

RABINDRANATH TAGOR'S CONCEPT OF FREEDOM: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

Author

RANDHIR SINGH

Research Scholar of Political Science Punjabi University, Patiala

ABSTRACT

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) was born into a prominent cultural family, during the Bengal Renaissance in the 19th century. Apart from fiction in the form of poetry, songs, stories, and dramas, portrayals of common people's lives, literary criticism, philosophy, and social issues include in his writings. The concept of *freedom* is one of the significant concepts of his philosophy. His poem 'freedom' and 'where the mind is without fear' specially explained his concept of freedom. In this research paper, we try to throw light on his concept of freedom, its meaning, nature, limits, and types will be discussed. Apart from a brief introduction of the types of freedom also will be discussed. This paper will also analyze the relevance of the concept of freedom of Tagore in the present context. Present paper argues that freedom for Tagore was not just to get rid of British rule, but also to uplift the people of society who are living in the shackles of old beliefs and thoughts.

Keywords: Freedom, Swadeshi, Independence, Movement, Society, Education,

spiritual. INTRODUCTION:

Tagore played a really important and noteworthy part in India's freedom struggle and his efforts were appreciated by both Gandhi and Nehru, and after independence, India chose a song of Tagore "Jana Gana Mana Adhionayaka" as its anthem. The citizens of Bangladesh also choose one among Tagore's songs ("Amar Sonar Bangla" which may be translated as "My Golden Bengal") as its National Anthem.¹ (Mukherjee, Radhika, 2017; 7-8).

If we look at Tagore's great writings on philosophical issues, we will find that he was mainly concerned with the general prescription for a perfect life.² (Datta, A. 2016; 115). His genuine desire was for world peace and universal humanity encompassing all cultures, races and religions. His philosophy transcends all the differences and strives to unite mankind.³

Rabindranath Tagore is many types of a philosopher but, the concept of *freedom* is one of the significant concepts of his philosophy. Though it has a specific use in moral and social life, yet in some aspects, the concept of freedom is quite controversial and interesting in his philosophy. Tagore, who dreamt of a harmony of universal humanity among the people of varied origins through freedom of mind and spiritual sovereignty.⁴ Tagore began to actively part within the

various struggles against imperialism, the anti-

British movement in Bengal in 1905 together with his poems.⁵ (Rao, V. 2015; 356).

He had joined to protest against the British Government's decision to partition Bengal in swadeshi movement (1903-1907) in which he was a leader. But he withdrew from the movement, unable to require its sectarian and coercive ways. He turned instead to educational work, retreating to the countryside in 1901 where he established a faculty for youngsters at an area called Santiniketan.⁶ (Gupta, U.D. 2012 ; 28).

He expected that his students would feel every happiness, big or small, by being given a full life. The other idea in school was freedom.⁷ (Biswal, S. K. 2013). He left the political movement and sought freedom by acting on his ideas.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Literature on Ideological thought is still an evolving field where new studies are being published and translated almost every day. The Researcher has come across many books on Rabindranath Tagore. The important books on his ideology include:

‘The Words of Freedom: Ideas of a nation’⁸ (Tagore, R. 1998), Rabindranath Tagore throw light on the freedom and nationalistic views of Tagore. Tagore consistently spoke up against the inequalities perpetrated by the British raj. But while a great deal of his writing was patriotic, he never quite saw eye to eye with the majority of nationalist leaders. This selection from Tagore's speeches and writings on the state includes an early piece, ‘The one nationalist party’ (1908),

his famous denunciation of nationalism ‘Nationalism in India’ (1917), the biting and sarcastic ‘The cult of Charkha’ (1925), and the final lecture he delivered, ‘Crisis in Civilization’ (1941).

‘The Political thought of Rabindranath Tagore’⁹ (Bharathi, K.S. 1998). It is studies in detail: life sketch and source of influences, on religion and politics, on Hindu Muslim unity and education, on the Charkha, on non-cooperation movements and chronology of events.

‘Rabindranath Tagore and the challenges of today’ (1988)¹⁰ (Chaudhuri, B., and Subramanyan, K.G. (Ed.), 1998), the author discusses his universal man, the value of nature and the concept of cooperation. Tagore did not want only the unity of East and the West but also was worried about the crises of personal identity in British India i.e. the traditional and human values.

Chandra Mohan Das's book **‘The Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore’¹¹**, the author says that Tagore's social, political and economic ideas are well-knit and do present a comprehensive view of the society. Tagore emphasized on man and he did not believe in any ‘ism’. He opposed

to imperialism. Further, he discusses that if we want to understand Tagore's achievements, we must understand the man himself and some qualities of his character which get reflected in his works.

'Nationalism' (2017)¹²(Tagore, R. 2017), Nationalism is based on the lectures delivered by Tagore during the First World War. While the nations of Europe were on battlefields, Tagore urged

his audiences in Japan and in the United States to eschew political aggressiveness and cultural arrogance. Tagore talks about the future, based on tolerance; the future where tradition and modernity are balanced. His mission, one might say, was to synthesize the East and the West. Tagore was a fierce opponent of the British rule in India. Tagore describes his universal brotherhood and the world of cooperation. Tagore was opposite to the concept of nationalism.

'Rabindranath Tagore and The Politics of Friendship' (2012)¹³(Collins, M. 2012), Tagore believed that building friendships and communicating ideas from the East to the West, was a method or model for achieving political change and progress. Tagore's project for East-West combination is based on cooperation and universal brotherhood and resulted in improvement in the relationship of all nations. Tagore was not a nationalist, rather he wanted all men should sink their differences with love and peace.

'Social Thought of Rabindranath Tagore' (1974)¹⁴(Gopal, K. 1974). In this book, the author throws light on Tagore's social as well as political ideas. His political, educational as well, an economic vision, is also discussed in this book. Tagore opposed the exploitation of man by man.

Freedom and Wisdom: The Heart of Tagore (1978)¹⁵(Peden, C. 1978), the author says, the ideal which lies at the heart of Rabindranath Tagore's philosophy is Mukti, or Freedom. This freedom isn't to be conceived during a narrow social or political sense; rather, it's the gut of the spiritual endeavor which involves the deeper self. Tagore says, each human is born conscious of one truth, which is the background to our knowledge of all other truths. This truth concerns one's inner reality, which has various external manifestations. Tagore also tells about the inner truth of Satyam, the Peace, on which the self-reliant freedom of a well-organized existence depends.

Aim of the Study

The key research questions which guided the present study are:

1. Why Rabindranath Tagore is presented only as a story writer or as a poet, is there any presence of the concept of freedom in the philosophy of Tagore, if yes then which type of freedom he talks about?
2. To understand the deep meaning of the concept of freedom of Tagore, and how many types of freedom is a presence in Tagore's philosophy?

3. Is Tagore's idea of freedom being still relevant in the present time, if yes then how much?

Research Methodology

For completion of this study, focused not only on one method but rather various methods of research have been used. The theoretical method was chief of them. Then historical and analytical methods also have been used. Present study is also based on various primary and secondary sources. Source of secondary data have been taken from books, journals, newspapers, websites, magazine, etc. The source of primary data taken from the letters of Rabindranath Tagore, articles, original translated work of the thinker. Whereas necessary online data has been utilized.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

What is Freedom:

The term *Freedom, Liberty, Liberation*, and their cognates have many meanings. Originally, *Freedom* was understood in the sense of civil status; but with the passage of time this concept becomes extended in various ways. The Oxford Dictionary reads the meaning of freedom as: being free, personal or civil liberty, liberty of action, independence, self-government, sovereignty, deliverance, freedom of speech and action, etc.¹⁶ (Simpson, J.A. and Weiner, E.S.C. 1989; 165).

According to Hoover, "Freedom is that open window through which pour the daylight of the human spirit and human dignity".¹⁷

According to Viktor Emil Frankl (Austrian neurologist and psychiatrist): "*Between stimulus and response, there's an area. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.*"¹⁸

According to Charles Kingsley, social reformer, "There are two freedoms - the false, where an individual is absolve to do what he likes; the reality, where he's liberal to do what he ought."¹⁹ Tagore consistently spoke up against the inequalities perpetuated by British Raj. Tagore's attitude to politics and culture, nationalism and internationalism, tradition and modernity, and cross-cultural education, can all be seen in the light of his strong attachment to the importance of living in freedom and reasoning in freedom.

TAGORE'S CONCEPT OF FREEDOM

Rabindranath was a champion of freedom and spontaneity. He supported Indian independence from Britain and desired the end of the British Raj, which is the subject of "Freedom."²⁰ Tagore's value scheme was not solely concerned with the sense of 'ought' but also with that truth,

Beauty and Goodness. The central issue in Tagore's philosophy was freedom and creativity. So, the concept of freedom and creativity altogether result in an integrated system where we get the notion of the metaphysics of the self. The concept of freedom in the philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore is closely related to his concept of man.²¹ (Ghosh, R. 2008 ;71). While freedom, for Tagore, is that the freedom from a sort of bondage created by alienation, freedom is actually a freedom to. It is stated especially in his Manuscript that 'I do not refer to ego'. Freedom is the dissociation from the ego sense. Tagore said: "The freedom of social relationship he attains through owning responsibility to his community, thus gaining its collective power for his welfare. In the freedom of consciousness, he realizes the sense of his unity together with his larger being, finding fulfillment within the dedicated lifetime of an ever-progressive truth and ever-active love". Hence, Tagore's concept of freedom is often envisaged only by watching his holistic approach to man - man in unity with the remainder of the fact.²² (Ghosh, R. 2008;71).

By emphasizing the importance of human freedom, Tagore directed us to regain self-reliance as a stepping stone to attain freedom. Self-reliance, according to Tagore's framework, can be obtained by inculcating certain virtues in us. These virtues are purity in thought, feeling and will as referred to by Tagore.²³ (Datta, A. 2016;19). Writing of himself, Tagore said, 'Rabindranath in his sphere of creativity stands alone, history has not bound him in generality'. Again, he was not 'just a British subject in the domain of general history'. As regards historical determination, his answer 'comes from within, where I'm nothing but a poet. There I'm the creator, there I'm alone, I'm free'.²⁴ (Sorabji, R. 2016 ;556). Poetry is that communication through which words of certain experiences are often communicated in no other way. That is to say, the poet wants to portray his experiences, his sensibilities that he has experienced, and that he has imbibed in his walks of life; so poetry is the focusing medium, the canvas of the poet's imagination and creative sensibility.²⁵ (Datta, A. K. 2007;1).

So when we read poetry, various forms of ingredients of poetry become revealed to us. We feel with him his feelings, his thought, his experience. Tagore's imagery is functionally illustrative, decorative, evocative and emotive. It imparts clarity, pictures queerness and concreteness to his thought and knowledge.²⁶ (Rao, V. 2015;356).

Tagore's '**Where the Mind is Without Fear**' brings out a sincere and genuine concern of the sensitive poet who cherishes a sweet dream of 'Mother India' with free, united, rational and powerful countrymen.²⁷ This poem describes the dream of Rabindranath Tagore where everyone in his country has head held high in dignity. The poet in his prose style uses imagery to require us to a rustic that's independent, where the people are liberal to express their thoughts, ideas, innovations and creations. Tagore is praying that God awakens his countrymen in order that they are

eavailableoutfromthedarknessofignorance, prejudices, disunity and everyone of the evils.²⁸ (Patel, R.B. (2015 ;2)

*Where the mind is without fear and the head is held
high Where knowledge is free*

*Where the world has not been broken up into
fragments By narrow domestic walls*²⁹ (Das, S. K. 2004 ;53).

In this poem, the poet imagines a world where no countryman should live with fear in his mind at all times. Instead, they should hold their heads up intrepidly and have self-belief. Knowledge should be accessible for the entire populace. Tagore said that after freedom India still faced dowry system, illiteracy, sexual harassment, inequality, it should be free from all sorts of discrimination. Female feticides, domestic violence against women, rape, prostitution, illegal trafficking and other issues in India to empower women first should become aware of their rights and values.³⁰

For Tagore, "freedom within the sense of independence has no content, and thus no meaning. Perfect freedom lies in the perfect harmony of relationship, which we realize in this world, not through our response to it in knowing but in living." - In other words, freedom attained through one's creative pursuits is not high enough. Higher than that is the freedom attained in the social field in cooperation with our fellow beings. Freedom in the social realm is attained with the

help of "sympathy" with others. Sympathy therefore becomes an instrument of integration with a world wider than one's own. It helps us to integrate ourselves with the ever-widening circle of human communities reaching right up to humanity as a whole.³¹

Tagore's openness was unique, even for his time. When the orders for partition came into effect on October 16, 1905, it had been Tagore who began the *rakhi* tradition among the Hindus and Muslims of Bengal. According to Tagore, the *rakhi* is a bracelet of love and unity which unites brothers and sisters. In appropriating the *rakhi* tradition, Tagore hoped that there would be a Bengal swathed in Muslim-Hindu unity and unbroken by "narrow domestic walls."³² He tried to free his own countrymen from fear, from the contempt for one faith or the other, from discrimination based on caste, dogma, intolerance and rejection of one group by the other.³

*Where words come out from the depth of truth
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards
perfection Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way
Into the dreary deserts and of dead habit*³⁴ (Das, S.K. 2004; 53).

For Tagore it is essential that the educational process train our minds so that we can realize our deeper spiritual relationship with the Supreme Truth.³⁵ (Peden, C. 1978; 213).

*Where the mind is led forward by
thee Into ever-
widening thought and action
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake*³⁶ (Das, S.K. 2004; 53).

To make it clear, the poet prays to the Almighty (my Father) to boost or lift (awake) his country to such heights where freedom would be realized at its best (heaven of freedom). In turn, he's praying that God awakens his countrymen in order that they are available out from the darkness of ignorance, disunity, prejudices and every other evils. By the end of the poem it has become a poem for awakening.³⁷ (Verma, R. and Anand, J. 2007 ; 3)

Tagore's other poem '**Freedom**' is so meaningful and also throws light on his concept of freedom. This poem displays an immediate treatment of the thought of freedom with its poem.

*Freedom from fear is the
freedom I claim for you my
motherland!
Freedom from the burden of the ages, bending your
head, breaking your back, blinding your eyes to the
beckoning call of the future*³⁸ (Das, S.K. 2004; 320).

This poem clearly expresses Tagore's personal philosophies about freedom, religion, nationalism, and self-determinism. In another explanation, first two lines of the poem, here refer to India as the "motherland" and states that he wants India to be free from fear. His use of alliteration, or repetition of the "f" sound within the words "freedom," "from," "fear," and "freedom" again within the primary line, emphasizes the urgency of his call for Indian independence. The word "freedom" is repeated throughout the poem to precise the poet's deep wish for his country to be independent. Further, In the third line, Tagore builds on the image of India as an aging mother, and he wants her to be free from the "burden of the ages," which refers to the yoke of English control of India. The aged woman who represents India bends her head, bends her back, and blinds her eyes under the burden of colonialism. Tagore speaks of the way during which India doesn't see the longer term or imagine a brighter future for herself by blinding her eyes.³⁹

Freedom from the shackles of slumber

where with you fasten yourself in night's stillness,

*mistrusting the star that speaks of truth's adventurous paths;*⁴⁰ (Das, S.K. 2004; 320).

Instead of looking forward, India sleeps with what Tagore calls "shackles of slumber," or time spent not thinking of her future. Instead, India is fastening herself "in night's stillness," meaning that the country is committed to the past and to the present situation of colonialism. The country "mistrusts the star that speaks of truth's adventurous paths," meaning that the country doesn't go searching in its dark time (represented by night) and picture a brighter future for itself an independent.⁴¹

freedom from the anarchy of destiny

whole sails are weakly yielded to the blind uncertain winds,

*and the helm to a hand ever rigid and cold as death*⁴² (Das, S.K. 2004; 320).

When Tagore asks for "freedom from the anarchy of destiny," he means he doesn't want this country to only blindly and passively follow the fate that has been given to it, and he compares this fate, or destiny, to a sailboat that has to follow winds that are blowing in every direction and that is captained by an uncaring hand. This is a metaphor during which his country is compared to a sailboat following uncertain winds with an uncaring person at the helm.⁴³

According to another explanation The free verse in which this poem is written and the direct treatment of the subject of freedom from colonial rule contribute to the theme of India's need for such freedom.⁴⁴

Freedom from the insult of dwelling in a puppet's

*world, where movements are started through brainless
wires, repeated through mindless habits,
where figures wait with patience and obedience for the
master of show, to be stirred into a mimicry of life.*⁴⁵ (Das, S.K. 2004; 320).

Then, Tagore asks for freedom from India living during a "puppet's world," by which he means a world during which India is controlled by other countries and forces as a puppet is controlled by a puppeteer. The movements are orchestrated through "brainless wires," meaning that England controls India stupidly and by following "mindless habits," meaning customs that are followed without reason. In this extended metaphor comparing India to a puppet show, figures, who are clearly Indians, wait obediently just to follow the master of the show, meaning their English rulers. Therefore, the Indians live "a mimicry of life," meaning an inauthentic life controlled by others.⁴⁶

In this poem, an expression of the poet's sense of urgency for his people to interrupt from the political bondage of colonial rule, Tagore employs much alliteration, a poetic device that accelerates the line. With this use of alliteration, then, Tagore creates a sense of the need for India's immediate attention to the cause of freedom.

In her paper 'Rabindranath Tagore On Values' Apree Datt writes that Freedom, according to Tagore, is of two types - positive and negative. The Self is conscious of its separateness and it enjoys freedom that permits to be detached. Negative freedom is a kind of sanction or license. Negative freedom, according to Tagore, can be enjoyed by accessing self-will. Tagore points out that "Ourself-will has freedom up to a certain extent; it can know what it is to break away from the path, but it cannot continue in that direction indefinitely. For we are finite on our negative side."⁴⁷

Man has been given the freedom to be detached from his surroundings. Man has been continuously creating different symbols to give shape to his dreams, by means of his self-will. These symbols have ultimately taken the different forms of institutions, dynasties and theories. So, these symbols at last result in differences in every sphere of life. Positive freedom leads to goodness, love and ultimately towards harmony. Tagore maintains that any form of eternal integration can be achieved through love. Love integrates two souls and at the same time leaves sanctions of accessing freedom. When man makes a gulf with himself as well as with his surroundings, he gets conscious of his soul, of his personality and comes into touch with positive freedom.⁴⁸

In his research paper, 'Concept of Machine and Human Freedom in Rabindranath Tagore's The Waterfall and Red Oleanders' M. Kalaivasan describes his two plays Muktaadhara (The Waterfall) and Raktakarabi (Red Oleanders) and show his liberal thoughts. These two plays centered on the conflict between machine and human freedom and deal with the other side of love and sacrifice. The theme of Rabindranath Tagore's 'Red Oleanders' is centered around immoral capitalism, environmental exploitation and importance of human relationships. The stories revolve

around human sacrifices. Tagore's conception of human love finds a beautiful expression in the plays. The protagonists in both the plays resemble the same sensitiveness and human spirit and sacrifice their lives for the welfare of the community. Nandhini sacrifices her life for the slave workmen and Abhijit sacrifices his life for the poor 'Shiv Terai' people. The protagonists sacrifice their lives not only for the people but also for Nature and freedom which they love. The protagonists are good and fight against evil. After their work is accomplished, their sacrifice earns them martyrdom. Tagore's key to human freedom results in a revolution against the greedy rulers and machines. The protagonists' love and care make the people realize their present life and question their future. They are tuned against the rulers for their rights. Like the protagonists, people also feel the spirit of human values and freedom. Tagore uses folk stories to destroy inhuman powers in both plays. Tagore uses the idea of freedom to criticize narrow nationalistic boundaries, governed by narrow-minded ambition and greed. Tagore's plays Muktaadhara (The Waterfall) and Raktakarabi (Red Oleanders) bring out different aspects of his broader concept of freedom. Tagore celebrates the sense of freedom, which is feasible only if hearts and minds close.⁴⁹ (Kalaivasan, M. 2013; 2).

Hence, Tagore's concept of freedom can be envisaged only by looking at his holistic approach to man - man in unity with the rest of the reality. He, therefore, visualized four stages in the realization of true freedom: realization of freedom at the individual level and then progressive movement of freedom from the individual to the community, from community to the universe and from universe to infinity.⁵⁰ (Chakrabarty, B. and Pandey, R. K. 2009; 65).

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION:

Rabindranath Tagore believes in complete freedom of any kind intellectual freedom, satisfaction, decision, heart, knowledge, action and worship. On behalf of upper discussion, the study will discuss the kind of Tagore's concept of freedom and a brief discussion of these kinds of freedoms is as follows:

SOCIAL FREEDOM: Tagore emphasized on social freedom, which is one of the most important freedom for individuals. Tagore was conscious of the very fact that everything wasn't alright within Society with its functioning wasn't always smooth nor the administration of its

segments filled with justice. Still he thought that it remained a realm of voluntary activity, of greater degree of moral choices and hence of freedom. Indian society is rampant with untouchability, religious intolerance, gender injustice etc. Tagore believed that each one citizenry belongs to at least one family. Therefore, it is the duty of every individual to fight against these prejudices. Tagore's writings emphasize the dignity of man and always focus on the betterment of society. He fought against all the social evils; like - child marriage, intoxication, enforced widowhood, caste system, untouchability, etc. Hence, he gave priority to the social freedom of people. Tagore believed in cooperative society, and his politics was based on equality, liberty, brotherhood etc. The author also tells us about his religious views which were aimed at the welfare of humanity.

POLITICAL FREEDOM: According to Tagore, Political freedom is birthright of the people as well as the nation. He did not like the domination of British Government over India. He resigned his knighthood four years later after British massacre at Amritsar. In the poem (freedom), an expression of the Tagore's sense of urgency for his people to break from the political bondage of colonial rule, he said every man has right to his free environment of equal development without any political restriction. Gandhi's life long struggle was for the upliftment of India, in which the nation will be handled by Self-government. Tagore's ambition was also mainly the political independence of India. Therefore, he started the unique weapon of 'literature, co-operation, swadesh movement etc.' against the British Government. His dream for India was free from every type of restriction or pressure although it was political.

SPIRITUAL FREEDOM: According to the traditional Indian philosophy, the ultimate aim of human being is to attain spiritual freedom. Tagore also accepts the same view. The poet (Tagore) aspires for spiritual freedom for his country which means that his countrymen expose the noblest, fearlessness; truth, rationality, generosity and religiosity in its truest sense. Lecture delivered in America; published in Personality London: MacMillan, 1933, I (Tagore) believe an unseen, not as anything break away this world, but as its innermost truth. With the breath we draw, we should feel this truth, that we live in God. He emphasizes on the cultivation of the Divine power in man. He asserts that if the Divine elements, (consciousness, free will, reason etc.) are utilized within the proper manner, man can bring down heaven to this earth. Tagore says that the realization of our soul has two aspects- moral and spiritual. Apart from the spiritual side, the moral side cannot be cultivated in us. The cultivation of the merely moral aspect leads us to a sort of narrowness and ultimately to what, in terms of Tagore, is "the intolerant arrogance of goodness."

ECONOMIC FREEDOM: Tagore directly pleaded for economic freedom by exposing the causes of economic maladies. According to him, economic freedom can be sought by terminating exploitation of the poor by the rich. He says a man who enjoys economic freedom always tries to live with minimum material wants. He believed that everybody in a society should be able to earn his bread by his labor. But if for any reason an individual isn't ready to maintain himself, the community must provide him with necessities of life.

PERSONAL FREEDOM: It is known to us that; man is born free. When a man exercises his free will and judgment, he is said to be the possessor of personal freedom. Tagore stressed on individual freedom. According to Tagore, man is a social animal, so he belongs to a society in which he should be allowed to enjoy social equality. Tagore emphasized man and he did not believe in any 'ism'.

WOMEN FREEDOM: Tagore also in the fever of women's freedom and he wrote about it in his poetry. He pleaded for the improvement of women and wanted to give equal status to the women as the men have. His feminism finds its most powerful expression in *Chitrangada* and *Palataka*. Dr. Rubina Verma and Ms. Jayti Anand, in their research paper 'where the mind is without fear: The study of the poem with a feminist outlook' describes the feminist view of Tagore. They wrote, Tagore strongly believed in fighting for women's upliftment using his pen as a weapon. Focusing largely on emancipation, his writing campaigned for women's liberation, equality, freedom, justice, power and dignity and rights. Tagore believed that his country should be free from all sorts of discrimination but still after freedom we face dowry system, illiteracy, sexual harassment, inequality, Female feticides, domestic violence against women, rape, prostitution, illegal trafficking and other issues in India to empower women first should become aware of their rights and values. Tagore also laid the inspiration of co-education by starting it at Santiniketan.

Further, education empowers women to make choices that improve their standard of living and welfare, including about their relationships and marriages, birth control, and having children, choices that were inaccessible to women in past generations. According to his poem (where the mind), a feminist has a vision of seeing a woman who is free from all sorts of fear who can enjoy the life confidently by keeping the head high.

Unfortunately, Indians have saddened the Tagore by failing miserably in shaping the country consistent with his dream. Even after seven decades of independence, an average poor, illiterate, common man is not out of fear of politicians, bureaucrats, powerful persons who exploit him mercilessly. The problems to which Tagore addressed himself were - education, caste,

rural reconstruction, self-reliance and self-respect, the fruitful blending of the cultures and thought of East and West, the status of women, civic consciousness and self-government, etc. These are the protracted problems to get rid of which India still is struggling with. Thus he (Tagore) has left us the heritage of poetry and courage, which is still relevant in the present time, indeed so relevant that Jawaharlal Nehru, in a speech during the Tagore centenary, said: 'I have learned more from Rabindranath Tagore than even from Mahatma Gandhi'

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