Synopsis

Mysticism and love have formed the subject matter for poetry as early as the ancient Sanskrit literature in the East and the ancient Greek literature in the West. Great poets and philosophers have experienced mystical moments and have endeavoured to express them in their own ways. The subject has provided fertile ground for research both universally and perennially. An extensive survey of literature brings to light the fact that the concept of Divine love in the poems of Kabir and Tagore has not been recorded. Hence this endeavour to explore the concept as incorporated in these two great poets of two entirely different times, religious backgrounds, social statuses, and language backdrops. The scholar aims to further the enquiry in this direction and throw light on the mystical concept of Divine love in Kabir and Tagore.

This project aims at making a thorough exploration into the philosophies, visions and the concepts, particularly the concept of Divine Love, as enumerated in select poems of Kabir and Tagore. The study will also focus on the impact of the topic in the modern world of chaos where man seems to have lost his anchor-hold on spirituality. The report will begin by establishing the presence of mysticism in literature in general and these two poets in particular. It is also the objective of the scholar to analyse the poetry of Kabir and Tagore by focusing on their distinct themes, variations and similarities in their purposes, the symbols and images employed by these great masters, the philosophy and the vision of these two poets. Their views on the human’s relationship with the Divine; shedding of ego to attain Divine communion; impediments on the path of a true seeker; the necessity of humanitarian emotions for attaining union with the Divine; the futility of rites, rituals
and similar practices; the folly of searching for the Divine outside one’s own self in external forces; the pining for the Divine Union; love as the ultimate emotion; the journey of love; and the realisation of God in the form of a friend or a lover, have been dealt with in detail.

At a time when man seems to have forgotten his roots and severed the umbilical cord that connected him with the Supreme spirit, it is in fact extremely pertinent to make such studies that endeavour to bring mankind closer to the transcendental. Among the various ways of attaining union with the Supreme, the Divine love or ‘Bhakti Marga’ is of paramount importance. Kabir is a predominant personality in the Bhakti Movement and Tagore, who is generally hailed as a nationalistic poet and a poet with a romantic strain, has also penned down his share of devotional poetry. Thus these two great poet-philosophers share the element of Divine love as a common thread. The scholar therefore aims to further the research in the field and relate the study to the modern day love-starved world.

Poet-seer-philosophers like Kabir and Tagore have played a vital role by making the people of their own times venture into a pursuit of truth. During the present time, a re-reading of such stalwarts of spiritual awakening is indeed a rewarding study as it helps uphold societal values, and the highest purpose of literature is to serve not only the aesthetic sensibility, but also to impress human values. In this context the present research work assumes significance by highlighting the essence and philosophy of such great writers and bringing to light their experience in the spiritual quest to benefit the posterity.
Objectives of the Study:

The proposed research work entitled, ‘The Concept of Divine love in select poems of Kabir and Tagore’ has the following objectives:

1. to trace Kabir and Tagore as Bhakti poets
2. to analyse their poetry in the framework of Mysticism
3. to study the themes, visions and the missions of the two poets under review
4. to bring out the concept of ‘Divine love’ as seen in select poems of these great visionary poets
5. to relate the concept to the present day love-starved world that is torn apart by religious unrest, where mankind is heading towards becoming a slave to science, technology and materialism.

Hypothesis

It is assumed that the poetry of the Hindi Bhakti Sufī poet-seer Kabir and the Bengali Romantic-nationalistic-mystic poet Tagore have certain similarities of ideas and they can both be taken as beacon lights by people allied to any religion or faith. Both the poets are universal in their vision, in the choice and the treatment of their themes.

Methodology of the Study

1. This is primarily a library research work and an attempt to make a thorough study of the life and select works of the two great poets by employing methods like interpretation, analysis, and comparison.
2. After a thorough reading of the primary sources, an in-depth study is pursued placing the two poets in the gamut of mystical poets of India.
3. An analysis is made of their themes, the underlying vision of the poets and their message to the society by expressing the non-sectarian concept of religion as seen in their poems.

4. The study is conducted based on the elements of mystical poetry.

Scope and limitations of the Study:

1. The present research work is based only on Tagore’s translation of *One Hundred Poems of Kabir* and his own English translation of the *Gitanjali*; notwithstanding the fact that both these poets have a huge repository of songs and poems to their credit.

2. The study is purely based on the features of Mystical Poetry. The work does not include Romantic, Theological or Psychological connotations.

3. The work is entirely a thematic analysis and not a comparative study in the strictest theoretical sense. Hence, all the tools of comparative study have not been employed.

Chapter Scheme:

The chapter scheme of this work is as follows:

**Chapter 1: Introduction:** This chapter will introduce the reader to the term ‘Mysticism’; who a mystic is; what is *Bhakti* and *Bhakti* literature; a brief biography of the two poets under review; poetry as an expression of philosophical and mystical moorings; and the concept of Divine Love.

**Chapter 2: Mysticism and Bhakti literature:** In this chapter, a detailed analysis of Mysticism is given. *Bhakti* as a mystical expression is propounded, and a brief account of the *Bhakti* tradition is put forward, placing Kabir and Tagore in the gamut
of the mystical poets of India. A succinct study of a few Bhakti poets has also been conducted.

**Chapter 3: The Unseen and the Unsaid in Kabir and Tagore:** This chapter concentrates on the mystical elements in Kabir and Tagore, giving a brief insight into the non-sectarian concept of religion as seen in their poems. This is the notion that leads to the expression of divine love that has its intrinsic bearing upon the modern day love-starved world.

**Chapter 4: Divine Love in the Poems of Kabir and Tagore:** This chapter will bring out the beauty of Divine love as seen in the poems of the two poet-seer-philosophers under review. The chapter will begin by establishing the concept of Divine love in general, and then discuss it with reference to lines from these two poets, enumerating the various stages in the development of Divine love till the final communion with the Supreme.

**Chapter 5: Relevance to modern times and Conclusion:** Here the scholar brings the connection between Divine love and the modern world. This chapter serves as an odyssey into the future, holding the hands of the two poet philosophers - Kabir and Tagore. It also consolidates the findings from the previous chapters, bringing out the similarities and differences between the two poets under review.