

Dr. BRR GOVT DEGREE COLLEGE JADCHERLA

Department of English



A PROJECT REPORT

ON

“Toru Dutt”

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DECLARATION

We are hereby declare that the study project: Toru Dutt is a record of work done by under the supervision of M JAGAN, faculty of English, Government Degree College, Jadcherla, Mahabubnagar District and that the project has not been previously done by any others in this college and any other college/University.

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Date : 27/06/2022

Place : Jadcherla

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the Study project on "**Toru Dutt**" is a bonafide Project work done by students listed below

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TORU DUTT

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Toru Dutt

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Toru Dutt ([Bengali](#): 4 March 1856 – 30 August 1877) was an Indian [Bengali](#) translator and poet from [British India](#), who wrote in English and French She is among the founding figures of [Indo-Anglian](#) literature, alongside [Henry Louis Vivian Derozio](#) (1809–1831), [Manmohan Ghose](#) (1869–1924), and [Sarojini Naidu](#) (1879–1949). She is known for her volumes of poetry in English, *A Sheaf Gleaned in French Fields* (1877) and *Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan* (1882), and for a novel in French, *Le Journal de Mademoiselle d'Arvers* (1879). Her poems explore themes of loneliness, longing, patriotism and nostalgia. Dutt died at the age of 21



Biography

Early life and education

Toru Dutt was born in Calcutta on 4 March 1856 to a Bengali family, which had converted to Christianity. Her father was [Govind Chandra Dutt](#) and her mother was Kshetramoni Dutt (*née* Mitter), of the Rambagan Dutt family.^[a] The Dutt family was one of the first Calcutta families to be strongly influenced by the presence of [Christian missionaries](#). Toru Dutt's grandfather [Rasamay Dutt](#) and her father both held important positions in the colonial government. Her cousin [Romesh Chandra Dutt](#) was also a writer and Indian civil servant. Dutt's father converted to Christianity in 1862, when Dutt was six years old. Her mother initially resisted conversion, but eventually became a practising Christian as well. Both of Dutt's parents published some writing: her father wrote poetry and her mother published a translation into Bengali of a religious monograph.¹

Toru was the youngest child of three, after sister Aru and brother Abju. She and her siblings spent most of their childhood in Calcutta, splitting their time between a house in the city and a garden house in the suburb of Baugmaree.¹ Dutt was educated at home by her father and by the Indian Christian tutor Babu Shib Chunder Banerjee, learning French and English, and eventually Sanskrit, in addition to her first language, Bengali.^[a] During this time, she learnt [John Milton](#)'s epic poem of Christian allegory *Paradise Lost* by heart. She also learned stories of ancient India from her mother.

¹ Abju, Toru's brother died when he was eleven years old and Aru died due to consumption on 23 July 1874

Life in Europe^[edit]

In 1869, when Dutt was 13, Dutt's family left India, making her and her sister some of the first Bengali girls to travel by sea to Europe.¹ The family spent four years living in Europe, one in [France](#) and three in [England](#).¹ They also visited Italy and Germany.

They first lived in France, from 1869 to 1870, in the south and in Paris Toru Dutt studied French in Nice and was briefly a student at a boarding school. In 1870, the family lived in Onslow Square, [Brompton, London](#), where Dutt studied music.¹ In 1871, they moved to [Cambridge](#), where they remained until 1873.

In 1872, the [University of Cambridge](#) offered a lecture series, "Higher Lectures for Women", which Toru Dutt attended with her sister Aru. At the time, women were not entitled to join the University of Cambridge and opportunities for higher education were limited. This was a chance for women to access University lectures, set up by a group that included the philosopher [Henry Sidgwick](#) and the suffragist [Millicent Garrett Fawcett](#). "Lectures for Ladies" became [Newnham College](#) in 1871, but Toru Dutt did not herself matriculate as a member, presumably because she was living in Cambridge and had no need for college accommodation. Her correspondence refers, however, to Merton Hall, the early name of Newnham College, and to Miss Clough as Principal of Newnham College. While not a member of a Cambridge college, Dutt would have had access to the college's intellectual discussions and critical thinking. At the end of 1872, Toru met and befriended Mary Martin, daughter of Reverend John Martin of [Sidney Sussex College](#). The friendship developed further in correspondence after Toru's return to India.

The family left Cambridge in 1873, living in [St Leonards, Sussex](#) from April to November 1873, and then returning to Calcutta.⁴

Grave of Toru Dutt at Maniktala Christian Cemetery

When Toru Dutt returned to Calcutta in 1873 at the age of 17, she found it challenging to return to a culture that now seemed "an unhealthy place both morally and physically speaking" to her Europeanized and Christianized eye. Her sister Aru died of consumption in 1872, aged twenty. Three years after returning, she wrote to Mary Martin, "I have not been to one dinner party or any party at all since we left Europe," and "If any friend of my grandmother happens to see me, the first question is, if I am married." Both remarks express frustration with what she found to be a restrictive and conservative society. However, she also recognized that Europe could not replace India as her true home. She took consolation in reinvigorating her studies of Sanskrit with her father and hearing her mother's stories and songs about India.

Like both her siblings, Toru Dutt died of consumption (tuberculosis), at the age of 21 on 30 August 1877.

Writing:

Toru Dutt was a natural linguist. In her short life she became proficient in Bengali, English, [French](#) and later [Sanskrit](#). She left behind an impressive collection of prose and poetry. Her two novels, the unfinished *Bianca or The Young Spanish Maiden* in English and *Le Journal de Mademoiselle d'Arvers* in French, were based outside India with non-Indian protagonists. Her poetry appears in *A Sheaf Gleaned in French Fields*, consisting of

translations into English of French poetry and *Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan*, composed of translations and adaptations from Sanskrit.

A Sheaf Gleaned in French Fields was published in 1876 without a preface or introduction. Its 165 poems are translated from French into English by Dutt, except for one poem composed by her, "A Mon Père", and eight poems translated by her sister.¹ At first the collection attracted little attention, though it eventually came to the notice of Edmund Gosse in 1877, who reviewed it favourably in the *Examiner* that year. *Sheaf* saw a second Indian edition in 1878 and a third edition by Kegan Paul of London in 1880, but Dutt lived to see neither of these. The second edition added 44 new poems, a portrait of Toru Dutt and her sister, and a preface by their father