



Rabindranath Tagore's Concept of Political Freedom

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Date of Submission: 01-10-2024

Date of Acceptance: 12-10-2024

ABSTRACT:-

Rabindranath Tagore was well known as a poet, philosopher, an artist, writer, an actor, socio-cultural reformer. His philosophy of life manifests itself in his activities. He performed as a national leader. The social and political agitation of his time engaged his attention as this mind of thinkers of the world. Being a humanist to the core, he could leave a word of advice to the communities composing the country which-ever he visited. We find him as one of the great leader of the Indian People in politics. This paper tries to explore the concept of political freedom of Rabindranath Tagore. It is a descriptive paper to explain the freedom of all types of narrowness and evils along with freedom from foreign rule according to Rabindranath Tagore.

I. INTRODUCTION:

Rabindranath Tagore was well known as a poet, philosopher, an artist, writer, an actor, socio-cultural reformer. His philosophy of life manifests itself in his activities. He performed as a national leader. The social and political agitation of his time engaged his attention as this mind of thinkers of the world. Being a humanist to the core, he could leave a word of advice to the communities composing the country which-ever he visited. We find him as one of the great leader of the Indian People in politics. This paper tries to explore the concept of political freedom of Rabindranath Tagore. It is a descriptive paper to explain the freedom of all types of narrowness and evils along with freedom from foreign rule according to Rabindranath Tagore.

II. DISCUSSION:

Tagore's contribution to political philosophy shows him as a great political adviser. He is a nationalist, internationalist and also supporter of democratic form of government simultaneously. The uplift of economic, social, religious and educational systems are included in his political programme and mostly he integrates spirituality with this programme. In Tagore, we have

a great passion for freedom in all branches of human activity. He has no sympathy for dogma or dead habit.

Rabindranath Tagore participated in national political movement of India and fight for freedom of India and Indians along with Swadeshi movement of Bengal in 1905. His political thought and imagination was shaped by influencing of his family environment. His father Debendranath Tagore and elder brother Jyotirindranath were two notable leading persons of the freedom movement of India; from whom Tagore was mostly influenced. Indian culture, history, love of man and nature along with political situation and spiritual attitude of his time helped him to proceed on the political movement.

Humayan Kabir says, "He wanted Indian Political action to be a positive programme of national regeneration rather than a blind reaction against foreign rule." (Towards Universal Man, P.22). Thus Political freedom of Rabindranath Tagore is glorified with his empirical, rational, ethical and spiritual dimensions which are derived from the teaching of Upanishad and Bhagawat Gita. Political freedom of Tagore tried to uphold the personality of man. He says in his little book "The Religion of An Artist". "There was yet another movement started about this time called the National. It was not fully political, but in began to give voice to the mind of our people trying to assert their own personality." (Religion of an Artist. P. 8)

From early age of Tagore, he realized that dependence is the greatest sin of Individual. By the word 'dependence' he meant not only political dependence but also the dependence of economic, social, educational, cultural and religious forces which impede to improve the society. Only political independence can't be called the independence of a state, it is not attached with the entire values of society. So, Tagore tried to rescue people from educational, cultural, economic, social restraints through his ideas of political freedom. Only political independence is nothing other than



the freedom from exploitation of individual in a state by government.

As a humanist, Tagore believed in human rights. He was conscious about his rights of freedom and he tried to transform it into the international level. Therefore, he did not want political freedom by oppressively and the style of freedom movement in India commenced in his days. Tagore's humanism was focused in his action by refusing his "Knight Hood" awarded by British in 1914. He returned this award for inhuman brutalities of British in Jalianwalabagh on 1919. Dr. Sunite Kumar Chatterjee said "He (Rabindranath) took a leading part at the time of the partition of Bengal in the Swadeshi Movement. Always a supporter of the cause of the oppressed and down trodden, with his hatred of sham and hypocrisy, he stood against such atrocities as the Jalianwalabagh massacre. He had an ideal India in his mind, and he involved this great India of his dream in many a noble composition in poetry and in prose. His great song the *Jana-Gana-Mana-Adhinayak*.... The National Anthem of India, is an expression of the ideal and the all inclusive aspects of his patriotism, which he never separated from a faith in the GodHead as the Ultimate truth and the Arbiter of Man's Destiny. (Three Lectures and R.N. Tagore Lecture-1 p.6). By the freedom movement of Tagore, he tried to uplift social, economic and educational systems of society that make the populace aware of their right of liberty.

Tagore was a nationalist. His Nationalism cover the all human beings of world without limiting the geographical expression.

Tagore was a socialist too. He distinguished between state and society. For him state is a part of society. The scope of society is broad and it is prior to state. Therefore his political ideology spreads international transcending through the state that "the whole world would meet in one nest." His all creativities highlighted an ideological content. His prayer to God, as the Arbiters of the nation's Destiny, for the unity of Indian people along with the harmony between various cultures and religion. His co-operative works in various field had led him spiritually freedom movement in India.

Man power is required highly to attain political freedom in a state but according to Tagore this is not a bodily force; it is spiritual force. People is the main property in a country. So freedom of country means freedom of people. The evaluation of man implies the evaluation of country. The educational and religious power of unity lead to bring freedom. Men are physically weak and incapable to strive for the true nature but by the gift God, men acquire stronger spirit which enables to

make a bridge between East and West. Education is a proper way to communicate between two countries and to improve the personality of man and awake the consciousness of individual about nation. Tagore was in favor of education for political freedom of India because education has the capacity to harmonize the people of the world. So, while the satyagraha movement was running, then Tagore was busy to build up a world school, Visva-Bharati. He thought that the dream of freedom can never attain if Indian remains stupid in ignorance. He thought that freedom is an inner Power of intelligence, feeling and active will.

For the poet Philosophy, attainment of Swaraj is Joy. Swaraj is possible amongst man to develop the economic and social conditions of the individual villagers. If man in a country is not self dependent and is not free from some social restraints then the fruit of it transitory. Otherwise, the fruit of self dependence is permanent. So by cultivating the different kinds of creative actions in group, the people of the nation can easily enjoy the freedom.

Tagore is a revolutionary who tried to reconstruct the Indian economic and social condition through harmony between man and man, man and nation. As a spiritual believer he wants deeds and devotion to nation for reconstruct the society. He wanted Joy of Indian (Bharotier Joy) through unity and devotion by people.

The gain of Joyless freedom is momentary. The joy of creation is described by the poet in the words like Surplus in Man. Attainment of political freedom according to Tagore is not possible by mere abolishment of British rule in India, It will be possible through a harmonious relationship between man and man, man and nature. Desire for swadeshi is a realization of Truth. Swadeshi means one's own country. Swadeshi doesn't imply the boycotts of foreign productive goods and their style and fashions but also to change the mentality of holding governmental jobs and at the same time preserving our customs and tradition.

Rabindranath Tagore mentions that recognition by other country is secondary for political freedom of a country. The people could enjoy the political freedom if they love and eager to serve the nation. Poverty is the greatest bondage for the development of a country. Tagore Knew well that if people cannot enjoy freedom with their country then the people of that country couldn't make up healthy, straight and strong nation. The uses of home made goods are a symbol of gradual development of society and can extinct all kinds of poverty and humiliation. It is also a sign of observing own culture. Love, unity and humanity



are the best ways to attain all kinds of freedom. So, freedom of politics means the freedom of society in where there is nothing any kinds of poverty, dependence and humiliations of society.

To Tagore, general people don't demand his rights but enjoyed through their creative work. Humanity and unity are the two prominent means to spiritual and moral freedom of human beings. So, his concept of freedom flows from his faith in divine power in man. He believed that it is by the grace of God, man possesses the capacity to enjoy freedom and to have a blissful life, and men can become the greatest by the love of God because he is the son of God (Amritaysa Putra). So, this freedom is surrendered to one Divinity and he wanted his grace for the development of country,

Rabindranath Tagore was not a common Patriot. His Patriotism preached the concept of Swaraj in India with the help of Destiny of nation. In his famous poem, "Bharat-Tirtha" That is 'Jana-Gana-Mana' Shows the essence of India that India has been moved by destiny "Bharat Bhagya-Vidhata." This Poem later has been recognized as the national anthem of India. This poem expresses the picture of unity of India and gives vitality of it.

Belonging to Brahma sect by his family, he worshiped an idol that is nation or country not of any deity. Country is called motherland. Mother is also called Shakti. So, country is worshiped as goddess which means Truth, The Realization of God is perfect freedom and freedom unites people together. He believed that whole universe is his home and all men are his dear and near ones. The Unity of man with man is the greatest religion which is also called by him the religion of man.

III. PRESENT RELEVANCE:-

In present situation, the value of Tagore's political freedom should be recognised by all. His political freedom preached the unity, brotherhood and humanity. Today, the political revolutionaries believe that all the political problems can be vanished with arms. They are adopting violent measures with an aim to free themselves from their grievances. But by this we see a picture of inhumanity in the banner of humanities. We must learn that only by revolutionary agitation nothing can be solved of the political problems. Slogans, Strikes and bondhas which represent non-cooperation, can't lead towards solving problems. Here Tagore's co-operative system may serve as a model so that our political freedom can be achieved from doing hard labor based on humanistic ideals of self-help and community service leading to scientific progress but at the same time we must

adopt spiritual insight. Some of political leaders today are indifferent to their social and moral responsibilities. So, in this crucial situation we feel very much the relevance of the ideas of Tagore's political freedom.

IV. CONCLUSION:-

Rabindranath was truly optimistic about the spiritual regeneration of man kind. He hoped that India could become free in one day by her own effort. He is the great sentinel and Guru of Indian culture. Rabindranath believed that the realization of Divinity of self is the secret of man's development both in individual and collective life. So, he preached the worship of Divinity in a nation.

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