ABSTRACT FOR Ph. D. THESIS

A Comparative Study of Saint Tukaram’s ‘Gatha’ (Selected Abhanga) and Rabindranath Tagore’s ‘Gitanjali’:
A Humanistic Perspective

This study aims at to explore the theme of humanity in Rabindranath Tagore’s Gitanjali and saint Tukaram Gatha (selected abhanga). It is also an attempt to compare both writers selected work from a humanistic perspective.

The first chapter of the present thesis is Introduction. This chapter is about the aims and objectives and background of Indian humanistic literatures’ review. Second half of the chapter is brief life sketch of saint Tukaram and it’s literaray characteristics. And third half of the chapter deals with short chronology of Rabindranath Tagore’s life and his worldly humanistic view.

Saint Tukaram’s was born in Dehu in 1608. 1621-Tukaram’s Father turns over to him the burden of the business. 1621-3-Tukaram is married to Rakhmabai and then to Avalibai, otherwise called Jijabai. 1625 -Death of Tukaram’s Parents and of his eldest brother’s wife.1626- His eldest brother Savaji becomes a sanyasi. 1628-Tukaram resolves to put aside his in- differences to worldly affairs and togi himself to the management of his business in company with his two wives and his eldest son. 1629 - Business failure and bankruptcy.1630-famine at its worst, during which Rakhmabai dies of hunger death of eldest son after which he in utter indifference to worldly things, he retires to Bhambanath Hill and receives a revelation. 1631 -Rebuilding of the temple in Dehu; continuous attendance at kirtans. 1632-5-Tukaram’s call to become a poet, he receives the guru mantra. 1638- Tukaram persecuted by Rameshwar Bhatt and sustained by a special revelation.
1861:- Tagore born in Calcutta in the family house Jorosanko. 1877:- Starts to publish regularly in his family’s monthly journal, Bharati. 1880:- His book Sandhya Sangit (Eveing songs) acclaimed by Bakim Chand Chatterji, the leading writer of the day. 1909:- Indian councils Acts, increasing power of provincial councils, attempts to meet Indian political aspirations. 1910:- Bengali Gitanjali pub. 1912:- Thirst visit to England; first visit to American publication of the England Gitanjali. 1913:- Tagore awarded the Nobel Prize for literature.

The second chapter of the thesis deals with the concept of humanity, and its meaning and definitions. It also focuses on its development throughout the world and various religions opinion about it.

Meaning and Definition:-

The theme of humanity comprises all characteristic of humankind, human nature, and psychological characteristic which all normal human have in common such as compassion, empathy, love, aggression, a fear, tolerance, Kindness, greatenderness of heart and altruism.

Definitions :-

1] The Oxford dictionary defines: human: “(adjective) of relating human kind, showing the better qualities of humankind such as sensitivity, compassionate, humankind, considerate, understanding, sympathetic, tolerant, approachable, accessible. “Humanity (noun) a) humankind b) condition of being human c) compassion or benevolence d) humanities learning or literature concerned with human culture”.

The New Encyclopedia Britannica defines: “Humanities is one of the broadest administrative division, that, together with the social and natural sciences, comprise the college and graduate schools of arts and sciences in a large modern American Universities. The humanities division is devoted to subject that stress human values and express the spirit of man.

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In a less definite sense the word also refers to a branch of knowledge the aggregate of such disciplines and subject matter in their own right. The humanities can be identified only provisionally with specific subject matters because so-called humanistic studies, such as literature, can be studied scientifically and vice versa. Hence several general theories of humanities have been proposed in the effort to identify the family resemblances involved. The text article covers the identity and scope of the humanities as an educational program; 1911 and 20th century theories of humanities and problems concerning the role and function of the humanities in education and the conflict of cultural ideas.

In fact, such a humanist is inclined to be atheistic; in recent times some of them, e.g. Corliss Lamont, have declared their position to be frankly naturalistic or even materialistic. Quite a few interpreters of Karl Marx— to take another example— declare his dialectical materialism to be a type of humanism. Jean Paul Sartre, the French representative of atheistic existentialism, also claimed his philosophical outlook to be humanistic. It is generally thought that humanism considered as a philosophical creed, is opposed not only to supernaturalism and the religious world-view but also to religion as a way of life. Now it is well known that most of our ancient and medieval thought, both in Asia and in Europe, is pronouncedly religious in inspiration and form. If for once it be granted that there is an unbridgeable gulf between humanism on one side and the pursuit of religion on the other.

As we have seen, all religions have taught us love. Let us love in the name of humanity. Let there be healing and forgiveness (Kofi Annan), Let us, the people of India, take the lead role and demonstrate to the world our solidarity to sow the seed of love.
and peace. Let not the forces of divisiveness and negation divide us.

Instead of entering into an acrimonious debate as to whose religion is superior, let us be the superwomen and men of enlightenment that each of our religions teach. It is time to understand that the religion belongs to the realm of ethics.

The third chapter of the thesis is the concept of humanity in Rabindranath Tagore’s Gitajali. In the west has for a long time been based upon the assumption that, Gitanjali is the crowning achievement of his life. Gitanjali begins with the statement “Tho hast made me endless, such is thy pleasure.” it ends with the jivas voyage to its eternal home. The wheel is come full circle Tagore is indebted is the most human God and quite obviously the Gitanjali is permeated with humanize. The prayer for freedom and the prayer to surrender that freedom are two interesting and unique poems in the Gitanjali collection. Tagore’s has a comprehensive view of life and his poetic inspiration draws its sustenance from the love of humanity which is not opposed to the love of God. It has been mentioned in the previous chapter that the two fundamental characteristic of Rabindranath’s poetry are spiritual realism and international humanism.

The second half of the chapter deals with Tagore’s love with nature. “In the pre-Gitanjali period, he studies man in relation to nature. In the Gitanjali – period, he studies man in relation to God. In the post – Gitanjali period, he studies man in relation to God. In the post – Gitanjali period, he studies man in relation to man.” Tagore thus moved from the love of nature and of God to ‘spiritual realism and international humanism’. In a later chapter again, Dr. Chakravorty writes: “Tagore’s realism is free from crude materialism, his mysticism is free from the false spirituality of escapism and his humanism is free from the narrow bounds of nationalism”.
Lastly, According to Rabindranath Tagore life as a battle, a journey and a search and as a progressive sacrifice, such is the dynamic of spiritual struggle and realization. There is the sudden invasion of darkness and man must needs cry: Light, oh, where is the light? He sees truth in nature, everything in nature is truth for him. He rejects the view that man can get salvation by renouncing this world. An intense love of the earth and of human joys and sorrows are the most silent features of his writings. The spirit of man resides in the physical organism which is the part of the nature. Tagore thinks that the fulfillment of these earthy pleasure is also necessary. Man can find paradise here on earth. There is no need to renounce the world but to see paradise by bringing oneness with nature and with God. Tagore says, I believe that the vision of paradise in to be seen sunlight and the green of the earth in the beauty of the human face and wealth of human life.

He knows that none can achieve the spiritual without the temporal. Man’s knowledge does not end with biological necessities of life but it also concerns itself with love, emotions and passions is necessary for the survival of humanity, Tagore rejected the puritanical attitude of life and ridiculed those who see moksha, liberation of the soul by the subjugation of their desires. Tagore suggests that salvation lies not in the renunciation of the world but in love and survival of humanity.

Thus Tagore’s humanism is based upon a deep devotion to human interests inspective of caste or creed and covers every aspect of human life. In the pre-Gitanjali period it is primarily concerned with Indian life but in the post-Gitanjali period it covers the entire humankind.
The fourth chapter focuses in detail the concept of humanity through selected Abhanga’s of saint Tukaram’s Gatha. The Marathi word ‘sant’ is derived from the Sanskrit “sat” which denotes being and awareness, purity and divine spirit wisdom and sagacity the quality of being emancipated and of being true. The relative emphases are somewhat different in the Christian concept of sainthood though there is an overlap. The poet saint fusion in Marathi gives us a unique view of poetry itself.

In this view, moral integrity and spiritual greatness are critical characteristics of both poetry and the poet. Saint Tukaram has explicitly written about being a poet, the responsibility of a poet, the difficulties in being a poet and so forth. He has also criticized certain kinds of poetry and poets. It is clear that he would have agreed with Heidegger that in poetry the language becomes one with the being of language. Poetry was, for him, a precise description of the human condition in its naked totality. It was certainly not an effete form of entertainment for him. Nor was it ornamental. Language was a divine gift and it had to be returned to its source, via-poetry, with selfless devotion.

Saint Tukaram’s poetry expresses pain and bewilderment, fear and anxiety, exasperation and desperateness, boredom and meaninglessness-in fact all the feelings that characterize modern self-awareness. Tukaram’s poetry is always apparently easy to understand and simple in its structure. But it has many hidden traps. It has a deadpan irony that is not easy to detect.

Saint Tukaram was a model saint. He practised what he preached. He found his own happiness in the happiness of others and felt unhappy to see others suffer. ‘I cannot bear looking on these people sunk in
misery, he said let us comfort those that are sweltering in the beat of worldliness. I seek these people because God is in all making no difference between men and women. They are the limbs of the same body to discriminate between them is a unholy delusion.

Love meant to him service of the poorest and lowliest and lost. It meant compassion for all creatures and finally something beyond verbal expression Love says Tukaram cannot be talked or defined, shown, it can only be experienced mind and heart alone can know it.

The second half of the fourth chapter deals with the teaching of saint Tukaram and the similies which Tukaram produces from his own observation. In short, he suggests , a man of immoral habits is the last person to be able to tread the way of the lord. Adultery and wealth acquired by wicked means are the two most immoral deeds. A man guilty of them is a shame to humanity . Tukaram did not preach an ascetic mode of life. But he was never tired of emphasizing the evils of inordinate sex indulgence and unlimited covetousness. He agreed that food clothes and shelter are the primary needs of life . He exhorts us to pray to the lord to provide for these needs . Even sex is a primary need but sex and wealth become sources of peril and abuse when man forgets god in their pursuit. Man ought to live a life sanctified by a personal relation to God and an unselfish affection for humanity. This is the notable and recurring theme of the Saint Tukaram’s abhangas

The fifth chapter of the present thesis is conclusion. The last chapter concludes the study based on the observations, interpretations of the research work about A Comparative Study of Saint Tukaram’s ‘Gatha’ (Selected Abhanga) and Rabindranath Tagore’s ‘Gitanjal:
A Humanistic Perspective

Specially the life of saint Tukaram is full of human interest, full of food for the moralist, full of suggestions for the idealist, and to everyone an inspiration to a better and nobler life. Nelson Fraser wrote: “Tukaram teaches his fellowmen not chiefly by what he says, but by what we realize him to have felt and experienced of aspiration, conflict and communion.

Saint Tukaram transforms the colloquial into the classic with a universal touch. At once earthy and other-worldly, he is able to create a revealing analogue of spiritual life out of this-worldly language. He is, thus, able to prove how close to common speech the roots of great poetry lie. Yet his poetry does not yield the secret of its seamless excellence to even the most sophisticated stylistic analysis.

Rabindranath Tagore’s prolific output, by and large, consists of a single spiritual autobiography revealed in its myriad facets. It defies any classification once it is realized that common thematic strands and recurrent motifs homogenize his work as a whole. Of what service is he thinking? He does not make this point clear, but evidently religious and moral instruction is part of it. From the saints’ life men learn what devotion is: they practice it and preach it.

When, I observed in detail the humanistic aspects in Rabindranath Tagore’s Gitangali and saint Tukaram’s Gatha (selected Abhanga). I founded out some similarity and dissimilarity in both writers writing.

Similarities:

1] Both have written about the human’s psychological development.  
2] Both writers Tukaram and Rabindranath Tagore are saints of the people and for the People they stand for the welfare and upliftment humanity.  
3] Both are not attached to their own bodies but compassion
towards all creatures. 4] Both writers insurgents humanism asserts itself against all religious orthodoxy in their Abhanga. 5] Both writers’ poems present four types of world. 1] God and Nature 2] Nature and the Soul 3] The Soul and Humanity 4] God and the Human Soul. 6] Both asserts that man can find paradise, here on earth. 7] They finalized that there is no need to renounce the world but to see paradise by bringing oneness with nature and with God. 8] They believed that the vision of paradise is to be seen in the sunlight and the green of the earth in the beauty of the human face and wealth of human life. 9] Both have written about love, sex, man woman relationship. 10] They focused on social, religious, political, and educational aspects. 11] Both have written poems in a abhanga form. 12] Both writers realized God experience with in own karm.13] They were strongly egalitarian and preached universal love and compassion

Disimilarites:-

1] Saint Tukaram’s language is the language of ordinary men such as farmers, traders, craftsmen, laborers and also the language of the average housewife. 2] Tagore’s language is the literary and Brahmin priests. 3] Saint Tukaram mentioned his own name such as Tuka says. 4] Tagore didn’t mention his own name. 5] Saint Tukaram practiced what he preach. 6] Tagore didn’t practice, he imagined and wrote. 7] Saint Tukaram is the teacher of Tagore 8] Tagore is learned and inspired by Saint Tukaram 9] Saint Tukaram’s poetry is easy to understand and simple in its structure.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:-

The present research is comparative and analytical therefore, the selected poems of Rabindranath Tagore and Saint Tukaram have been chosen. Humanistic literature are now getting place in the courses of many Universities and professional colleges such as medical,
management, engineering, science etc, in India and particularly abroad (Western countries). Tukaram and Tagore are the poets who belongs more to the future than to a historically bound specific past. They were strongly democratic egalitarian also preached universal love and compassion. Their penetrating criticism of the degenerated state of Brahminical Hinduism, and their scathing comments on bigotry and obscurantism, profiteering and profligacy in the name of religion bear witness to his universal humanistic concerns. Poetry was for them a precise description of the human condition in its naked totality. Like Milton, Saint Tukaram and Rabindranath Tagore, in their own way, through example and perception, justified the ways of God to man, they were, however, more interested in paradise regained than paradise lost.

**Message**: Lastly, the essence of thesis of Saint Tukaram & Rabindranath Tagore entire human being is in the following words.

- We are the birds of same nest.
- We may ware different skins.
- We may speak different tongues.
- We may believe in different religions.
- We may belong to different cultures.
- Yet, we share the same home, Earth.
- Born on the same planet.
- Covered by the same skies.
- Gazing at the same stars.
- Breathing the same air.
- Therefore, We must learn to progress together.
- Or, miserably perish together.
- For a person can live individually.
- But, Can only survive collectively.