

CONCLUSION

: C O N C L U S I O N :

In the present thesis, an attempt is made to study Tagore's ideas on nationalism. Nationalism, as a political concept had its origin in the west, and it played a significant role in the modernization of Indian tradition society. The leaders of Indian renaissance showed a great reverence to the idea of nationalism. They considered nationalism as a magical wand and the only means of emancipation of Indian people from the colonial domination. But Tagore, as a cosmopolitan thinker was a critic of the idea of nationalism. He propagated the idea of spiritual internationalism, as the alternative concept of nationalism. To neutralise the evil effects of nationalism and to promote the idea of internationalism, Tagore felt the need of co-operation between the East and the West on the basis of mutual trust and friendship. He sought the synthesis of two cultures - the cultures of the East and the West, as the only way towards development of universal humanism.

A) Summary :

The first chapter deals with Indian renaissance and the emergence of Indian nationalism. Indian renaissance was the inevitable consequence of the British rule and the Western

education system introduced in India. The Indian National Congress was the off- spring of Indian Nationalism and it played a significant role in the national evolution.

Rabindra Nath Tagore was born in the most crucial period of Indian history, when Indian society was in a transitional phase. Tagore maintained the balance between tradition and modernity. The first half of the 20th century Indian history was dominated by two distinguished personalities - i.e. Rabindra Nath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi. The first chapter concludes with a brief account of ideological controversy between Tagore and Gandhi on national issues.

The second chapter deals with Tagore's ideas on Indian history as in this section he attempted criticism of British historiography and sought to find out the basic characteristics of Indian history. The remaining part of this chapter deals with Tagore's evaluation of the significant features of both Eastern and Western civilizations and his advoeacy of the synthesis of the good qualities of the two civilizations.

The third chapter constitutes the main body of the research work. In this section Tagore's ideas on nationalism are analysed. According to Tagore Nation was an artificial creation that served the collective self interests of the people. Nationalism, as a political concept emerged in the

West and it completely changed the outlook and the ways of life of the European people. With the impact of the idea of nationalism, the quest for power and profit became the basic ingredient of the Western civilization.

Tagore was of the view that nationalism was the training of whole people for a narrow ideal. It suppressed humanitarian and moral values of human civilization because it stimulated a feeling of separation and hatredness in the minds of the people. It sought to weld individuals into a uniform mass according to its own formula.

After analysing the concept of nationalism, Tagore sought to discuss the role of nationalism in the west, nationalism in Japan and nationalism in India. He vehemently criticised the role of western nationalism because it bred imperialism and was the root cause of the outbreak of the European wars. He termed nationalism as a great menace and a threat to human civilization. He distinguished the spirit of the west from the nation of the west and it was the nation of the west that was suppressing the most of the countries of Asia and Africa and it was not allowing them to be benefitted from the spirit of the west. He held that the relationship between man and man should be established on the basis of sympathy and co-operation. The basis of human civilization should be of social co-operation and not of economic exploitation and conflict. According to Tagore the emergence of a number

of nation-states in the West had created a poisonous atmosphere in Europe that threatened international peace and security. The competition for more profit and power among the European nations breed hostility among the European people. In spite of the evil effects of the Western nationalism Tagore expressed the hope that the tyranny of the Western nations would come to an end in near future and man would be free from the iron claws of this type of mechanical organization.

Regarding the nationalism in Japan, Tagore argued that Japan borrowed the concept of nationalism from the West but she remained in tact with the ancient ideals of the East. Japan was the land of the rising sun and she adopted the blessings of the Western civilization as the instrumental for her development in science and technology. Tagore cautioned that no good would be produced if Japan blindly followed the self-aggrandisement policy of the western nations. On the contrary, it would be inimical for her interest.

After examining the positive role of Japanese nationalism Tagore turned to India - the land of his birth. At the outset, Tagore discussed the Indian social problems and later he discussed about the emergence of Indian nationalism as the fruition of the rule of the Western nation ( i.e. the impact of the British rule in India )

According to Tagore, Indian civilization was evolved as a process of racial synthesis of divergent races. From the early periods of history a number of foreign races had come and merged with Indian social system. India was the meeting ground of a number of heterogeneous foreign cultures. Thus, the Sakas, the Huns, the Pathans and the Moghals were got united in Indian soil without losing their cultural affinities. The main characteristics of Indian history and civilization was to maintain unity in diversity.

Tagore was of the view that India was the country of 'No-nations' and she put more emphasis to bring about social unity because politics was not the matter of concern for Indian society. Indian social unity was maintained with the application of the strict regulations of the caste system. Tagore glorified as well as criticised the role of caste in Indian social development. Again, the goal of Indian society was the realisation of the spiritual ideals and not to enhance the motive of power and profit of the western society.

Regarding, Indian Nationalism, Tagore argued that India never had a real sense of nationalism. It was largely due to the impact of the British rule and Western education that nationalism emerged in this country.

Indian National Congress was the child of Indian Nationalism. Tagore was not satisfied with the action

programme of the both liberal and extremist factions of the congress because they were less interested in social reforms and were oriented towards political gains.

Tagore also pointed out the far reaching consequences of the British Administration in India. Under the British rule the relationship between the rulers and the ruled underwent a drastic change. The freedom of Indian people was crushed under the dead weight of the rule of the British nation. Although, the enforcement of new pattern of law and order in the country enhanced the universal standard of justice of the country but the Indian people got the negative benefit of Western legal system. According to Tagore, the government by the nation retained tight control over Indian people and there existed a little scope of internal adjustment of the steel framework of the British Administration.

Tagore expressed the view that the basis of nationalism was wanting in India because, there existed no cultural and racial affinities of Indian people. Thus, according to him, nationalism had no roots in Indian social history.

Finally, Tagore was of the opinion that both the civilizations of the East and the West were complementary to each other because of their different outlooks towards individual, life and society as a whole. He called upon his

countrymen to imbibe the virtues of virtues of Western civilization for the over all development of Indian society. He made a harmonious blending of two streams of thought - the thought of the East and the West. Regarding the modernization of Indian society, Tagore followed the middle path. Neither did he support radical modernization, nor he strictly adhered to blind traditionalism. Tagore's approach towards modernism was thought provoking and praise worthy. According to him, modernism was not the mere imitation of the Western culture. It signified a psychological change - a change in the behaviour of individual towards life and society.

Chapter four deals with a critical study of Tagore's ideas on nationalism and Tagore's relevance in the present day world. It is pointed out that at times Tagore's criticism of nationalism was not based upon facts as he did not see other side of nationalism that helped the people to overcome sectarian consideration. Also his views on caste system were contradictory and at times, he sought to glorify <sup>eastern</sup> civilisation. It is argued that some of the arguments put forward by Tagore are now used by the opponents of the modern development theory.

#### B ) CONCLUDING REMARKS :

Tagore was basically a humanist and his contribution in the realm of modern Indian political thought is significant



in the sense that he did not accept western political ideals as the only means of political development. His approach towards state and society was different from the Western political thought.

There were certain weaknesses in the argument of Tagore as he did not take into consideration, the integrating function of nation. His ideas about the social system in India were contradictory because the old dominance of society over state could not be maintained without the support of caste system. But Tagore considered caste system as a divisive force. Some times it was difficult for him to choose between the East and West as his reformist background did not allow him to totally glorify the past and the corrupt practices of modern capitalist nation-states did not command his respect.

One of the great merits of Tagore's criticism was that he tried to put nationalism in proper perspective and anticipated the reservations of the developing countries against the wholesale adoption of Western model of political development. In that sense he can be termed as a precursor to the ideas of Kothari, Andre Gunder Frank and others.

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