

Development and Rabindranath Tagore : A Review of Literature and a Bibliography

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Abstract :

The history of development in the developing world, which has given birth to Development Studies, began soon after the World War II (1939 – 1945). It proceeded through stages with evolution of a number of theories, one superseding the other and thus emerging as a multidisciplinary subject including Economics, Sociology, Anthropology, Politics, Philosophy and so on. The world famous poet Rabindranath Tagore breathed his last in 1941. Yet we are surprised to find a lot of ideas and concepts regarding development in the writings and activities of Rabindranath Tagore. This is an attempt to develop the insight for establishing Tagore as an alternative development thinker with having an emphasis on human development.

Key words : Development, Globalization, Mahatma Gandhi, Cooperative Principle, Palliprakriti, Rabindranath Tagore.

Introduction

The identity of Rabindranath Tagore (1861 – 1941) as an alternative development thinker has been overshadowed by his extraordinary talent in the spheres of music and literature. The people of India have forgotten that he was also a great educator, a sensible social reformer and above all a conscious human being. With his deep-rooted humane feeling he came forward to restructure his native society in order to make it self-sufficient, confident and integrated. He realised that the western culture and civilization which were imposed by the British upon India would not be a fruitful one. A vast portion of his literature has been devoted in analysing the basic structure of Indian society, its tradition, the social problems from which it was suffering, the causes of those problems and last but not the least, their remedies. He was unique in the sense that, besides suggesting, he was keen on implementing every device for socio-economic development in India which came to his mind. This proposal is an attempt to assimilate his ideas with practices and assess his role as an alternative development thinker.

This study has two aspects: one deals with the theory and concept of development and the other deals with Tagore – his concepts and activities in this context. In the first section the books related to Development Studies have been reviewed in order to introduce the concept of development and to prepare the background for locating Tagore in the development discourse.

In the second section, the study selects some of essays and articles, novels, dramas, letters and correspondence of Tagore as the area of analysis. It is also interesting to go through his *Shelaidah* experience as well as *Santiniketan-Sriniketan* programme where his ideas could vision the light of the day. He basically laid stress on the concept of human development without state intervention. It was his firm conviction that India was never a state-led society. Here, the process of evolution showed that the Indian society was always more active and operative than the state. The dependence upon the state was something foreign, a habit introduced by the British in India. Tagore by his intuition felt that the essential elements for developing a society were already inherent in the social body of India. It was necessary to find them out and to motivate them towards development. In this research proposal this process has been referred to as society building although Tagore preferred to address this process as ‘rural reconstruction’.

Books on Development Studies

Critical Development Studies edited by Ronald Munck and Denis O' Hearn is an important book in the area of development studies. Chapter 7 (The place of Development in Theories of Imperialism and Globalization) written by Bob Sutcliffe is worth studying for this research. Here development as a model and its three critiques have been discussed. Development, according to the author, means modernization which in the name of economic progress includes education, urbanization and more access to medical services, longer lives, democracy and human rights. This standard model has been attacked mainly from three different directions – the polarization critique, the attainability critique and the desirability critique.

Development Theory and the Three Worlds provides a substantive survey of social science theories for understanding development problems from the historical perspective. The author of this book is Bjorn Hettne. He attempts to examine the history of development thinking in each of the worlds: the first world i.e. the western industrial world, the second world i.e. the socialist world and the third world i.e. the so-called 'backward' areas. The very title of the book also reveals this fact. The introduction is very rich in the sense that the author not only makes the readers familiar with the area but also specifies the research territory which can give the researcher a new insight.

Chapter 3 (The voice of the third world), Chapter 4 (The globalization of development theory) and Chapter 5 (Dimensions of another development) are specifically important for the present research. The author is very rational and logical while he is introducing the concept of third system politics that is the role of the 'community', besides state and market.

Development Theory: Deconstructions/Reconstructions by Jan Nederveen Pieterse can be treated as a compulsory reading for studying development. Keith Griffin, Department of Economics, University of California has rightly commented, "This marvelous book should be read by every social scientist interested in development studies."

As development theory is wide ranging in treatment, the author first of all has tried to locate this very concept in broad area of social science and very rightly has pointed out that the concept of development is problem driven. It is worldly, based upon practical knowledge rather than upon just book knowledge.

Development thinking can be broadly classified into: a) state led (classical political economy, modernization, dependency), market led (neo-liberalism), society led (alternative development) and last but not the least post development that is rejection of development. In this context, the tradition-modernity dichotomy has also been handled by the author very efficiently. Related to it is the concept of indigenous reservoir of knowledge which is also a construction like modernity, has been highlighted by the author in a very interesting way.

Banker to the poor: the Story of the Grameen Bank written by Muhammad Yunus with Alan Jolis is the winner of the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize. The basic objective as has been presented in the book is eradication of poverty which should be the main theme of any proper development effort. The author here is convincing the reader that the present responsibility of humanity is to create a poverty free world. The basic focus of Yunus can be summed up in this way. Firstly, his working in the Grameen Bank of the micro credit system can bring an end to poverty. Secondly, apart from this, there are also other ways and means which should be searched out. Thirdly, it is essential to conceptualize people differently because we are not conscious about the fact that each person has tremendous potential by means of which he or she can influence the lives of others. Finally, Yunus invites all the people of the world – whether revolutionary or liberal or conservative, whether young or old to work together on this one issue.

This book emphasizes the true meaning of development – this is the ideology of development from below. In fact, Yunus has made almost a miracle by implementing his philosophy into practice. Tagore had also the idea of *Grameen* Bank which he tried to establish very earnestly. His dream has been visualized by the world through Yunus, thanks to the Nobel Prize winner who inherited the legacy from Tagore, the first Indian Nobel Prize winner.

The very concept of development divides the world into Developed North and Underdeveloped (Developing) South. This South is composed of three vast continents Asia, Africa and Latin America. *Latin American Theories of Development and Underdevelopment* by Christobal Kay is a book where one can distinctly hear the exclusive voice of the Latin Americans in the context of development and underdevelopment. This book, as the author says, tries to present the key ideas of the Latin American school of development. It has been very clearly pointed out that the northern paradigms were of limited value in addressing the development problems of the Third world. The basic contribution of the Latin American school was the emphasis on the specificity of the peripheral countries and the insistence that new theories were required to explain their different structures, dynamics and realities. Thus, this book deals with the structural school of development – the concept of marginality and dependency debate in the context of Latin America. This book, obviously, serves as a guide for locating our development problems according to our spatial direction.

World Politics: Trend and Transformation jointly authored by Charles W. Kegley, Jr. and Eugene R. Wittkopf is a book for studying international relations very systematically. This book has tried to trace the nature and development of power politics in the sphere of international society and accordingly helps to develop an overall concept about the role of world politics in the developed-underdeveloped (developing) dichotomy. Chapter 5 (The Global South: Roots and Consequences of Global Inequalities) is specifically relevant for this study where the concept of development has been treated elaborately. The end of the Colonial Empire and the emergence of the Global South have been discussed analytically here. Different Structural Theories such as Dependency Theory and Dualism, World-System Theory and Neoclassical Development Theory have been interpreted along with introducing the concept of human development. Chapter 11 (The Ecology of World Politics: Security and Sustainability on a Small Planet) is also hopeful for understanding the nature of environmental security and sustainable development.

The concept of ‘Poverty’ is intimately related to the concept of ‘Development’ because the actual objective of ‘Development’ is eradication of ‘poverty’. Tim Allen and Alan Thomas have jointly edited a book *Poverty and Development into the 21st Century*. In this book Chapter- I is – ‘Poverty and the End of Development’ written by Alan Thomas which after analyzing the state of development has tried to relate it to the concept of poverty which is a very useful and interesting study. In this article, the reader gets familiar with the concept of human development as well as that of post development. Chapter 2 of this book (Meanings and Views of Development) is a resourceful analysis by Alan Thomas. It revolves round the basic concept of development. Chapter 23 (The New Politics of Identity) and Chapter 24 (Industrialization and Development: Prospects and Dilemmas) are also important references for constructing (or deconstructing) the concept of development.

The concept of globalization is very intimately related to the concept of development. *The Globalization of World Politics: An introduction to international relations* edited by John Baylis and Steve Smith is an attempt to touch each and every specific area and issue which have been influenced by the process of globalization. It is really very interesting and helpful to go through this book for an overall understanding about the evolution of development. Mention should be made about Chapter 26 (Poverty, development, and hunger). The section on development is a critical narration of post 1945 international economic order which starts from the concept of embedded liberalism to neo-liberal economic and political philosophy which emerged with the ending of the cold war and the collapse of the Eastern bloc i.e. post 1989 situation. Moreover, here there is a critical alternative view of development. In this section a table has been inserted on the orthodox versus the alternative view of development very summarily and point wise. A glance at this table can enrich any student of development.

Besides, World-System Theory which has been incorporated in Chapter 10 (Marxist Theories of International Relations) can also be treated as a theory on development. The World-System Theory discussed here is a valuable addition.

Arturo Escobar, famous as a post-development thinker has contributed a very valuable chapter (Chapter 8 – The Problematization of Poverty: The tale of Three Worlds and Development) in the book *Development: A Cultural Studies Reader* edited by Susanne Schech and Jane Haggis. He has proved himself very competent in unpacking the concept of poverty within the development discourse. “As a discourse, development is thus a very real historical formation, albeit articulated around an artificial construct (underdevelopment) and upon a certain materiality

(the conditions baptized as underdevelopment), which must be conceptualized in different ways if the power of the development discourse is to be challenged or displaced". This very comment makes one conscious about how to locate the concept of development in the 21st century. In Chapter 9 James Ferguson has studied Lesotho, a small land-locked country in Southern Africa which is a less developed country. Although it is a case study it throws light on the proper connotation of the concept and practice of development. 'Becoming a Development Category' (Chapter 10) is a superb and unique addition written by Nanda Shrestha, who used to belong to really poverty stricken category in his childhood growing up in a rustic town of Pokhara in Central Nepal. This article as he has said is a post mortem of the body of development by a colonized mind, designed to serve as a research method. Last but not the least, Chapter 11 (Knowledge for development) contributed by the World Bank is valuable from the epistemological standpoint.

International Relations written by Joshua S. Goldstein made us familiar with the global context of development. If any researcher goes through this book he / she may have a clear idea about the historical background as well as the basic politics operating behind the intention of development. Today like other issues, development is also not only an international issue but also a global one. Chapter 12 (The North South Gap) starts from the concept of poverty and touches a number of relevant issues like post-colonial dependency, basic human needs and the role of women in development. Chapter 13 of the book (International Development) begins with third world development and goes on unfolding the basic process inherent within it. Although, this is basically a book on international relations, it is helpful for structuring the theoretical analysis of development. Finally Chapter 11 (The Environment) is also relevant here which deals with the problem of sustainable development.

One very important book on development is *The Development Dictionary* edited by Wolfgang Sachs. This book may be described as a compulsory reading for the beginners of Development Studies. Basically, this is a critique of development and declares a post development or anti-development approach. Here, some of the world's most eminent critics of development review the key concepts of development discourse in the post war era. All the authors have tried to analyse the concepts very consciously and carefully. All of them call for a bidding farewell to the whole of the 'mainstream development' idea. According to them, it is necessary to think differently about development in order to save both nature and humanity. 'Introduction', 'Environment' and 'One world' – three chapters by Wolfgang Sachs, 'Development' by Gustavo Esteva, 'Participation' and 'Poverty' by Majid Rahnema are some of the important chapters in this book which need special mention. Disappointed with the achievements in the name of development, the editor Wolfgang Sachs utters in disgrace, "The lighthouse of development was erected right after the Second World War ... To-day, the light house shows cracks and is starting to crumble. The idea of development stands like a ruin in the intellectual landscape.

(The New Palgrave) Economic Development edited by John Eatwell, Murray Milgate and Peter Newman is actually a concise dictionary of economics. The basic concepts of development have been treated by experts from different corners of the world. On the whole, the book is helpful for the present research although three of the articles 'Colonialism' by M. Abdel-Fadil, 'Dependency' by J.G. Palma and 'Periphery' by Immanuel Wallerstein can be especially recommended for the present study. In the general preface of the book the authors have said, "For each subject, its contributor was asked to discuss not only present problems but also past growth and future prospects. This request was made in the belief that knowledge of the historical development of any theory enriches our present understanding of it and so helps to construct better theories for the future."

Globalization and Development Studies edited by Frans J. Schuurman is an essential reading for all students and academics of Development Studies. This book tries to assess the impact of globalization on a number of key areas of study in the discourse of development. These include environment, gender, human rights, multinationals and urban development.

In her book *Political Theory: Ideas and Concepts*, the author *Sushila Ramaswamy* has introduced with other theoretical concepts, the concept of development in Chapter- 16. She has discussed the meaning of Development, Theories of Development, Gandhian Concept of Development, Sustainable Development and Environmentalism. Although very brief, this is no doubt a systematic study with a chronological analysis of the concept. What is new about her is

that she has incorporated the Gandhian model in her discussion which is obviously a non-western perspective. Besides, she gives a very short but penetrating account of Modernization Theory and Dependency Theory. But in a sense this discussion is incomplete for it does not speak anything about alternative development or post development although Sustainable Development and Environmentalism have been discussed.

The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi and Sarvodaya by Vishwanath Prasad Varma is an extensive study on Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi is significant in the context of alternative development thinking. It is interesting to make a comparison between Tagore and Gandhi and for this purpose this book can enrich the researcher. In this book Chapter-4 and Chapter-9 are important for the present study. These two chapters present Gandhian vision about Indian society. It also reveals his critique about modern capitalist development. His concept about *Swaraj* also becomes clear after going through Chapter-9. It is a detail analysis about his agrarian approach emphasizing his choice for rural development.

Modern Indian Political Thought authored by Vishwanath Prasad Varma may be regarded as an indispensable reference for the present research. First of all, it gives an overall background which helps to locate the present issue of research. Specifically, two chapters need special mention: Part – I- Chapter 5.1 (Rabindranath Tagore) and Part-III- Chapter 17 (Mahatma Gandhi). The first one gives an analysis of the philosophical foundation of Tagore's thought and highlights the spiritual humanism of Tagore which upholds the basic essence of Tagore's ideas. His social interpretation of history, especially Indian history, which is very unique and modern, has been covered in this book. Tagore's views on rights and freedom, his critique of nationalism and above all a comparison between Tagore and Gandhi, although very brief, have been discussed here. Next one deals with Gandhian philosophy emphasizing the concepts of *Swaraj*, *Satyagraha*, freedom etc. which help the present research for making an idea about Gandhi.

Gandhian Model of Development and World Peace is a by product of a national conference on Gandhian Model of Development and World Peace held on 29-31 January, 1988. This book is composed of 21 essays with an introduction jointly written by R. P. Misra, the editor and T.R. Lakshman. All the essays deal with Gandhi from different dimensions. Among them, Chapter – 5 (Economic and Social Development: A Gandhian Perspective by K. D. Gangrade) and Chapter 21 (Some Reflections on Development, Peace and Education in the Gandhian Perspective by Marjarie Fernandes) are specifically important for the present study.

Bidyut Chakraborty is very thoughtful when in his book *Social and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi*, he incorporates a Chapter (Chapter 5 - Introducing the text) incorporating excerpts from *Harijan* dealing with the concepts of *satyagraha*, *ahimsa*, *charkha*, *khadi* and so on. On the whole this book is a textual analysis, so worth mentioning.

Catastrophic Development – The Search for an Alternative Paradigm by B.D.Sharma is a book worth mentioning here. Amartya Sen, the Nobel laureate has made a great contribution here by presenting his book *Development as Freedom*.

For methodology three books can be consulted. They are: *Your Research Project* by Nicholas Walliman, *Foundations of Qualitative Research* by Jerry W. Wills and *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S.Lincoln (eds).

Original Texts of Rabindranath Tagore

Samaj is a collection of essays written by Tagore. These essays deal with various issues relating to his native land and society. The first essay (*Bharatvarshiya Vivaha*) is about the nature and character of Indian marriage. This piece is especially important for here Tagore is vocal about the role of women in a society. The next piece which is actually a letter to someone (*Narir Manushyatwa*) is in a sense a continuation of the previous one. It declares that the identity of any human being should get priority over her womanhood. Tagore is emphasizing that the deprivation of a woman is the deprivation of the society as a whole. This view is relevant in the context of alternative development which addresses women as a marginalized group. Other two relevant essays are *Hindur Aikya* and *Purbo O Paschim*. Both of them enlighten the readers about the basic nature of the Indian society – the problems and the remedies. Tagore warns us about accepting everything positive from the west provided we are settled on a solid indigenous base. Any blind imitation of the west would surely ruin us.

Bharatvarshe Itihaser Dhara is a relevant essay. As Tagore was sincerely concerned to reconstruct the Indian society on its own foundation, he very seriously tried to find out the basic root of Indian history and tradition. Very analytically, he starts from the advent of the Aryans, Aryan–non Aryan conflict, complications and crosscurrents in the process and then he discusses the chronology of Indian culture and civilization and gives symbolic interpretation of the two epics – the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, the importance of the Buddhist period and so on and so forth. This article also can be considered as a basic text for realizing the socio-political basis of the Indian society.

Atmaparichaya may be treated as an analysis of the concept of nationalism which is obviously an original concept of Tagore and to be distinguished from the concept of western nationalism. Here, Tagore has tried to define the concept 'Hindu' which, according to him is not a religious identity; rather it connotes a way of life, a social identity which is exclusively Indian. This Indian society is a Hindu society which embraces within it the Hindu Christians as well as the Hindu Muslims. Thus, in order to bring social integrity he has very eagerly tried to redefine Hinduism in order to make the Indian people conscious about their foundation, their base and their identity. He was very much against the western concept of nationalism which was being accepted by his contemporary Indian nationalists. It was a rational and honest attempt of Tagore to build up an Indian brand of 'nationalism'.

Itihas is the compilation of a number of historical essays by Tagore. He truly realized that each and every society is having its own character and direction towards development. So, it is necessary to study the history of that society in order to find out the mode of development suitable for it. Very sincerely, he studied Maratha history and Sikh history of India. Any society needs, according to him, unity in order to survive and to progress ahead, which is definitely distinct from integration which can be seen in the United States of America. Study of history is necessary to feel the spirit of unity as he used to think. In this collection two major observations of Tagore are worth mentioning. He was of the opinion that Indian history should be studied and written by the Indians themselves. It was very unscientific that the Indians were habituated in knowing their own history from the European historians. So the Indian scholars should take the initiative of writing their history by themselves which would be rational and logical for a student of history who would get both views – European and Indian and would be able to develop his own ideas scientifically. The Indians should look at their history through their own eyes.

Another point Tagore emphasizes is also interesting. He feels that any history is not simply narration or description. Any incident somehow or other puts an impact upon the contemporary people. Each and every person perceives any event according to his/her own disposition. Thus, each person is going to develop an image of reality which is not, in any sense, the reality itself. Tagore considers this image of reality as true for it actually represents the contemporary mind and builds up true history. Finally, he suggests that if each and every district tries to collect its own history it will make possible the construction of Indian history from an indigenous perspective

Palliprakriti is a collection of essays by Tagore which makes the researcher familiar with the problems of rural Bengal. This book is essential for understanding Tagore's development thought. Most of these essays are lectures delivered by him on different occasions whenever he could get the opportunity to address the people. Tagore was not a formal sociologist in any sense of the term. But, obviously, he was a sociologist by himself. Because of his versatility, he could develop an integrated approach and with this vision he came forward to reconstruct the rural society of Bengal with his original concept and programme. While he was acting as a *Zamindar* at East Bengal, he came into direct contact with the rural people and with his sympathetic and receptive mind he could feel the pulse of rural Bengal. All the articles of *Palliprakriti* amply prove this. Here, he has tried to find out the problems of the villages, reasons responsible for their backwardness, the rural-urban differences and the emerging necessities for rural uplift, proper utilization of machine, the true meaning of patriotism, and the transformation of local market into national and international market and so on and so forth. These essays are especially valuable for making alternative development programme especially human development. In each and every essay, Tagore makes a very earnest and sincere request to his countrymen to rouse their enthusiasm and spirit to develop their, society by themselves. He had acquired direct experience about rural Bengal and accordingly he prepared his programme for improving the same which was thoughtful, practical and humane. This collection of essay makes one familiar with that Tagore.

In his *The Cooperative Principle*, Tagore says "This combination of many people to earn a living is known in Europe as the cooperative system." In his articles on *Samavayaneeti* (The Cooperative Principle – translated from the original Bengali essays and addresses of Tagore by Apurvakumar Chanda, Somnath Moitra, Jitendranarayan Sen

and Surendra Nath Tagore and edited by Pulinbehari Sen, 1963, Kolkata, Visva-Bharati), Tagore seems to be very hopeful about cooperative principle and goes on saying “If wealth and power could be gained by the concerted labour of the members of a community, everyone could enjoy the fruits of such corporate endeavor ... When, by cooperative endeavor, men will learn to turn their own work into wealth for all, then only will the real foundation of man’s freedom be laid.” Tagore directly experienced the distress of rural Bengal and he suggested this cooperative principle to be the way out for the poor peasants. It is to be mentioned that he was inspired by a book *The National Being* written by an Irish idealist, A. E., who had a rare combination in himself of poetry and practical wisdom.

Kalantar is a collection of essays which makes us familiar with our society and tries to trace the trend of social transformation. *Nari*, *Samasya*, *Samadhan* etc. are very suggestive essays in this context.

Atmshakti is an important collection of articles where Tagore is defining and prescribing the basic necessities of the Indian society. In the first article, he defines the western concept of nation and has tried to interpret it in the Indian context. Actually, his notion about the term nationalism was not the stereotyped one. He conceived it from the Indian viewpoint and tried to convince his countrymen about its difference from the western one. The second article is on Indian society. In spite of his fame as a poet, in this essay he has appeared as a renowned sociologist. *Swadeshi Samaj* is another important essay where Tagore is making his countrymen conscious about their own society instead of imitating the western one. Here, in one article, he addresses the students, the future generation, to make them conscious about their duties and responsibilities. All the other articles of *Atmshakti* are relevant for the present research. Special mention may be made about one Constitution for *Swadeshi Samaj* and another for *Pallisamaj* where he suggests about constructive work –the most important part of development.

Samuha means collection. Here, Tagore expresses his keen observation about the Indian society which is obviously necessary for carrying on any development programme. In the first article he tells about the necessity of an efficient and appropriate leader. The next one is his presidential lecture in the Pabna provincial conference. This lecture also reveals his minutest findings necessary for reconstructing the Indian society. Another important article is about Hindu Muslim communal harmony which he thought was essential for proper development in India.

Rajapraja also has a number of important articles which in various forms say about Tagore’s development ideas. In this book Tagore makes the society alert about the true meaning of diplomacy. In the western sense the concept of diplomacy is related to ‘cunning deceit and duplicity’. Tagore very sensibly differs from this view. It means, according to him, to perform any task on the opportune moment following the rules without being emotional. Thus, he defines many concepts according to the social ethics of India without imitating the west.

Bharatvarsha O Swadesh is a collection of essays written by Tagore. Each and every essay is an attempt to rouse the true patriotic spirit among the Indians. Tagore, in these essays has tried to trace the origin and nature of Indian life style – the uniqueness inherent in Indian society. There are eight essays in this collection. In the first article Tagore expresses the basic ethics and moral principles so earnestly protected and transmitted by the Indian society. India has always given priority to man not to work. This emphasis upon man is the true philosophy of Indian society as well as the key concept of Tagore’s philosophy. Unity is the basic essence of Indian culture and civilization. That has been again and again harped on by Tagore. Our religion also preaches the same thing.

Gora is a novel by Tagore which is very important in the context of nation building in India. Tagore had a concept of nation building which was completely different from the western notion of nationalism. In this novel, he could transcend the myth of Hinduism and reached the level of ‘Indian-ness’ which again led him to what may be defined as worldliness. This transformation of Gora, the eponymous hero, has revealed his realization. The dialogues and debates in this novel on various occasions seem to express Tagore’s arguments which he wanted to tell to his contemporaries. Any society is situated upon the poor peasants and labourers and it is the primary necessity to improve their condition by making them self-confident and self-sufficient. It has been aptly suggested by him very honestly. Gora was a sincere patriot but used to suffer from the bias of Hinduism. Through him, Tagore has tried to talk about all sorts of contradictions and finally announced the victory of humanism.

One important novel very relevant in the context of development ideas of Tagore is *Ghare Baire (The Home and the World 1916)*(Macmillan, London, 1919). In this novel a love triangle of two men and one woman has been painted against the backdrop of political excitement in the stormy years of *Swadeshi* movement during the first decade of the

twentieth century. This novel is especially important, for, Tagore joined the movement initially although later left due to frustration and desperation. The novel *Ghare Baire* is like an answer to his critics who had accused him for desertion.

This novel throws light on the present research from three standpoints. Tagore, in his early youth was assigned the responsibility to look after Tagore *Zamindari* estate at east Bengal (undivided). During his stay there, he loved the picturesque beauty of Bengal as well as the poor people who were his subjects. This attachment to these poor peasants of rural Bengal has been reflected through the character of Nikhilesh. Here also lies Tagore's concept about restructuring rural Bengal. His firm belief was that this poor rural society was the reservoir of power. It was necessary to rouse the spirit of the people and to encourage them to activate and to motivate their capabilities.

Secondly, Tagore was disillusioned by the method and goal of political agitation which was being carried on during his time. He was shocked to find the duplicity and deceit among the political leaders. The boycott movement and the burning of foreign clothes were very much against his principle.

Finally, Tagore wanted to define 'nationalism' differently. According to him, the feeling of unity or attachment to one's own country cannot have a static model which can be imposed from outside. So, he refused to accept the western model of nationalism.

In the year 1930, thirteen years after the October Revolution (1917), Tagore went to visit Russia and wrote a unique piece named *Russiar Chithi* (*Letters from Russia*). This is especially important for this is not only a description but also a document expressing Tagore's socialist ideals. The implementation of Marxist socialism which could bring equality in many spheres of social life did really impress Tagore although he did never express any orientation to that particular ideology whatsoever. He was very enthusiastic about the achievements of the Soviet Government because he dreamt of implementing such programmes at *Sriniketan* at least on an experimental basis. Such measures, according to him were essential for society building which he considered to be the precondition of economic development for any country. At the same time, he was very much aware about the dark sides of the same system which were inevitable in any dictatorial regime. By eliminating the negative sides, he wanted to introduce the positive sides of Soviet Russia in his own society. *Russiar Chithi* is a product of his matured age. While appreciating and criticizing, he has expressed his various constructive ideas about restructuring the Indian society.

Chhinnapatrabali is a collection of 252 letters written by Tagore mainly to his niece Indira Devi in between 1887 to 1895 although a few of them were addressed to others. This book is relevant for the present study because most of the letters were written by Tagore during his days at *Shelaidah*, *Sahajadpur*, *Potisar*, *Katak*, *Balia* and *Puri* while he was staying or visiting these places for administering his responsibilities as a *Zamindar*. Then, he had the opportunity to meet the people of rural Bengal who were very poor and exploited but very simple and innocent. These people appeared as different characters in many of his short stories. He felt that the proper development of India could be possible only by developing these people. This realization encouraged him to take initiative for making these people self-sufficient and confident. That apart, charmed by the enchanting loveliness of rural Bengal, he became aware about protecting this nature from the thaws of the machine age. This experience directly or indirectly made him conscious about fighting against environmental pollution and for sustainability of nature. This feeling had its origin in these letters.

Rabindranath Tagore was very keen to develop humanity among his countrymen. He usually dreamt of a society full of human beings in the proper sense of the term. For this purpose, he very truly used to think of following great men of all times. *Chairtrapuja* is that contribution by Tagore which puts before the society the basic features of humanity and in this venture he has attempted to analyze some of the great characters, world has ever created. Tagore wants to worship Rammohun Roy, Iswarchandra Vidyasagar and Devendranath Tagore. These articles are very detail, analytical and exemplary. It is necessary, in this context to refer other three personalities whom Tagore is paying his homage. Buddhadev and Christa (Jesus Christ) are two, to whom Tagore has offered his tribute. Tagore here also respectfully deals with the personality of Mahatma Gandhi who was his contemporary.

Shiksha is a collection of essays on education. Tagore could feel that education was the most powerful pillar of social development. Spread of education was essential in every sphere of society. In different essays, he has tried to express his original views on education. He was of the opinion that the primary objective of education would be to

develop human personality. The mode and method of education would be consistent with the social structure. He realized that the British education policy, which was compulsorily imposed upon the Indian society, was completely different. Moreover, only education could generate proper national unity according to the poet. Introduction of mother tongue as the medium of instruction was his earnest attempt. He, not only thought about imparting education, but also took every trouble to implement his ideas into practice. Here lies the real value of these essays. He can be considered as one of the great educators of all ages for whatever he had contributed in this sphere.

Ashramer Rup O Vikash is almost like a history written by Tagore about the educational institution which was his brain-child. This essay acquaints the reader with the initial years of the institution, the teachers who came to teach during that period, his realization about proper education, various problems the institution had to face, his hopes and aspirations and so on. In this essay there is a vivid picture of the said institution which is very interesting and useful for understanding the poet as an educator.

Visva –Bharati is a collection of essays written by Tagore at different times and on different occasions. *Visva-Bharati* was his dream where he wanted to integrate all the currents of education from different corners of the world. These essays are basically analytical where his views about education have been thoroughly discussed. Moreover, these essays also carry his experience regarding *Visva-Bharati* – its success as well as limitations – its scholarly teachers as well as its financial crisis. Finally, his basic mission was to declare the basic spirit of India – that is the spirit of truth and unity – through *Visva-Bharati*. Tagore with these ideas has been revealed very vividly in this collection.

Santiniketan Brahmacharyashram is a collection of two write-ups by Tagore. The first was his address to the gathering on the foundation day. This was an educational institution completely different from the existing British education system. So, he was very sincere in this address about the real objective of this institution. As it was unique and original and different from the familiar system, it had to suffer from a lot of suspicion generated in the contemporary society. Here, Tagore is very pious and confident, very noble and determined. Apart from this, the very day of its deliverance gives it an added historical significance. In the second article there are actual and practical directions to the students. This is actually a letter written by Tagore to Kunjalal Ghosh after a few months of the foundation of the institution.

Jibansmriti is the autobiography of Rabindranath Tagore. Apart from its literary flavour it has a historical value. It gives a very vivid picture of the socio – political and cultural backdrop of his contemporary Bengal. But its real worth lies in the fact that here Tagore is found as a child gradually growing. Different events and incidents as well as different personalities influenced Tagore's personality. Although this reminiscence covers only a portion of his life starting from the beginning, yet this narration helps to recognize him as a person.

Chelebeli is also a type of autobiography which covers a period from his childhood to his first visit to England. This piece reflects his various feelings to the British which help to perceive him as a thoughtful sensitive person.

Santiniketan composed of 17 chapters was published during 1909 – 1916. The lectures delivered by Tagore during this period at different places of *Santiniketan* have been compiled in this volume. Here, the readers actually hear the voice of the *Upanishads* through him. His basic ideal was to develop a person as a proper human being and his basic emphasis is upon the feeling of unity. He tries to follow the unity among God, Man and Nature and links up divinity and humanity. This feeling is very spiritual, although, not in any mystic or abstract sense and leads to uplift one's soul. In this course of progress, he analyses different virtues such as sacrifice, renunciation, emancipation, beauty, strength, will, prayer, love, sorrow and so on. By these discussions, he wants to rouse the true spirit in each and every person.

Prayaschitta (Atonement) was a drama based on Tagore's first novel *Bau Thakuranir Hat* (1883)²²¹, a remodeled one and was published in 1909. Here, the King Pratapaditya is the universal symbol of power that represents the suppressive character of each and every ruler, irrespective of time and place. As an opposite character, the author introduces Dhananjaya Bairagi who is not only universal but immortal, who is capable of conquering every odd by his spirit and who is indifferent to all sorts of wealth, greed or power. The contemporary society treated this drama as an underestimation of King Pratapaditya who was famous as a hero before the countrymen. But Tagore remained undaunted. Krishna Kripalani tries to analyze the character of Dhananjaya Bairagi from a patriotic as well as a humanistic approach.

The play which in a sense is a noble tribute to the personality of Gandhi and his campaign of non- violence, is named as *Muktadhara*(Free Current). It was published in 1922. In this drama, the author has re-introduced that remarkable character, the ascetic Dhananjaya, prototype of Mahatma Gandhi, who first appeared in the drama *Prayaschitta* (Atonement) in 1909. Perhaps no other play of Tagore expresses his political convictions with such directness and vigour. The drama is rich in meaning and suggestion which may tempt critics to attempt a variety of interpretations. To the mind of the researcher, it is a drama where Tagore protests against too much of mechanization which harms nature and causes distress for the general people. This play also has a psychological significance where the Prince identifies his own imprisoned spirit with the dammed current of *Muktadhara*.

In 1924, *Raktakarabi* a drama by Rabindranath Tagore was published as a protest against materialistic and mechanistic capitalism of the west. Here his voice against the ruthless exploitation could be heard. This is a symbolic drama where the author makes the society conscious about the evils of capitalism which destroys the spontaneity of human life. This is a warning against the machine age which is guided only by money and pride without any humane touch.

In *Japanyatri* Tagore is talking about water pollution and air pollution which is a warning to the human society. He considered that man is part of nature and whenever and wherever that bond is loosened, wherever the issue becomes man versus nature, environmental balance is disturbed.

Conclusion

In the course of discussion, books on development get the priority so that one can build up the theoretical framework while in the Bibliography, text books of Tagore come before the books on development as the primary sources.

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