

Rabindranath Tagore and His Perceptions Regarding Human Rights and Women Empowerment

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Abstract:

Rabindranath Tagore, a phenomenon, a name, a moulder of the thoughts of an entire nation, was an ambassador of the principles of human rights, specially in the field of women empowerment. Long before many international and national instruments had been thought of Tagore in most of his creations, in his poetry, novels, plays, short stories had propagated the conception of women empowerment. Not only had he projected the wretched conditions of the women facing the worst forms of obstacles and hindrances but he also had conceived of the emancipation of women in all fields of life and has pleaded to get the women of his country.

Country educated and receive an opportunity to get themselves employed. Tagore in many of his creations has highlighted the issues of child marriage, child labour, dowry system, domestic violence, the lack of education and opportunities of employment, the horrible condition of the widows and in his later works he has portrayed some of the most bold, independent, intellectual females in many of his short stories, plays, novels and dance dramas.

The paper is a humble attempt in presenting Tagore's phenomenal reference to the principles of human rights specially in the field of women empowerment. It presents how Tagore through his plays, novels, short stories, paintings, his composition of music and even dance dramas and travelogue portrays various shades of the female gender and appeals to the highest ideologies of feminism. His efforts are so relevant that even in this generation of mechanical development and globalisation the impact of Rabindranath Tagore can never be forgotten.

Keywords: Human Rights, Women Empowerment, Child Marriage, Dowry, Domestic Violence, Right to Education

Introduction:

Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, being a great writer, poet, dance dramatist, a social reformer had always kept importance of human existence as the most important philosophy expressed in each of his works. Transcending all the barriers of race, caste, nationality, creed, and specially gender Tagore had always believed and had upheld the doctrine of the equality of all men and women. Tagore had understood that a huge importance is to be given to growing socio-political problems in our country. Believing in the diction of Lok Shakti, Tagore, the first non-European to win the Noble Prize in the year 1913, was a very strong propagator of the interdisciplinary genre of law and literature. Long before The League of Nations² or Universal Declaration of Human Rights³ or various other international instruments. The

Declaration on The Elimination of Discrimination Against Women⁴, and The United Nations Development Fund for Women⁵, Tagore had spoken of and advanced the concepts of human rights enhancement and the conception of women through most of his creations.

The paper is a humble attempt in presenting the conceptual understanding of Tagore's relevance to the principles of human rights specially in the field of women empowerment and it states that how Tagore had appealed to his countrymen to raise their voice of protests against all forms of human right exploitations . When Tagore had witnessed the horrible conditions of the peasants, and the poor and the under privileged people of our country, Tagore had composed some of the beautiful compositions in an attempt to give voice to those whose pleas are never heard and some of the compositions are like-

" If they answer no to thy call walk alone,
If they are afraid and cower mutely facing the wall,
O thou evil luck
Open thy mind and speak out loud "⁶

The other composition is as follows

"I shall not be afraid
I shall not die, every now and then, before death
To encounter storm while at sail is a routine
I shall not cry frustrated.....⁷

The next composition is as follows -

" Raze the dravel of unsuccessful soul, light up the fire
My wish is an illuminated path whileI am alone in the dark."⁸

Tagore while believing in the concept of Sarva Dharma Sambhava had always upheld the conceptions of equality of all religions and strongly believed in the conception of secularism, and in some of his compositions Tagore had highlighted his beliefs in all faith and religious discourses of our country and a composition which can be cited in accordance to this ideology is-

"Oceanic expanse of the mankind lay in front
Liven up my soul on this great land of India"⁹

1. An organization established in January, 1920
2. International document adopted by General Assembly, United Nations
3. A declaration proclaimed by United Nations for rights of women
4. Framed by United Nations to provide financial help
5. <https://www.geetabitan.com/lyrics/rs-jodi-tore-dak-sune-english-translation.html> (Visited on 10.10.2023)
6. <https://www.geetabitan.com/lyrics/rs-a2/ami-bhoykorbona-bhoy-kobrona-english-translation.html> (Visited on 10.10.2023)
7. <https://www.geetabitan.com/lyrics/rs-b/barthopranner-english-translation.html> (Visited on 10.10.2023)
8. <https://www.geetabitan.com/lyrics/rs-h--heymorechitto-punnya-english-translation.html>.

Embodying all the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, like the principles of equality of all men and women, liberty and freedom from any forms of slavery or torture and highlighting the empowering qualities of providing education and employment opportunities Tagore had composed his greatest creation which is as follows -

" Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high
Where knowledge is free
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments
By narrow domestic walls.
Where words come out from the depths of truth.
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way.
Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit
Where the mind is led forward by thee
Into ever- widening thought and action
Into that heaven of freedom, my father, let my country awake "¹⁰

Tagore's expression of the socio economic and wretched conditions of the women-

Tagore had always been aware of the extreme hardship and miseries faced by women and he had also talked about the orthodox and conservative ideologies of the colonial and pre independent era which ultimately aimed at chaining down the empowering attributes of the entire feminine genre . Some of the extreme forms of the social evils existing in those times were the problems of child marriage, child labour , dowry system, domestic violence , sati system, polygamy, the wretched conditions of the widows and so on. Tagore in most of his creations has highlighted and spoken about all such problems in many of his short stories, plays, novels ,dance dramas and so on .

To begin with, the problem of child marriage, on which many international instruments have worked on like The ""The United Nations Convention on Consent to Marriage and Registration of Marriages"¹¹ which prescribes a specific age for marriage which mentions that a minimum age for marriage should be eighteen years, and

9. W.B. Yeats Gitanjali (song offerings), a collection of prose translation made by the author from the original Bengali (London: Mac Millan, 1913)

10. This conventions sets a minimum age for marriage

who can forget our national law which is the " The Child Marriage Restraint Act (1929)"¹² which targets to totally abolish the child marriages or "The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006",¹³ which is termed to be a much stronger law , and which again aims at solving the entire problem of child marriages. Long before all such international and national laws were even conceived of Tagore in his,"The Ghat's Story ",¹⁴ talks about the problem of child marriage through the female protagonist Kusum , who was a very little and a very energetic and a charming girl, who used to play at the banks of the river Ganges and how this beautiful personality was totally devastated by her early marriage and ultimately after the death of her husband she becomes a child widow and her whole life was shattered and torn into pieces.

The problem of dowry, which is ever increasing in our country and many legislations like The Dowry Prohibition Act 1961,¹⁵ to to which strictly talks about dowry as crime and tries to totally negate it or punish the offenders, Tagore long before such legislations in his story , The " Debts and Dues",¹⁶ talks about the terrible problem of dowry system prevalent in our country and how the leading female

protagonist of the story, Nirupama had become a victim of it. The story begins with the theme of dowry and how the marriage of Nirupama was conducted solely on the condition that a huge sum of money needs to be paid by the bride's father Ramsundar who has no choice but to ultimately agree to it. The story depicts the humiliation and agony which Nirupama had to face due to non fulfillment of the demands of her in laws and how she wasn't even allowed to visit her father finally how Nirupama who couldn't bear the torture anymore and who had almost given up on herself took her last breath .

Sati , a horrible custom which was prevalent in the colonial times in our country was a huge threat to women. In this custom a wife was tied up with the dead corpse of her husband and then she was burnt alive along with him. Such a threat was strongly opposed by many stalwarts like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and so on. The abolition of Sati was made possible by the passing of the Bengal Sati Regulation 1829.¹⁷ In the story Mahamaya, through the female protagonist Mahamaya Tagore had cited the problem of Sati in India , and he has asked the members of the society to raise their voice of protest against this horrible problem and take every steps in order to save women from this horrible tradition. Mahamaya in the story is a very dignified women who has feelings for a person named Rajiv, and one day when she was having a conversation with Rajiv ,her brother Bhabanicharan overhears them and decides to sacrifice his sister Mahamaya in the practice of Sati. Mahamaya wearing a red saree was tied to a dying man and when she was the funeral pyre was already set ablaze, heavy rain and thunder storm saved the life of Mahamaya who had ultimately managed to elope from this terrible incident.

- 11 This convention sets a minimum age for marriage
12. This was meant to restrain child marriages
13. It forbids child marriage and protects the victims
14. An English translation of Tagore's Ghatat Kotha
15. It was meant to abolish the dowry system
16. Rabindranath Tagore, Rabindra Rochonaboli, Viswa Bharati grontho bibhag p496
- 17 It was meant to stop the practice of Sati

Domestic Violence, another word which is the most cruel forms of torture and inhuman treatment which is performed by the in laws and their relatives on women of their households. This kind of a torture has been spoken of in various international instruments like The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which talks about the protection of life from any forms of inhuman treatment and The Committee on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and again The Beijing Platform for Action¹⁸ and The Vienna Declaration, do speak about absolutely abolishing all forms of violence and degrading treatment done to women across the entire globe, and not only in the international regime , there are many national legislations like The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005 ¹⁹, and sections 498A and 304B of the Indian Penal Code ²⁰, which strictly prohibits any form of domicile torture done to women and various strict punishments. But long before any of such national and international laws were even spoken Tagore had highlighted such a problem, prevailing over generations and generations through his very tragic story " Shast " or "punishment". The story revolves around the central protagonist Chandara . Dukhiram and Chidam were the two brothers working in the fields and on one awful night as they return from their work , Dukhiram asks for food to which his wife replies that she cannot offer him food as there is nothing in the house and hearing this Dukhiram loses his patience and hits his wife hard to which Dukhiram's wife finally succumbs to death. After this fatal incident of domestic violence had

happened, Chidam does another terrible thing, he decides to put the entire blame on his wife Chandara. Chandara in a state of utter shock and mental trauma does not react to this, and a personality which was so vivacious and full of life becomes absolutely mundane as if she has decided to sacrifice all her happiness. She does not utter a word of protest and when she is asked about this horrible incident in court, she lies and blames herself for the incident and then finally she is put behind the bars for a crime which she has never done and Chandara ultimately even decides not to meet her husband even for the last time.

Another problem which was faced by women through out the world is the problem of being physically challenged and such women are even in this modern and cosmopolitan times are considered as a burden by the society and their families. Although many international legislations like The Convention on The Rights of the Persons With Disabilities or national laws like The Rights of Persons With Disabilities Act 2016²¹ has been established Tagore before such national and international laws talks about the problems in his short story "Subha"²², through the central female protagonist Suhasini who couldn't speak or hear and she suffers the worst forms of indifference as she didn't have any friends or any family members or relatives whom she can talk to or express her feelings. The story has a miserable ending as Subho is married to a man who has no idea about her problems and when everyone understood that Subho was dead and dumb, her husband married once again.

18. This action was taken up to further the causes of women empowerment
19. This act was passed in order to stop domestic violence
20. These two sections of IPC talk about various forms of domestic violence and provide its punishment
21. This convention was taken up by the United Nations to empower persons with disabilities.
22. Rabindranath Tagore Rabindra Rochonaboli, Viswa Bharati Gronthon Bibhag, p349

Another major problem which was existing mainly in the developing nations was the problem of child labour and such a problem has been discussed very elaborately in Tagore's "Post Master". Many International instruments and national laws like The Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986,²³ has been established which strictly speaks about solving the problems of child labour, Tagore in his short story mentions the character of a very young girl Ratan, and states how she is subjected to the problem of child labour. Ratan is presented here as a very hard working person who not only performs her kitchen duties but many other household works and looks after the post master with utter dedication. She has beautiful conversations with the post master who even tried to educate her but the story ends with a pathetic note when Post Master got his transfer letter and when he informed Ratan about this, Ratan spoke of her wish to accompany him to which the post master was totally left in a state of surprise and without even thinking about the emotions of the little girl, he refuses her and finally the story ends with the arrival of a new post master and with Ratan still performing all her duties without having the rights of getting educated or leading a far better life. Tagore also speaks about the problems of unsuccessful married and conjugal relations faced by the central female protagonist in "Monimalika" and the problems of polygamy in "She was who in the middle". The story "Haimanti" again speaks about the problems of Domestic Violence where the central female protagonist Haimanti faces the problems of mental harassment, humiliation and torture in her in-laws' house and the story ends with Haimanti's leaving her in-laws' house forever and returning to her paternal home.

Right to proper health and sanitation is something which is extremely necessary for all the females around the world. The World Medical Association, Article 12, of The Convention on The Elimination of

All Forms of Discrimination Against Women,²⁴ speaks about the maintaining proper health and hygiene standards for women and Indian Article 25 of our Constitution²⁵ do strictly talk about the provision of receiving proper health and medical facilities without any discrimination as to gender. Long before such international and national laws Tagore in his composition, "The wife's letter"²⁶ talks about such horrible condition of living in an atmosphere which is totally unhealthy and unhygienic by the women of those colonial era. The story remarks on the gender discrimination where men used to stay in beautifully decorated quarters and the inner quarters of the house belonging to women were absolutely devastating. Here Tagore also speaks about the ultimate forms of domestic violence as Mrinal one of the chief female protagonists of the story is never appreciated, and her intellectual charms are never even spoken of, and she is only admired for her beauty. The story has another female protagonist Bindu, who faced the worst forms of domicile injustices when she was married off to a mad person as she was considered as a burden and she ultimately sacrificed her life instead of giving herself to her lunatic husband.

23. An Act to solve the problems of child labour

24. This was a declaration adopted by the United Nations to wash away all the discriminations against women.

25. This article of our constitution talks about health conditions

26. It is an English translation of Tagore's *Streer Patro*

Tagore's perception of the representation of the independent, bold and strong women believing in all forms of empowering qualities -

Rabindranath Tagore a maestro of feminism and champion spokes person of the feelings of the women folk, was absolutely aware of the presence of the bold and the progressive women who were ready to march ahead and raise their voice of protest against any forms of exploitation. Such bold and independent women were not disturbed by the existing orthodox rituals and they knew how to receive ultimate freedom by achieving all their aims in life and making their own identities. Tagore was not only a writer a poet, or a novelist but he was a great social reformer and his contribution in the field of providing education to women can never be forgotten. Education to Tagore was the ultimate means of providing empowerment to women and by this the entire shape of a nation could be totally transformed. According to Tagore education was not only a way of making oneself economically and socially empowered but also emotionally as well. A large number of international instruments like Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,²⁷ which talks about providing education without any kind of discrimination or Articles 13 and 14 of The International Covenant On Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966²⁸, talks about the empowering qualities of education and Articles 21A, 28, 29, 30, 45 of our Indian Constitution²⁹ do talks about providing education. Imbibing all of the empowering qualities of education and also believing in the conceptual communion of the western skills and know how to the Indian traditional knowledge Tagore had established Visva Bharati in 1921. Tagore strongly believed that the women in his country had each and every right to get themselves educated and have a rational conceptual understanding of everything. The Shantiniketan Sreeniketan University which is still considered as a state of the art university strongly believes in empowering the women specially belonging to the poorer sections and rural folk by providing them education. Tagore had firstly established a resort for the Brahmo Samaj and then he developed a school which later turned into Shantiniketan. Visva Bharati not only imparted formal education but also had The Kalabhavan which provided fine arts education and Sangeet Bhavan, which provided education relating to music. It also

provided scope to study languages like French ,German, Japanese and so on .In those pre independent times Tagore believed in the equality of all men and women and hence he practiced the co- educational system of providing education and this was a real path breaking move. Girls along with boys received education amidst open air and under the trees, thus understanding the importance of nature and divine relationship between nature and knowledge. Girl students in Shantiniketan got themselves educated in arts , science, mathematics music dance and were given training in even martial arts. Brati Balak, were introduced, and it was an organisation in which there were men and women scouts who performed various voluntary services. Under the guidance of Gretchet Green, girls had the scope

27. Article 26 talks about the empowering qualities of education

28. The articles talks about providing education

29. This article of Indian Constitution speaks about providing education

of learning the art of nursing and they also learned how to heal the wounds of young boys. Not only were the girls encouraged to divulge themselves in various conversations with their male counterparts but they also learned how to go in picnics with them. The women studying in Shantiniketan had the scope of even performing musical shows and dance dramas in public.

Rural Reconstruction was a major way of providing empowerment to the rural women of our country and Tagore long before various international instruments like various efforts by The International Labour Organization and The United Nations and various national legislations like The Mahatma National Rural Employment Guarantee Act,³⁰ or The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development Act, 1981,³¹ which targets at economically empowering the poor rural folk , Tagore had believed in the conceptual of empowering the rural folk specially the women . One of the main problems existing amidst the rural folk was the maintenance of proper health and hygiene to which maximum of the village crowd were totally ignorant of . Not only major international instruments addressed the issue of the importance of proper health and hygiene specially in the poorer and poverty stricken sections of the society and rural folk but many national laws were also framed to ameliorate the health conditions of the sections of the society mentioned above. Long before such legislations Tagore had observed the problem of puberty, women getting affected to cholera, jaundice ,malaria without having any proper recourse to treatment, Tagore had taken into consideration such issues and he had established a small clinic with the help of an American nurse who also trained young boys and girls to do the job . The Brati Balaks also performed voluntary services like cleaning of roads and villages which could provide better scopes of hygiene. In order to economically empower the rural female members, Tagore undertook the task of performing various agricultural developmental programmes which would ultimately help the village crowd by selling their agricultural outputs and earn money, Various celebrations like the Halakarshana Utsav, were organised mainly to advise and empower better ways of cultivation and plantation and economically empower women. Not only women were given training in various forms of agriculture but they were also trained in, animal husbandry and fishery techniques and in learning to produce various forms of dairy products and Bichitra Studio, was also set up to train the females in stitching, knitting and in various forms of handicrafts like learning the Batik work, and lace works and Shilpa Bhavan, was set up which helped the females to train in pottery work and leather work and annual fairs were organised in order to economically empower the rural women who could exhibit their products and earn a lot of money. The Visva Bharati Central Bank and various other forms of co operative farming was also set up to provide economic support.

30. This Act was established to provide financial assistance

31. This Act was established to provide financial assistance to the rural areas.

Tagore, being born in a very aristocratic family was raised up in a very cosmopolitan culture and hence Tagore's views regarding the fairer gender of the society was very very empowering. Tagore strongly emancipated and believed that each and every woman had the right to get themselves employed and ultimately become economically independent and help the growth of a nation. Many international instruments which speaks about right to employment of women are Equal Remuneration Convention, by The International Labour Organization and Article 23 of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights³² and various national legislations like Articles 15, 16, 23, 39, 43 of our Constitution of India,³³ and various Acts like The Factories Act 1948,³⁴ The Equal Remuneration Act,³⁵ and various other Acts all voice for the provision of employment opportunities of women. Tagore, believing in the diction of women employment, had composed, "Laboratory,"³⁶ a short story which remarkably talks about a brilliant and a bold and an independent woman Sohini, the female protagonist of the story. Sohini here breaks all the pre conceived notions of a house wife and a widow and who makes her ambition of developing and maintaining the laboratory established by her husband. Sohini is depicted as a beautiful and a charming woman who even carries a weapon to protect herself, She not only acknowledges the intellectual brilliance of (3500)her husband but also encourages him to march ahead with his scientific conquests. After the death of her husband Sohini not only looks after the laboratory, but she also attends court cases, manages funds and even converses with the advocates. She doesn't even hesitate to go against her daughter whom she perceived could be a potential danger to the maintenance of her laboratory. This story was a path breaking move by Tagore as such a character, such a protagonist was never anticipated of before.

Freedom from slavery is an attribute which is celebrated by many international instruments like Article 4 of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights or various articles mentioned in the two Covenants or The 1926 Slavery Convention³⁷ or India some of the national legislations like Article 21 of our Indian Constitution 62 or section 370 of The Indian Penal Code 63 or The Bonded Labour Systems Act, 1976,³⁸ all aimed to ameliorate the conditions of the poor peasants who were a victim of bonded labour. The play " Raktakarabi ", or" Red Oleanders" ³⁹ is based on such a theme where all the workers of Yakshapuri were treated as machines bereft of any human attributes attached to them. They were identified)with numbers not named and were slaves of the king of Yakshapuri. Here the central female protagonist, Nandini was a free soul taught them the meaning of individual freedom and emancipation from various forms of bondages. She ultimately even convinced the king to acknowledge the attributes of freedom and to free his subjects. Here the character of Nandini, a female, understands the conceptual ideologies of freedom and also voiced for the ultimate disposition of bonded labour.

32. This Article talks about employment opportunities

33. These Articles speak about proper opportunities of employment

34. This legislation was passed to look after factories and provide proper employment opportunities

35. This Act talks about providing equal salaries without any discrimination

36. A story written by Tagore

37. This convention was meant to abolish slavery

38. It was meant to abolish bonded labour

39. Rabindranath Tagore Rabindra Rochonabali Viswa Bharati Gronthon Bibhag p356

Tagore a champion of the genre of women empowerment had depicted very strong and independent and brave widows who challenged the boundaries set by the society for them. Such a character was Binodini

in "Chokher Bali",⁴⁰ who was extremely educated, intellectual, could speak fluently in English and was very very aware of the male attention which she was drawing. Tagore in another story, "Chaturanga"⁴¹ or "The Quartet", talk about a strong widow named Damini who doesnot blindly follow her religious teacher and is very vocal and opinionated. She doesn't even hesitate to express her sexual desires and when widow remarriage s weren't even spoken of opted to marry one of her friends. In the novel, "The Last Poem",⁴² Tagore again talks about the(3800) intellectual brilliance of the central female protagonist Labanya who is sought after by the most intellectual batchelor Amit who is astonished at her brilliance. Tagore in his dance dramas had presented very very brave and intellectual woman. One such character is that of Prakriti from the dance drama "Chandalika"⁴³ who is a member of the lowest caste of the society, and who desires to rise above her caste and be recognised and be treated with equal dignity and respect, hence Tagore here talks about the problem if caste system long before any international or national legislations. When warned by her mother, Prakriti states that by quenching the thirst of the Buddhist monk, she was ultimately quenching her thirst of rising above her existence. The dance drama, "Chitrangada",⁴⁴ talks about a warrior princess who is trained in all forms of Warcraft. When this extremely strong female protagonist falls in love with Arjuna, she awakens the love God Madan who transforms her into a beautiful lady and gives an immortal speech to Arjuna which is as follows - "I am Chitrangada, the emperor's daughter. I am no goddess not an ordinary woman. I am not she who you will pray(4000) to keep on raised platform. I am not she who you will throw behind with disdain. If you keep me by your side in troubled and joyous times, If you permit me to be your partner in all your endeavours, then you will know the real me. I am Princess Chitrangada"⁴⁵. In his various travelogue Tagore talks about very independent and smart women belonging to various European countries or in countries like Japan or Peru. Tagore even on his essays on his travels like, "Europe Jatrir Diary, "Japan Jatri",⁴⁶ talks about the very charming and confident women who were travelling through out the country for business.

40. Rabindranath Tagore Rabindra Rochonaboli Viswa Bharati Gronthon Bibhag p375

41. Rabindranath Tagore Rabindra Rochonaboli Viswa Bharati Gronthon Bibhag p426

42. Rabindranath Tagore Rabindra Rochonaboli Viswa Bharati Gronthon Bibhag p460

43. Rabindranath Tagore Rabindra Rochonaboli Viswa Bharati Gronthon Bibhag p216

44. Rabindranath Tagore Rabindra Rochonaboli Viswa Bharati Gronthon Bibhag p215

45. <https://geetabitan-en-blogspot.com/2010/aichitrangada-html>

46.. Rabindranath Tagore Rabindra Rochonaboli Viswa Bharati Gronthon Bibhag p396,444

CONCLUSION -

Women of Tagore's family who depicted the philosophy of ultimate empowerment and Tagore's depiction of the concept of women empowerment through his poems-(4120)

The conclusion of the paper can never be complete without mentioning the phenomenal women of The Tagore's family and Tagore's portrayal of the various critical situation of encroachment of the rights of women and again their wish to have an identity of their women, through his marvelous poems.

In an age where women were only confined to the four walls of the house and they weren't even allowed to go out, there was a residence in Jorashanko, in Calcutta which redefined the conceptions of women empowerment. Long before any international or national legislations which catered to the needs of the emancipation of women in every field of life, there were ladies of the Tagore family who became an inspiration of wisdom, power, freedom and independence. Some of them are as follows -Jnanadanandini

, A name which shines as a beacon of hope is that of jnanadanandini, who not only got herself educated but even composed, puratani, and in her voyage to Bombay she even styled a whole new way of draping a saree. She travelled alone with her children and even organised several evening parties, and she even started a magazine called, Balak, and even wrote articles. She dramatised fairy tales and write in the Bharati Magazine. Another name which can never be forgotten is of Swarnakumari, and she was not only a poet and a writer but she also composed musicals and documentaries and so on . Some of her compositions are " Phooler Mela, Hooghly Imambara", and "kahake".⁴⁷ She made efforts to give voice to the pathetic situations faced by the widows. In order to encourage female writers she even established an organisation known as Sakhi Samiti and she was also a member of the Indian National Congress. Kadambari, a very controversial name of the Tagore household was that of Kadambari ,who had the guts to ride a horse openly in the pre independent era beside her husband in public. She was a very intellectually brilliant woman and a reader of Bengali literature, she even organised intellectual conversations at her garden. Mrinalini Devi, the silent warrior who stood beside Tagore in each of his endeavours was that of Mrinalini Devi, not only was she educated but she also gave marvellous theatrical performances and was a translator of various Shlokas and Upanishads . Chandramukhi , another name which can never be forgotten was that of Chandramukhi who was the first female candidate to sit for a public exam against all her male competitors and Saudamini ,who inspite of being a widow, established the ,Anushilan Samiti. Protiva was a musician and even composed a play on music and she later opened two schools named, "Ananda School and Sangeet Sandha".⁷⁸ Indira had done some excellent translations like "The autobiography of Maharshi Debendranath Tagore, Bharat Bhraman Kahini " and she had also translated many compositions belonging to the genre of rabindra Sangeet. While Shobhnasundari's kahabats, can never be forgotten, Protiva's exceptional academic career can never be ignored. Sushma's amazing performance in the field of academics, she was not only a writer of many articles but she was also the founder of the school named, Shiksha Sangha.

47. Creations by Swarna Kumari

While talking about Tagore's relevance to the field of women empowerment through his poetic creations ,some of his immortal creations are always worth mentioning and can never be forgotten. . In his poem " Kanganini " ⁴⁸ Tagore speaks about the plight of an unfortunate little who enjoys no rights of a child . She belongs to the marginalised sections of the society and does not even receive proper food or have good clothes to wear . On the backdrop of Durga Puja festivities, Tagore talks about the problems of poverty stricken girl children, their horrible economic conditions, how they are deprived of a right to life filled with liberty and security , happiness and food and education and proper health and hygiene and how such little girl children are considered as a burden by their families and how they have to become a money earning machine for their families. Hence long before any international instruments like The various articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or various Conventions on rights to child , which addresses their right to education and have a proper and healthy life and ensures their security from any form of exploitation, like Articles mentioned in The United Nations Convention on The Rights to Child , or various efforts made by the UNICEF or various national legislations like various articles mentioned in the Constitution of India like Articles 14, 15, 21A, 39 (e) ,39(f), which entails for the provisions of the development of children without any form of discrimination specially relating to gender. Long before these legislations Tagore sincerely makes an effort to portray the horrible conditions faced by girl children of our country who are considered not only as outcast and unwanted by their families but by the society also . Here the unfortunate child complains to Goddess Durga,

considering her as the mother of the entire universe, that why is her condition so bad and why she cannot enjoy a good life while everyone else in the world is busy with their own celebrations. Tagore in the poem "Deliverance" ⁴⁹ has again taken up the subject of child marriage and the terrible conditions of child widows in our country.. The conceptions of right to recognition and life full of dignity and respect is very well spoken of in the poem "Emancipation", ⁸⁴ and Tagore in many poems have spoken of a women's desires to rise beyond her ordinary existence and get herself educated and employed like in "Ordinary Women" ⁵⁰. Hence while drawing a conclusion from the above mentioned compositions, once has to agree to the fact that Tagore through his various short stories, plays, novels etc. has given a beautiful relevance to the principles of human rights and specially to the genre of women empowerment. Such is the relevance that even in this contemporary world which is overwhelming with the conceptions of mechanisation and extreme form of globalisation people cannot forget Tagore and his immortal creations which are still path breaking and marvelous.

48. Rabindranath Tagore Robindra Rochonabali Viswa Bharati Gronthon Bibhag p48

49. Jadu Saha, images of women, selected poems, Sipra Publications, 2004 p58

50. Jadu Saha, images of women, selected poems, Sipra Publications, 2004 p100

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