

Towards Nationalism : Background, Family Culture and Early Development of Rabindranath Tagore¹

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Abstract

Even though the Queen's rule promised to provide a deliverance of Indian people from the torture and exploitation of the sharks of East India Company and its anarchy, the words were not kept. India continued to suffer in economic, political and administrative affairs. The relief however, came in the field of consciousness and education through the wings of enlightenment. Tagore was born in this transition period. The family, with a steady growth in business under the Company regime, had already imbibed the liberal thoughts and positive outlook of Western culture. On the other it had an instinctive love of motherland and sense of self esteem. Jorasanko, the crossing point of cultures, thus proceeded to offer the first shape to Indian nationalism through its patronizing and organization of Hindu Mela. Tagore inhaled its breath. Even in those early days his poems and songs adopted its colour which never left him. The rejection of formal education itself was a move towards the protest of clerk-making educational system of the British. Tagore, self taught and tutored by Nature, was receiving the signals of true emancipation and freedom, if not outwardly, at least in his creative impulse, that was soon to find out its overflowing outlet. Then Jyotidada provided the last touch. A spirit, unbound and free, took upon itself the immense task of registering the spiritual freedom of an enshackled race and people, preparing and striving desperately for the unknown avenues of official independence.

Key words: Enlightenment, culture, Hindu Mela, Jorasanko, emancipation, Sanjibani Sabha, My Reminiscence, steamer Swadeshi.

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Pointing towards the poor and exploited Indian population under the company rule, it was assuringly declared in the 1858 queen's