

## **Rabindranath Tagore and His Thought Regarding Library of Modern Times.**

**\*Lopamudra Dey Dutta**

*Librarian, Women's College, Calcutta West Bengal, India*  
*Women's College, Calcutta P-29, Kshirode Vidya Vinode Avenue Kolkata-3, West Bengal, India*  
*Corresponding Author: Lopamudra Dey Dutta*

---

**ABSTRACT:** In this topic researcher mainly highlights on Tagore's thoughts regarding library. Tagore two times mentioned about library in his writings. At first Tagore describes the importance of a library and next time to specify the work of a librarian. He was the pioneer of the library movement in West Bengal and his family is the patron of library movement for years. Researcher here tries to identify his views in the perspective of library's basic pillars on which library mainly based on i.e. collection development, service and staff, accommodation, reader etc. Tagore travelled many countries of West and as well as many places of East. He explored knowledge of different regions and applied his knowledge in various field of his work. He was a man of talents. So, it is our little attribute towards his honour.

**Keywords:** *Rabindranath Tagore, Education, Library,*

---

Date of Submission: 22 -07-2017

Date of acceptance: 08-08-2017

---

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence."

#### **— Rabindranath Tagore**

Eminent intellectuals discussed about versatility of Rabindranath Tagore's (1861-1941) life and his writings in different angles. But in this topic, we have to focus on vision of Rabindranath Tagore's on two important aspects from his essays. He always emphasized on development of education which comes from open environment of Mother Nature. Education is for overall development of human. He defines that creative mind needs flexibility .So art, music etc. are indispensable part of any child's education. He always speaks for education which is not an artificial thing, it is part of life. One's learning is successful if he relates himself with his aim. "The growth of knowledge must be like the growth of life, a process of organization and not merely one of accretion and that as in the growth of life the juicy circulation is the most essential factor, so interest and emotion are the most fundamental factors in the growth of intellectual life." said by Surendranath Dasgupta about Rabindranath Tagore's ideas of education. According to J.Findlay,"There are two great men in our epoch, John Dewey in the West and Rabindranath Tagore in the East..." Tagore propagated the idea of community education which is helpful for rural community and his sincere effort is to deliver community education through library. According to Rabindranath Tagore, "Our centre of culture should not only be the centre of the intellectual life of India, but the centre of her economic life also. It must cultivate land, breed cattle, to feed itself and its students: it must produce all necessaries, devising the best means and using the best materials, calling science to its aid. Its very existence should depend upon the success of its industrial ventures carried out on the co-operative principle, which will unite the teachers and students in a living and active bond of necessity. This will give us also a practical industrial training, whose motive force is not the greed of profit." Tagore believed in this idea of Philosophy. Every time and his every writing he focuses on nature, native people. His philosophy was based on people with nature.

### **II. OBJECTIVES:**

"Library" which is a collection of sources of information and similar resources, made accessible to a defined community for reference or borrowing, it provides physical or digital access to material, and may be a physical building or room, or a virtual space, or both get patronage of three generation of Tagore's from Prince Dwarakanath Tagore to Gurudeb Rabindranath Tagore. In this topic my objective is to relate Rabindranath Tagore's idea with few important features of library mentioned above in the definition. There is a huge change from library of Tagore's time to modern age library. But, basic idea is similar. So, my objective also is to find out the relation between age old libraries with modern age library based on Gurudeb's view.

### III. METHODS AND MATERIALS

Researcher's method is purely to study modern library in view of Tagore's thought. As, a librarian, day to day activities of library is based on modern technology. In few cases, traditional library system is maintained side by side modern technology based library for the sake of users. But overall primary concern is 'users'. Tagore was very much ahead of his time. In this topic, researcher tried to find out the Tagore's thinking is much related with modern day views through studying different types of literature e.g. print as well as e-resource.

### IV. DISCUSSION

#### a) Collection development:

Rabindranath Tagore opines that Library's natural tendency is to collect books. He compares library with a dictionary of which total collection of words are not in need always. In his time, libraries are mainly built up by royal patronage. With the help of monetary support of Jamindars, Kings etc. These are mainly private in pattern. "The most significant fact was that the establishment of the public library at Calcutta in 1835. This was the library which later developed into the National Library of India. Almost simultaneous, subscription libraries were started in many Indian cities. These were, of course, not public libraries in the true sense of the term, and did not provide free books for all. Founded in imitation of their western counterparts, the use of these libraries was confined to small, affluent portion of society." In 1921, A society named L'Ami de l'Orient presented books in the Visva Bharati Library. Mr. Sridhar Rana, a merchant of Cutch, resident of France, who died at this time, gifted his library to Santiniketan. Visva Bharati Library was also a private possession at that time. In 1925, All Bengal Library Association was formed with Rabindranath Tagore as President and with the establishment of All Bengal Library association, a province wise library movement started gaining ground. According to Annual Report of Bolpur Bramhacharya Ashram (January 1913) that Books were not sufficient in numbers in the library of Bolpur Bramhacharya Ashram Vidyalaya..... The library had total 4788 books in its collection on different subjects. Tagore in his time pursued a well thought procedure for maintaining collection of Visva Bharati Library i.e. appointing a full time librarian, using a Dewey Decimal Classification system, cataloguing books by a standard procedure and using good shelving method. After independence, Sinha Committee (1957) supported Tagore's view by saying that the libraries in most cases, "a stagnant pool of books, "because new books were not added regularly". According to the report, as of March 1954 there were 32,000 libraries in India, with a little more than 7,100,000 books and a total circulation of about 37,700,000. The report observed that genuine public library service was rarity, and that public library service throughout the country was unsatisfactory. The committee recommended creating state library networks based on uniform library legislation.

#### b) Service and Staff:

In this point, Rabindranath Tagore's view has a similarity with S.R Ranganathan's that Library books are for use. Book list is not sufficient for any reader. According to Tagore, Library makes its own reader. Librarian should be knowledgeable about his collection. He is not a book collector. Resembling with this view Arunachal Pradesh Government Act, 2009 declares that The Government shall establish, maintain and develop Library service in the State for carrying out the following purpose such as to promote reading habit and the to use of books for the benefit of the people and to Offer in its Public Library an adequate books and reference service. Government should give special efforts to create the love for books in the masses and especially in children and the youth. Government should promote mobile libraries, audio and visual Libraries for children, audio libraries for blind and special libraries for hearing impaired, text book library, children library, computerization And microfilming or rare documents to meet the demand of present day. Make compulsory enrolment of every student in the Public Libraries on reaching standard eighth. The expertise of any staff always necessary for smooth functioning of any organization but in case of library staff as expert professional he should aware of his reader's demand and should provide necessary information whichever needed.

#### c) Accommodation:

Rabindranath Tagore mentioned that "Father had obtained permission from the Maharshi to start a school to be called Brahmacharya Ashrama at Santiniketan. The formal opening ceremony was to be performed on the 7<sup>th</sup> Paush (23<sup>rd</sup> December) 1901.... The first step taken towards equipping the school was to fit up a library in one of the rooms of this house. Father had brought his magnificent collection of books from Calcutta and this formed the nucleus of the future library at Santiniketan." Rabindranath Tagore stated (Rabindra Rachanabali, fourteenth vol. 1358 (B.S) pp 727-729) that library is a repository of knowledge. We can get beats of our heart in a library. Language is silent here. Human imprisoned words, music, hope, feeling of joy etc. into silence of papers. Rabindranath Tagore feels traditional library was not helpful for reconstructing his vision of rural reconstruction. Illiteracy is the curse of people. Any type of development initiatives will be futile if we do not literate our people for better life. "Rabindranath Tagore opened a new horizon of library services establishing the "Chalantika Library" in order to support his rural reconstruction activities at Sriniketan in 1925. Chalantika Library has become a burning example of mobile library services in India for building up a new society with quality of life for rural people.... the librarian or bearer had to carry the books from the main collection of Chalantika at Sriniketan on foot or by bi-cycle or bullock cart to their respective villages. That is why Chalantika was termed as Circulating Library instead of mobile library." as mentioned by Nemai Chand Saha and Keshab Chandra Sinha. Visva-Bharati Library was established in 1901 by Rabindranath Tagore. Nowadays library go beyond its walls because library service is going towards web based, 24\*7 hour service, open resource access, multilingual service, and obviously global coming with ATM Library, Bookless library, Green Library etc.

**d) Readers:**

Readers are indispensable part of library. They not only come in library for information but also for leisurely recreation. For effective use of leisure time, it is main concern for community to help the people to engage for positive activities. In this context we again owe to Rabindranath Tagore's view that to help in the elevating, self-dependent use of leisure with the aid of freely served books, pictures, sound records and other graphic materials; and to help in increasing the opportunity for the spiritual awakening of one and all members of humanity. Nowadays books have competition with modern technologies like web based open resources which are coming very easily in our hand with the advent of smart phone. People have no need to go a specified place like library and to search necessary information from pile of books. They want to get their data with more accuracy and with more speed. After twenty five years of advent of World Wide Web, we are going towards Experience age from information age. But, we have facing challenges for more information to deal with and we have now more opportunities to go beyond library walls. In public library, a diverse group of readers come in the library. According to Tagore, it is helpful for the reader if it keeps a book list of famous published books for a particular year and displays it. And, this is also applicable for electronic information also. Library's main responsibility is to make a relationship with its reader; book collection and preservation are secondary. (Rabindra Rachanabali 15<sup>th</sup> Vol.(1373 B.S)pp221-223, Viswabharati). But, with technology, librarian can introduce his readers to outside world. The search of information is more interesting ever than before. Now, librarian's job is based on communicating the masses, organizing events and talks etc. Community people get more importance ever than before.

**V. CONCLUSION**

According to Thompson, Edward, "In politics, in education, in ethics and social reconstruction, his findings were usually untainted by nationalist prejudice; his wisdom will be seen ever more clearly as the centuries pass." It is truly said for library section also. Tagore was not only a poet but also a novelist, philosopher, educationist, painter, artist so on. His thought is followed in University Library also in nowadays. Tagore stated that "A teacher can never truly teach unless he is still learning himself. A lamp can never light another lamp unless it continues to burn its own flame. The teacher who has come to the end of his subject, who has no living traffic with his knowledge but merely repeats his lesson to his students, can only load their minds, he cannot quicken them..." Library in modern days fulfills his vision. Nowadays it is not just collection of books, it is a resource centre. At last we can quote Tagore's words that personality. It has come to the perfection of a mechanical order but what is there to humanize it! It is the person who is in the heart of all beings....."

**REFERENCES**

- [1] Chakrabarty, Bhubaneswar (1993) Library and Information Society; World Press;
- [2] Dasgupta, Surendranath (1948) Rabindranath the poet and the philosopher; Mitra & Ghosh, pp5.
- [3] Findlay, J (1930) The Foundation of Education, Vol II, pp239-40.
- [4] Prasad, Navin (2016) Public Library System and Services in India ; International Research Journal of Interdisciplinary & Multidisciplinary Studies (IRJIMS) A Peer-Reviewed Monthly Research Journal ISSN: 2394-7969 (Online), ISSN: 2394-7950 (Print) Volume-II, Issue-VI, July 2016, pp70-77.
- [5] Saha, Nimai Chand Dr. and Sinha, Keshab Chandra (2012). Rural Libraries in Support of Rural Reconstruction: Tagore's Thinking and Reality Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal). Paper 867.
- [6] Tagore, Rabindranath (1936) Proceedings of the Bengal Education Week; "The ideal of Viswabharati" pp78-83.
- [7] Thompson, Edward, "Rabindranath Tagore (1948) Poet and dramatist; Oxford University Press; pp330.
- [8] Zahid Ashraf Wani (2008) Development of Public Libraries in India.. Library Philosophy and Practice;
- [9] THE ARUNACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC LIBRARIES ACT (2009) .
- [10] Wikipedia. <http://en.m.wikipedia.org>.

IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS) is UGC approved Journal with Sl. No. 5070, Journal no. 49323.

Lopamudra Dey Dutta. "Rabindranath Tagore and His Thought Regarding Library of Modern Times." IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS) 22.8 (2017): 13-15.