

About the Editor

Dr.D.Uma Rani, M.A,Ph.D., is presently working as the Principal at Govt. Degree College, Avanigadda. Earlier she worked as Principal at GDC, Tiruvuru and as a Reader in English, at SRR&CVR Govt. Degree College, Vijayawada and V.S.R. Govt.Degree College, Movva. She 's a GOLDMEDALIST for Ph.D from Nagarjuna University in 2003 is also a recipient of TEACHER TRAINER CERTIFICATE in CLT by U.S.STATE Department and CCE in 2006 . She has rendered 28 years of service as a Lecturer in English grooming young minds towards excellence guiding 6 MPhils and 1 PhD. She is a dynamic lady with a versatile profile rendering service as the coordinator for Women Empowerment cell while working as lecturer acted as NSS P.O .at GDC, Bhadrachalam. JKC Coordinator at GDC-Bhadrachalam & Movva, P.I.O. for right to information committee, BOS Member for Krishna University, Machilipatnam, & K.B.N.College, Vijayawada, Guided Dissertatons of M.SC, in Value Education and Spirituality of DDE, Annamalai University, delivered many guest lectures etc.

She is diligent at work with a vision to provide holistic education. Being an ardent reader band critic of literature she believes that literature has a great influence on both individuals and society and it can inculcate great qualities like leadership in the individuals. Leadership is not about glorious crowning acts. It's about keeping your team focused on a goal and motivated to do their best to achieve it, especially when the stakes are high and the consequences really matter. It is about laying the groundwork for others' success, and then standing back and letting them shine. This idea is the driving force behind this compilation.

The work aims at throwing light on the genesis of nationalistic ideology in the days of freedom struggle so that it becomes easier for the present generation to understand it's true spirit.

Shriyanshi Prakashan

8 Gandhi Nagar,Agra-282003 (U.P)
Mob-09761628581

email-infoshriyanshiprakashan@gmail.com,

Branch office

31A/119,Mata Mandir

Gali No.2 Maujpur,Delhi-53,India

email-shrtyanshiprakashan@gmail.com

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Indian English Literature with
Freedom Struggle as Background

Dr. D. Uma Rani
G. Manibabu
V. Aruna Kumari



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Edited by
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V. Aruna Kumari

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Edited by

Dr. D. Uma Rani

Principal,

Government Degree College,Avanigadda.

G. Manibabu

Lecturer in English

Government Degree College,Avanigadda.

V. Aruna Kumari

Lecturer in English

Government Degree College,Avanigadda.

Publisher



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Shriyanshi Prakashan

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CONTRIBUTORS

Chapter-1

B.Bulli Babu

Lecturer In English,

AG&SGS Degree College, Vuyyuru.

Chapter-2

V.Venkata Aparna Reddy

Lecturer In English

Ag&Sgs College, Vuyyuru.

Chapter-3

Dr.K.V.R.Srinivas

Post Doctoral Fellow (ICSSR), Dept. Of. Political Science
&Public Administration, Acharya Nagarjuna University, Guntur,
Andhra Pradesh.

A.Hari Krishna

Lecturer In Political

Science, S.V.R.M.College, Nagaram, Guntur
Dist, Andhra Pradesh.

Chapter-4

Mrs.Eppuri Sunitha

Lecturer In English

Sri VSSC Government Degree College,

Sullurupet, Tirupati Dist,

Chapter-5

V.Aruna Kumari M.Sc.,MA.,Mphil,PGDTE

Lecturer In English

Government Degree College,Avanigadda.

Chapter-6

J. Kavitha

Lecturer In English, SRR&CVR Govt Degree College,
Vijayawada. AP.

Chapter-7

Kalpana Rani Kalapala

Research Scholar

Dr.E.Bavani, Ph.D, Assistant Professor

Krishna University, Machilipatnam

Chapter-8

Ch . Kavya

Department Of English

Andhra Loyola College.

Chapter-09

S.Kiranmayi

Lecturer In Electronics

V.S.R Govt. Degree & PG College, Movva

Chapter-10

Dr.Gajula Naga Lakshmi,

Lecturer In Political Science,

The Hindu College, Machilipatnam.

Chapter-11

Dr. K. Pankaj Kumar

SG. Lecturer In English, Government Degree College,
Kaikaluru.

K. Durgarao

Asst Prof Of English, Bonam Venkata Chalamayya Institute
Of Technology & Science, Amalapuram.

Chapter-12

Ollala. Srinivas,

PGT English, Telangana Minorities Residential JR College,
Karimnagar, Telangana

Dr. M. Sandra Carmel Sophia

Professor Of English, Aditya Engineering College(A),
Surampalem,EG Godavari,AP

Chapter-13

B.Neethuprathyusha,

Research Scholar,

P.R.Government College (Autonomous) Kakinada

Chapter-14

Dr.D.Rajyalakshmi,

Lecturer In English, SRR&CVR GDC(A),

Vijayawada

Chapter-15

Dudekonda Ramanjineyulu

Lecturer In History, T.R.R. Govt. Degree College, Kandukur,
SPSR Nellore District (A.P)

Chapter-16

J.Ratna Vinola,

Lecturer,Dept.Of English,
GDC,Kovvur.

Chapter-17

Dr. K. Ravi Teja,

Lecturer In Political Science,
Government Degree College, Avanigadda, Krishna Dt.

Chapter-18

Dr. D. Sahadevudu

Lecturer In History, Govt. College (A),
Ananthapuramu

Dr.M.Ramesh

Lecturer In History, Govt. College For Men (A), YSR Kadapa

Chapter-19

D.Samatha

Lecturer In English, SRR & CVR GOVT Degree College,
Vijayawada

Chapter-20

Roja Masanam

Lecturer In English
AG&SGS College, Vuyyuru

Dr. K. Ravi Teja,

Lecturer In Political Science,
Government Degree College, Avanigadda, Krishna Dt.

Chapter-21

Santipriya Dutta

Research Scholar, MSSV, Nagaon,
Assam, India.

Chapter-22

S.Shabana

Lecturer In English
Gdc Pattikonda, Kurnool District

Chapter-23

Soni Gandepudi

MA, MA (Hons) TESL, PGDTE, PGDCA

Head, Department Of English

Government Degree College

Ravulapalem, Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Konaseema Dt

Chapter-24

Dr.SVS.Balasubrahmanyam Devarakonda

Dept. Of Political Science

SRR&CVR Govt. Degree College(A) ,Vijayawada

Chapter-25

A.Veera Kumari

Lecturer In Economics,
GDC,Avanigadda.

Chapter-26

Dr.S. Madhavi

Principal
V.S.R.G.D.C, Movva

Dr. A.V.V.Malleswaramma

Lecturer In English

V.S.R.G.D.C., Movva

CHAPTER-1

INDIAN ENGLISH LITERATURE WITH FREEDOM STRUGGLE AS BACKGROUND

"Tagore's broader idea of nationalism in terms of spiritualism and anti-colonialism"

B.Bulli Babu

Lecturer in English,

AG&SGS Degree College,, Vuyyuru.

ABSTRACT

During the days of freedom struggle several men of letters produced creative works which inspired nationalism and patriotism among people. The paper aims to examine the Tagore's broader idea of nationalism in terms of spiritualism and anti-colonialism.

The powerful patriotic spirit of Tagore's literary works brought him in the mainstream of the freedom struggle and earned him national wisdom. He not only gave importance on political freedom but also spiritual freedom. Tagore in his poem, "where the mind is without fear" writes:-

Where the mind is led by thee into ever-widening. Thought and action into that heaven of freedom. My father, let my country awake.

His works generated a spirit of liberating India from colonialism. He was on a poetic mission to save India from slavery. His works ignited passion and united people to dedicate them to the national struggle. He opposed the partition of Bengal along communal lines

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and hated the idea of division of his beloved state. He advocated for Swadeshi, composed soul – stirring songs, addressed meetings and led protest marches.

Tagore suggested the people of country to get freedom on humanitarian grounds. “It is my conviction that my countrymen will truly gain their India by fighting against the education which teaches them that a country is greater than the ideals of humanity”. He opposed the ideas of nationalism initiated from West.

Tagore gifted to India her national anthem. The song generated a sense of national unity during the days of freedom struggle which made India stronger than before. He was a seer and national builder and his contribution of his songs to the national freedom was immense.

Key Words: nationalism, patriotism, spiritualism, colonialism, freedom

“Tagore’s broader idea of nationalism in terms of spiritualism and anti-colonialism”

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), popularly known as Gurudev, expressed his views on Indian nationalism on various occasions. A collection of his speeches on nationalism was published in 1917 with the same title and one of the speeches in it denotes Tagore’s unconventional, integrated views on Indian nationalism. A substance of his deliberation is that the true spirit of nationalism lies in its broad humanistic concern rather constrained political strategy. The spread of fanatic nationalism during the First World War might have forced him to interpret and blame it as an evil epidemic. He was trying to subvert the popular idea of nationalism which was more a political justification that encouraged grabbing other nations and their resources.

Rabindranath Tagore was a versatile genius, a true nationalist and above all an indisputable humanist who has been inspiring generations of intellectual and empathetic minds irrespective of their religion, race, language and also the barriers such as state and nation. The literary and artistic genius of Tagore, which spanned over six decades, is nothing but a reflection of a sensitive artist, a sympathetic man of letters,

a profound thinker and a strategic experimentalist. It may be considered a false promise if someone assures to introduce in brief his all-encompassing intellectual engagements; therefore, the author of this article assures his readers an introduction of Tagore's thought-provoking perception on Indian nationalism focusing the very soul of his intellectual deliberation.

Tagore's perception of nationalism has mainly relied on ancient Indian philosophy, where the world was accepted as a single nest. In this way, Tagore was striving to dissociate himself from the general belief of nationalism and trying to associate it with ideas such as peace, harmony and welfare. He argues further that if anyway India decides to contribute the world; it should be only in the form of humanity.

Humanity, world over does not require a narrow but broad sense of nationalism. Therefore, it should be formulated through various means of life. Tagore's idea of humanism goes beyond any boundaries or barriers and seeks at large a common place where humanity comes before any other kind of identity. He adds further that the saints such as Nanak, Kabir, Chaitanya ignited the flame of humanism in Indian minds. But unfortunately, it was faded over time with an aggressive rise of racism and caste-based disintegration of our society.

The ideas like purity and impurity of race have massacred millions over centuries. Even two World Wars and other racial conflicts were provoked based on the false notions of superiority. Nothing as such has really existed in this world where men and women can be straightway divided and disintegrated. Therefore, his belief: *'Only those peoples have survived and achieved civilisation who have this spirit of co-operation strong in them'* receives a cardinal significance. At large, human beings all over the world should be glanced only through the mirror of co-operation and humanity.

Tagore considered that apart from political freedom, the freedom of mind is more important. The Euro-centric notions of freedom have forced us to consider political freedom as an ultimate destination in the journey of the freedom movement in our country. Blind faith in

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Europe will instead increase our greed for possession. Hence, we should give up this narrowness and be more comprehensive in our inward and outward expressions that extend freedom of mind. Ultimately, this freedom of mind finds harmony with the human soul and at large human life. He also believed that there is only one history, i.e. history of man and other histories are mere chapters in the larger one.

Nations with spiritual integration, love, and sympathy for others may find a permanent place in any age. Thus, Indian nationalism or nationalism of any kind is nothing but a mixture of integrated ideals of humanity and human welfare. It should be a tenable progression that outsets within.

The world politics today indicates its growing narrowness in the form of mounting significance given to the politics of dominance and also to the theory of division. Tagore's views on nationalism are much ahead of time and should reach the masses.

The postcolonial discourse in India has made many attempts to appropriate Tagore within its fold, and it is not that its arguments are weak. We can take two of Tagore's famous novels *The Home and the World* (1916) and *Four Chapters* (1934), which are set against the backdrop of political upheavals, for the purpose of examining this point. The protagonists from both the novels—represented by Nikhil, Bimala, Sandip (from *The Home and the World*) and Indranath, Ela, and Atin (from *Four Chapters*)—embody the happenings that took place during their subjugation by the British colonisers, amidst the Indian freedom struggle. The main focus in both the novels is on the discourse encompassing cultural, political, social, and economic issues which reflect the mindset of the people during those times. The novels clearly depict the British colonisation of India, the bold rejection of subjugation by the protagonists, and the reasons for doing so. Thus, the need for self-identity and recognition was beginning to take root in the heart and soul of the people of India at that time. Tagore's initiative to instil self-worth into a colonised people is portrayed through his novels (Ebenezer 2005).

But, surely, Tagore cannot be appropriated by a single discourse, let alone by postcolonialism. His works, when keenly examined, transcend postcolonial thinking. Michael Collins in his 2011 book, *Empire, Nationalism and the Postcolonial World: Rabindranath Tagore's Writings on History, Politics and Society*, argues that postcolonial historiography has not accorded Tagore the intellectual standing he deserves. His book strives to explain, on the one hand, why "Tagore has been consistently misunderstood, misrepresented, sometimes ignored, and in many respects diminished as a writer and thinker" (Collins 2011: 1). On the other hand, it attempts to locate more precisely Tagore's importance for historians, political scientists, and theorists of modernity, postmodernity, and postcolonialism alike. It does so by laying out Tagore's "distinctively universalist philosophy," presented as a critique of certain aspects of modernity, and as an alternative to both empire and nation. On the other hand, Collins (2011) claims that "Tagore can help us better understand some of the failures of postcolonial theory."

The Perils of Nationalism and the Merits of Cosmopolitanism

Tagore does not engage in an outright denunciation of the West, but acknowledges its good aspects (Tagore and Dasgupta 2009). He does not indulge in mirrored reactions; that is to denigrate the Western culture in return for their denigration of ours, the non-Western. Apparently, this appears to be a trend of postcolonialism in its attempt to reassert the self (the East). In contrast, Tagore attempts to draw an overarching bridge between the East and the West. He engages in an attempt to find harmony and unity in its true essence, a call to be one with "the infinite."^[1] We can observe this in his novel *The Home and the World*. His conception of internationalism—located in the interactions between colonial and postcolonial, East and West, tradition and modernity—contains the seeds of cosmopolitanism, as he perceives colonialism as a two-way process.

Taking the context of British colonialism in India, he observes that colonialism steers nationalism into becoming imperialistic. He was

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concerned about anti-colonial resistance in India which morphed into chauvinistic nationalism, which has been the characteristic of Western nationalism. For instance, referring to the burning of “foreign” goods by Indian nationalist leaders, during the freedom struggle, he said such acts were not only self-defeating, but also a mere imitation of Western nationalism.

However, on the other hand, Tagore believed that colonialism presented a chance through which the West came to be experienced by India, and thereby, introduced a channel of learning and exchange. Tagore argues that certain extreme forms of nationalism, espoused and used in India’s struggle for independence, are ultimately self-defeating, and perceives nationalism as a purely Western construct, warning against the extreme frenzy of nationalism. For him, independence lay both in denunciation of imperialism and the retention of the channel of learning and exchange. It is in Tagore’s ability to accommodate such contrasting viewpoints does one find the roots of cosmopolitanism (Dharmani et al 2015).

“If Tagore were to see the India of today, more than half a century after independence, nothing perhaps would shock him so much as the continued illiteracy of the masses. He would see this as a total betrayal of what the nationalist leaders had promised during the struggle for independence—a promise that had figured even in Nehru’s rousing speech on the eve of independence in August 1947 (on India’s “tryst with destiny”) . . . Rabindranath would be shocked by the growth of cultural separatism in India, as elsewhere. The ‘openness’ that he valued so much is certainly under great strain right now—in many countries. Religious fundamentalism still has a relatively small following in India; but various factions seem to be doing their best to increase their numbers. Certainly, religious sectarianism has had much success in some parts of India (particularly in the west and the north). Tagore would see the expansion of religious sectarianism as being closely associated with an artificially separatist view of culture.” (Sen 2001)

Such occurrences are against Tagore’s notion of “the infinite.” In essence, they are simply articulations of forced unity and not harmony.

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