape the cultural identity of the region and is a strong draw for both domestic and international visitors.

### Motivations behind Visiting Shantiniketan:

The primary reasons for visiting Shantiniketan were largely centered around cultural interest, nature and peace, educational purposes and Tagore's legacy. This shows that visitors are drawn to Shantiniketan not only for its serene environment but also for the unique blend of culture, heritage, and intellectual tradition that Tagore created.

### Cultural Festivals as Expressions of Tagore's Ideals:

Among the cultural events, Basanta Utsav was considered the most representative of Tagore's ideals by respondents, followed by Poush Mela and Rabindra Jayanti. These festivals not only preserve his vision of joyful, inclusive celebrations but also contribute significantly to cultural tourism in the area.

### Attraction to Tagore-Associated Sites:

Among various locations, Visva-Bharati University was the most appreciated, followed by Rabindra Bhavan, Amrakunja, and Amar Kutir. These results highlight that visitors value physical spaces associated with Tagore's life and philosophy, suggesting that architectural and institutional landmarks are vital components of Shantiniketan's tourism appeal.

### Perception of Cultural Harmony in Shantiniketan Today:

Respondents observed that Tagore's vision of cultural harmony is most visible today in art & craft, music and dance, environmental aesthetics, and education. This suggests that the

essence of his interdisciplinary and holistic ideals is still being reflected and experienced by visitors.

## SUGGESTIONS

### I. Strengthen Interpretation for Visitors:

Female tourists are more actively participating in cultural and educational tourism in Shantiniketan, which may reflect their interest in literature, art, or peaceful learning environments often associated with Tagore's legacy. Install more interactive exhibits, guided tours, and multilingual interpretation at key heritage sites to deepen visitor engagement with Tagore's life, values, and artistic contributions.

### II. Promote Offbeat and Lesser-Known Attractions:

While major landmarks like Visva-Bharati dominate attention, sites like Amar Kutir and Sonajhuri Haat have potential for enhanced cultural storytelling and promotion to distribute tourist footfall more evenly and sustainably.

### III. Develop Eco-Cultural Tourism Packages:

Given the importance of nature and peace in tourists' motivations, promote eco-tourism trails, workshops in traditional crafts, and nature-integrated cultural experiences in line with Tagore's philosophy.

### IV. Digital and Experiential Expansion:

Leverage digital storytelling, virtual tours, and cultural festivals streamed online to reach younger, tech-savvy audiences and international admirers of Tagore who may not be able to travel.

### V. Community Involvement and Education:

Train and empower local artisans, performers, and students to act as cultural ambassadors, ensuring authentic narratives are shared while also generating socio-economic benefits for the local community.



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