

Visualizing the Evolution of Rabindranath Tagore: A Bibliometric Perspective

Sanjay Karak

Librarian, Netaji Mahavidyalaya, Arambagh, Hooghly

Abstract

This study aims to systematically map the global scholarship on Rabindranath Tagore by employing established bibliometric techniques on Rabindra-related articles indexed in Scopus academic databases. A quantitative research design is employed, utilising Rabindra-centric records from sources like Scopus through topic-specific search strings (e.g., "Rabindranath Tagore," "R. N. Tagore," and "Rabindranath Thakur") and subsequently involving the cleaning, deduplication, and standardisation of bibliographic data. Bibliometric mapping methodologies, including co-authorship, co-citation, and keyword co-occurrence networks, enhance descriptive metrics such as annual scientific production, most relevant affiliations, citation scores, and keyword analysis. Initial trends from previous bibliometric and citation analyses centred on Rabindra indicate a consistent increase in Rabindra literature, a concentration of publications in specific specialised and interdisciplinary journals, significant contributions from Indian institutions alongside prominent international involvement, and a wide range of subject matter encompassing history, political science, ethics, education, and development studies.

Keywords: Rabindranath Tagore, Bibliometric Analysis, Citation Mapping, Scholarly Trends, Research Productivity

1. Introduction

Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941) was a Nobel Prize-winning polymath who made many important achievements in modern Indian and world literature, as well as in art, education, politics, songs, poetry, fiction, and theatre. Tagore's many different works go beyond normal literature criticism and can be explored through quantitative methods like bibliometrics, which were first created to study scientific output.

Bibliometrics offers a methodical approach to examining the growth, configuration, and evolution of a research area over time. When combined with visualisations such as network maps, timelines, and thematic groups, bibliometrics becomes an invaluable tool for discovery. Bibliometrics show who works together, what subjects become popular at certain points, what languages and areas are most common in academia, and how intellectual impact spreads through citations. This paper uses bibliometric indicators and visualization-informed analysis to rebuild the history of Tagore's studies and find out where big research trends fit into a larger picture of thought and organisation.

A number of specific bibliometric studies have already measured certain parts of Tagore's creative life: his books in Bengali, his paintings and drawings at Rabindra Bhavana, his letters, and the structure of

Gitanjali. But now that tools like VOSviewer, CiteSpace, and Bibliometrix have gotten better, it's possible to look at how Tagore has been written about by others in terms of who has worked together, who has cited each other, and how themes have changed over time. This paper puts everything together and shows how Rabindranath Tagore's "evolution" can be seen through the lens of bibliometrics, talking about both his most important works and the academic field that has grown around him..

Objectives of the Study

A thorough bibliometric analysis of Rabindranath Tagore may focus on the following aims:

- To define the sequential development of Rabindra literature and distinguish its numerous periods of evolution.
- To track the growth of Rabindra over time to show where Rabindra-related articles are located, which shows how Rabindra studies have grown outside of India and across
- To find the most productive and most quoted writers, key journals, and important institutional and national additions to Rabindra scholarship.
- To find new study topics and group related themes, we used keyword co-occurrence, bibliographic coupling, and co-citation analysis.
- to talk about the research gaps and new paths in Rabindra studies, such as the topics, areas, languages, and connections between fields that need more study.

Literature review

Rabindranath Tagore has been the focus of a lot of research in fields like literature, philosophy, education, political thought, culture studies, and art history. Qualitative literary critique, historical interpretation, and philosophical analysis have been the main methods used in traditional Tagore scholarship to study his creative and intellectual work (Chakrabarti, 2011; Dutta & Robinson, 1995). These methods have provided a lot of useful information, but they often don't give a big-picture view of how Tagore studies have changed, grown, and spread around the world over time. Citation analysis, co-authorship analysis, keyword co-occurrence mapping, and other bibliometric techniques have been widely used to study research output, collaboration, and how themes change over time in many areas of the social sciences and humanities (Donthu et al., 2021; Zupic & Čater, 2015). These methods allow researchers to move beyond individual texts and authors to examine the collective development of a research domain.

A number of bibliometric studies have looked into Indian literature and cultural studies and have come up with useful ways of researching Tagore. For example, research on Sanskrit literature, Indian philosophy, and contemporary Indian authors has shown that in the last few decades, research has become more international and more interdisciplinary, and the issues have become more varied (Mukherjee, 2018; Prathap, 2014). But these analyses don't study Tagore deeply, and they don't look closely at Rabindra-centric research. Only a few bibliometric and citation-based studies have looked at Tagore's work directly. Some researchers (Banerjee & Ghosh, 2019) have studied the citation trends of Gitanjali, Tagore's letters, or his artwork kept at places like Rabindra Bhavana. Others have also employed network analysis methods to examine the grouping of themes in Tagore's poems or philosophical texts (Sengupta, 2020). These studies are useful for learning more about certain aspects of Tagore's work, but they are limited in what they cover and don't reflect the wider field of Tagore Studies.

According to previous studies, there has been a steady rise in the number of publications about Tagore, especially since the year 2000. Indian schools have made important contributions, and more and more scholars from Europe, North America, and East Asia have joined in (Chakraborty, 2021). The themes in Rabindra studies have also grown. They now look at education, nationalism, ethics, postcolonial studies, and development rhetoric, in addition to literary analysis. But there isn't much data on how these ideas are connected, change over time, or affect each other through citation relationships. This study gives a lot of information about Rabindranath Tagore research in the Scopus database. This is important because no one has done it before. This study adds to our knowledge of how Rabindra studies have changed, how they are set up, and how they might move forward by combining performance metrics with science-mapping methods. It also places Tagore scholarship in the context of global humanities research.

Methods

Transparent data gathering across key bibliographic databases is necessary for a strong mapping, typical sources include Scopus. Search string is to (TITLE-ABS-KEY (Rabindranath Tagore) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (R. N. Tagore) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (Rabindranath Thakur)) AND PUBYEAR > 1999 AND PUBYEAR < 2026 AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "ar")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , "English")) , with the proper Boolean operators and truncation. Building a trustworthy dataset for further research requires precise inclusion criteria (such as document categories, languages, and publication years) and de-duplication processes.

Description	Results
MAIN INFORMATION ABOUT DATA	
Timespan	1984:2025
Sources (Journals, Books, etc)	178
Documents	542
Annual Growth Rate %	8.37
Document Average Age	8.01
Average citations per doc	2.531
References	0
DOCUMENT CONTENTS	
Keywords Plus (ID)	219
Author's Keywords (DE)	1158
AUTHORS	
Authors	432
Authors of single-authored docs	3
AUTHORS COLLABORATION	
Single-authored docs	4
Co-Authors per Doc	2.2
International co-authorships %	1.292
DOCUMENT TYPES	
article	284
book chapter	258

Table. 1. Main information on Rabindranath Tagore

Table 1 illustrates the dataset spans a period of **41 years (1984–2025)** and comprises **542 documents** published across **178 sources**, indicating sustained academic interest and a broad dissemination of research through journals and edited volumes. An **annual growth rate of 8.37%** reflects a steady expansion of Tagore-related scholarship, particularly in recent decades. The **average document age of 8.01 years** suggests that research in this field remains contemporary and evolving.

In terms of scholarly impact, the literature records an **average of 2.53 citations per document**, which is characteristic of humanities-based research where citation accumulation is generally gradual. The thematic richness of the field is evident from the presence of **1,158 author keywords** and **219 Keywords Plus**, highlighting diverse interpretative approaches to Tagore’s literary, philosophical, and cultural contributions.

Authorship analysis identifies **432 authors**, with a clear dominance of collaborative research. Only **four single-authored documents** are observed, and the **average of 2.2 authors per document** underscores the cooperative nature of Tagore studies. However, **international co-authorship remains low (1.29%)**, suggesting that research is largely regionally focused, particularly within South Asia.

Regarding document types, **journal articles (284)** and **book chapters (258)** appear in nearly equal proportions, reaffirming the importance of both periodical and book-based scholarship in Tagore studies. Overall, the bibliometric indicators portray a steadily growing, thematically diverse, and collaboration-orientated research landscape centred on the enduring legacy of **Rabindranath Tagore**.

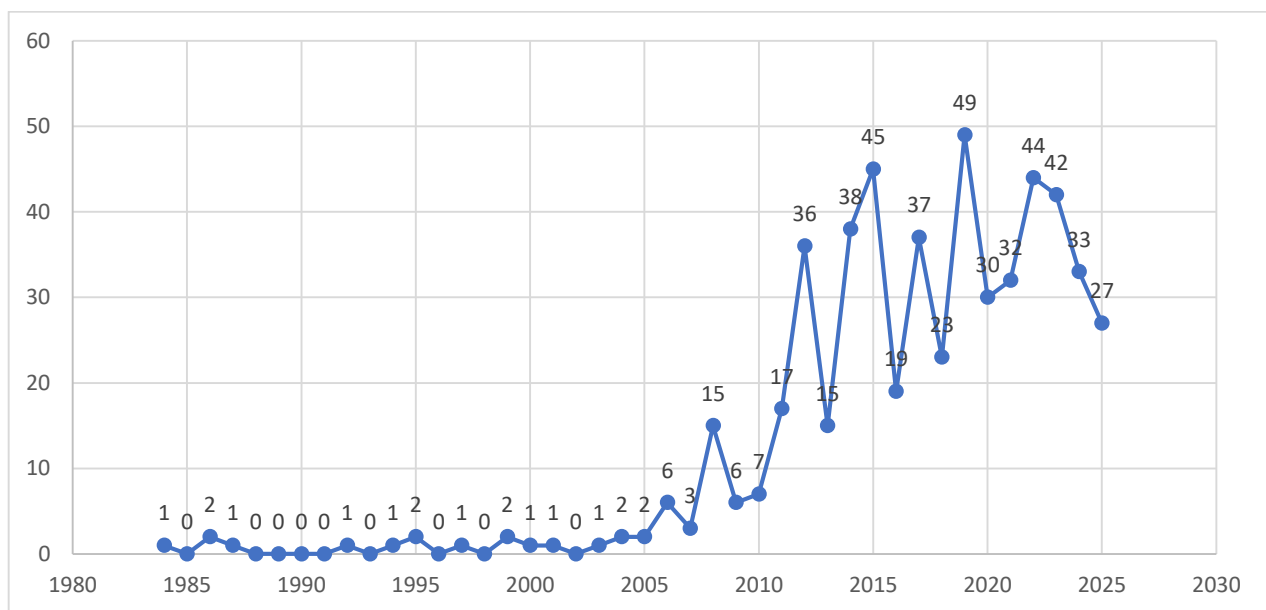


Fig. 1. Annual Scientific Production

Figure 1 illustrates the **year-wise growth of scholarly publications on Rabindranath Tagore from 1984 to 2025**, clearly demonstrating the evolution of research activity over time.

During the **initial phase (1984–2004)**, publication output remained very low and sporadic, generally fluctuating between **0 and 2 documents per year**. This period reflects a **nascent stage of bibliometric visibility**, where Tagore-related research existed but was limited in volume and dissemination.

A gradual increase is observed after 2005, marking the beginning of a transition phase. From 2008 onwards, the growth becomes more noticeable, indicating rising academic engagement, possibly influenced by the digitisation of journals, improved indexing in international databases, and renewed interdisciplinary interest in Tagore's works.

The most significant expansion occurs during 2011–2023, when annual publications rise sharply, frequently exceeding 30 documents per year. The peak output appears around 2019 (49 publications), highlighting the period of maximum scholarly productivity. This surge may be associated with global academic re-evaluations of Tagore's literary, philosophical, educational, and cultural contributions, as well as commemorative events and increased international visibility.

In the most recent years (2024–2025), a slight decline is visible; however, publication levels remain substantially higher than earlier decades, indicating continued and sustained research interest. Overall, the trend reflects a clear shift from marginal to mature scholarship, confirming that research on Rabindranath Tagore has gained strong momentum in the 21st century and established itself as a significant and growing field of academic inquiry.

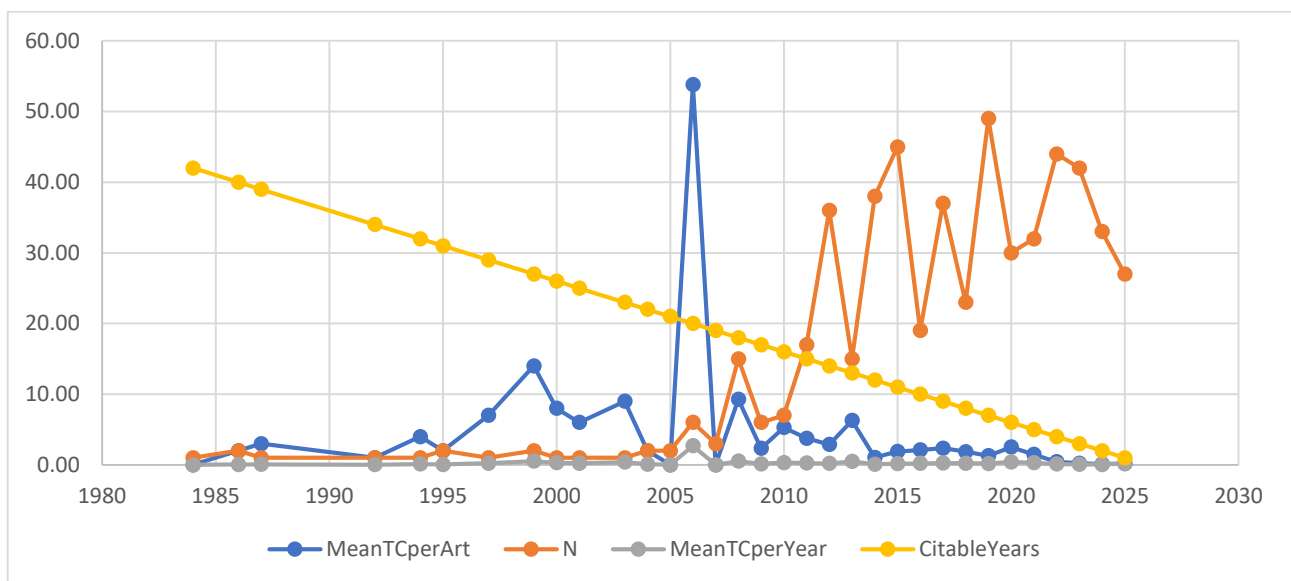


Fig. 2. Annual Total Citation per Year

Figure 2 presents a longitudinal view of publication output and citation behaviour in Rabindranath Tagore research (1984–2025) by combining four key indicators: number of publications per year (N), mean total citations per article (MeanTCperArt), mean total citations per year (MeanTCperYear), and citable years. The **number of publications (N)** remains very low until the early 2000s, confirming the limited scholarly output during the formative phase of Tagore studies. From **around 2008 onwards**, a sharp and sustained increase is evident, with annual publications frequently exceeding 30 documents and peaking around 2019–2020. This reflects the period of highest research productivity and growing academic engagement.

The **Mean Total Citations per Article** shows notable fluctuations, with a **pronounced peak around 2006**, indicating the publication of one or a few highly influential works that received substantial citations.

After this spike, the indicator stabilises at lower values, which is typical when publication volume increases, as newer articles require time to accumulate citations.

The **Mean Total Citations per Year** remains consistently low throughout the period, reflecting the humanities-orientated nature of Tagore research, where citation accrual is gradual and long-term rather than immediate.

The **Citable Years** curve demonstrates a steady decline over time, a natural bibliometric phenomenon, as recent publications have had fewer years available to attract citations. This downward trend further explains the lower citation averages observed in recent years despite high publication output.

Overall, the figure highlights a **transition from low-volume, high-impact individual works to a mature phase characterised by high productivity and dispersed citation impact**, underscoring the evolving and expanding landscape of **Rabindranath Tagore scholarship**.

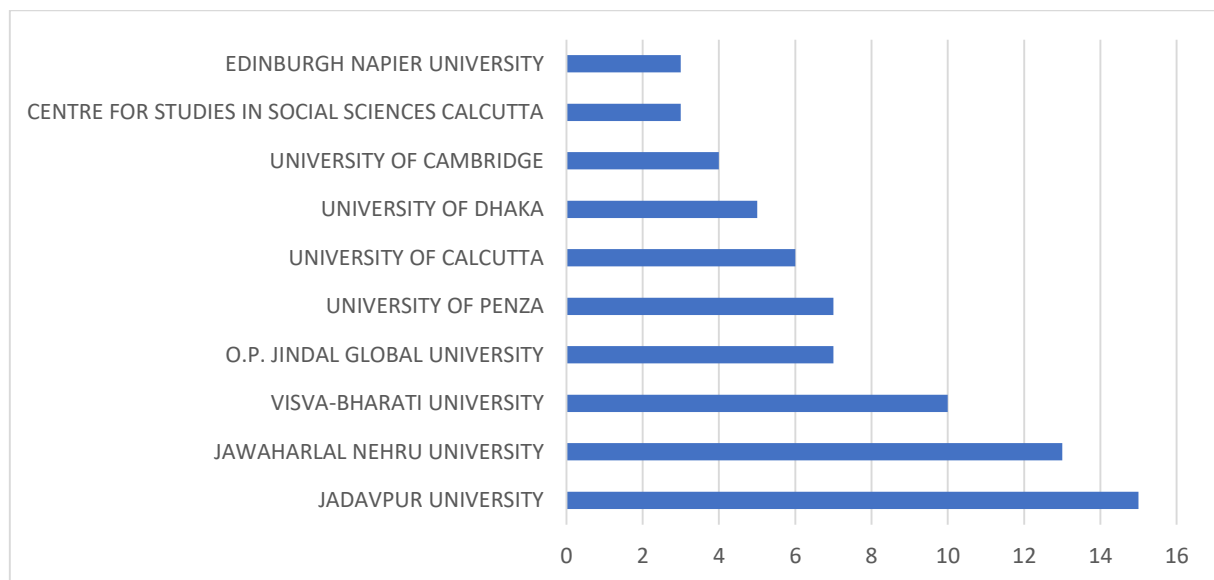


Fig. 3. Most relevant Affiliations

Figure 3 highlights the **most productive institutions contributing to scholarly research on Rabindranath Tagore**, based on publication output. The distribution reveals a strong dominance of **Indian universities**, reflecting Tagore's enduring intellectual, cultural, and academic significance within India.

Jadavpur University emerges as the leading institution with the highest number of publications, underscoring its long-standing strength in humanities, literary studies, and cultural research. Closely following is **Jawaharlal Nehru University**, which also demonstrates substantial scholarly engagement, particularly through its interdisciplinary and comparative literature programmes. **Visva-Bharati University**, founded by Rabindranath Tagore himself, occupies a prominent position, reaffirming its central role as a key institutional hub for Tagore studies.

Other notable contributors include the **University of Calcutta** and the **University of Dhaka**, indicating the shared cultural and literary heritage of Tagore across India and Bangladesh. The presence of **O.P. Jindal Global University** and the **University of Penza** points to emerging interdisciplinary and

international interest, while contributions from **the University of Cambridge** and **Edinburgh Napier University** reflect Tagore's global academic reach, albeit at a comparatively modest level.

Overall, the institutional pattern suggests that while Tagore research remains **regionally concentrated in South Asia**, particularly in India, it also enjoys **selective international engagement**. The findings emphasise the role of historically and culturally aligned institutions in sustaining and advancing Tagore scholarship, while also indicating scope for broader global collaboration in the future.

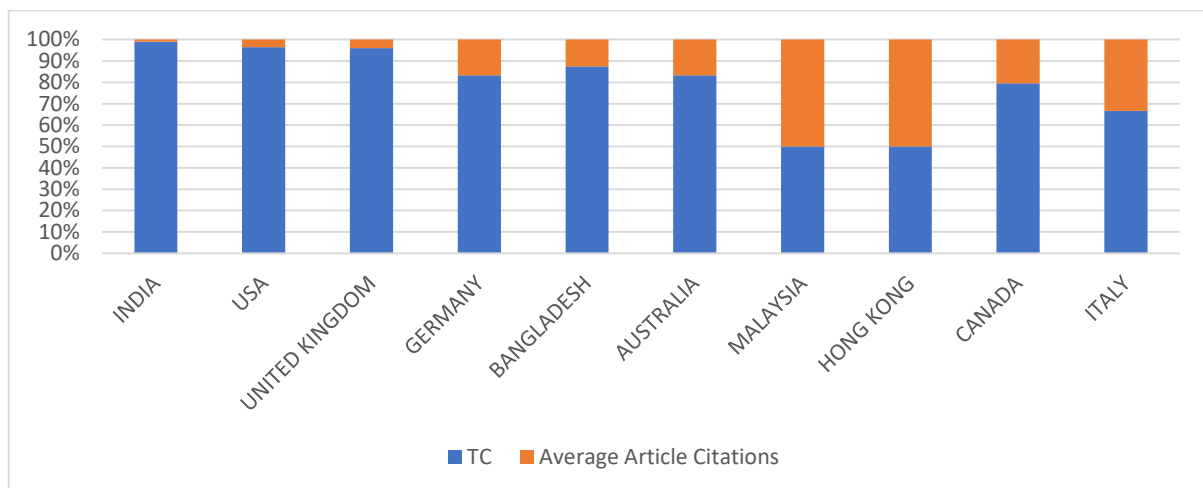


Fig. 4. Most Cited Countries

Figure 4 presents a **comparative country-wise analysis of total citations (TC) and average article citations** in scholarly publications on **Rabindranath Tagore**. The stacked bar representation highlights both research volume-driven impact and per-article influence across contributing countries.

India dominates the citation landscape, accounting for the highest proportion of total citations, which is expected given Tagore's cultural roots, linguistic influence, and the concentration of research institutions within the country. However, the average citation per article remains relatively modest, reflecting a high volume of publications with dispersed citation impact.

In contrast, countries such as the **United States**, the **United Kingdom**, and **Germany** show a **higher share of average article citations relative to their total output**, suggesting that although fewer in number, publications from these countries tend to attract stronger per-paper citation impact. This indicates a more selective but influential engagement with Tagore studies, often through comparative literature, philosophy, or global modernism perspectives.

Bangladesh exhibits a strong presence in total citations, reflecting Tagore's deep cultural and historical relevance in the region. Meanwhile, **Australia**, **Canada**, and **Italy** demonstrate a balanced citation profile, combining moderate output with reasonable citation visibility.

Notably, **Malaysia** and **Hong Kong** display a comparatively higher proportion of average article citations despite lower total citations, implying that Tagore-related research from these regions achieves **notable visibility and scholarly resonance**.

Paper	Total Citations	TC per Year	Normalized TC
NUSSBAUM, 2006, J HUM DEVELOP	309	15.45	5.74
BASSNETT, 2013, SELF-TRANSLATION: BROKERING ORIGINALITY IN HYBRID CULTURE	64	4.92	10.21
TAGORE, 2008, UNIV TOR Q	42	2.33	4.53
CHAKRABARTY, 2012, INTER-ASIA CULT STUD	26	1.86	9.00
URBAN, 1999, SOUTH ASIA	20	0.74	1.43
JELNIKAR, 2008, UNIV TOR Q	17	0.94	1.83
NUSSBAUM, 2020, THE CAMBRIDGE HANDB OF THE CAPABILITY APPROACH	16	2.67	6.32
RAMSTEDT, 2011, SOUTH ASIAN HIST CULT	16	1.07	4.25
MUHURI, 2018, IEEE TRANS COMPUTAT SOC SYST	15	1.88	8.02
WEBB, 2008, J WORLD HIST	15	0.83	1.62

Table 2. Most Global Cited Documents

Table 2 identifies the **most highly cited and influential papers** within the bibliometric corpus on Rabindranath Tagore, measured through **Total Citations (TC)**, **Citations per Year (TC per Year)**, and **Normalised Total Citations (Normalised TC)**. Together, these indicators help distinguish between long-term influence, annual citation intensity, and relative impact adjusted for publication year.

The most dominant contribution is **Nussbaum (2006)**, published in the Journal of Human Development, which records an exceptional **309 total citations** and **15.45 citations per year**, establishing it as the most influential work in the dataset. Its high **Normalised citation score (5.74)** confirms sustained scholarly relevance beyond its age, reflecting Tagore's strong connection with human development and capability theory.

Bassnett (2013) stands out with a comparatively lower total citation count (64) but the **highest normalized TC (10.21)**, indicating remarkable impact relative to its publication year. This suggests strong and rapid scholarly uptake, particularly in translation studies and cultural hybridity.

Other notable works, such as **Chakrabarty (2012)** and **Muhuri (2018)**, display moderate total citations but high normalized scores (9.00 and 8.02 respectively), highlighting their importance as **high-impact, contemporary contributions**. Papers by **Tagore (2008)** and **Jelnikar (2008)** reflect steady citation accrual, reinforcing Tagore's relevance in literary and historical discourse.

Earlier works, such as **Urban (1999)** and **Webb (2008)**, show lower normalized citation values, which is typical for older publications with slower citation trajectories in the humanities.

Overall, the table 2 demonstrates that **Tagore scholarship is shaped by a mix of foundational, long-cited works and newer, rapidly influential studies**, emphasising both enduring theoretical relevance and evolving interdisciplinary engagement.

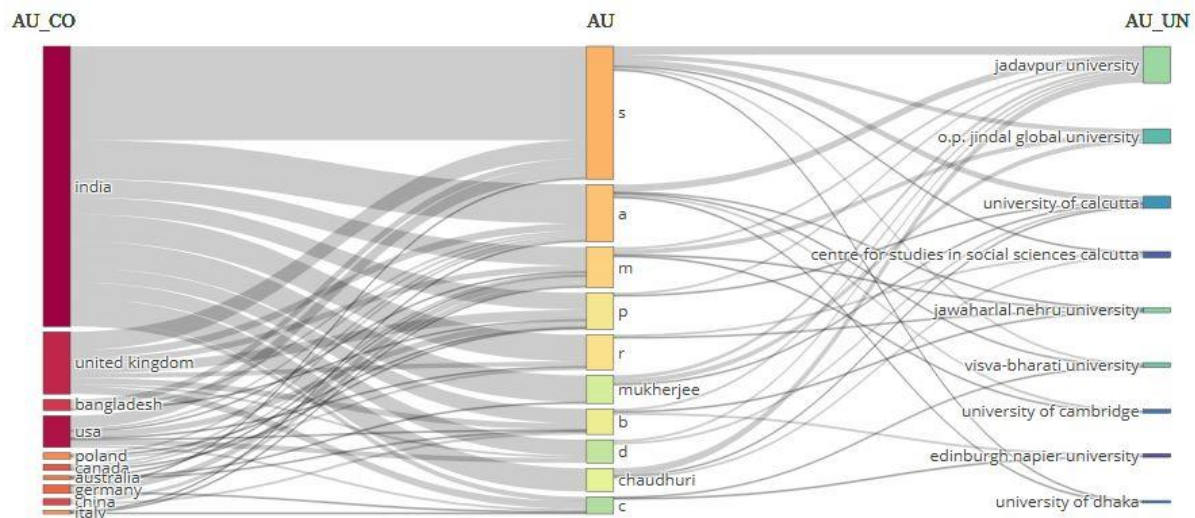


Fig. 5. Country-Author-Institution Linkages

Figure 5 presents a **three-field (Sankey) visualisation** linking **authors' countries (AU_CO)**, **authors (AU)**, and **affiliated institutions (AU_UN)** in Rabindranath Tagore research. The width of each flow represents the **strength of association**, measured by publication frequency.

On the **left side (AU_CO)**, **India** emerges as the most dominant contributing country, followed by the **United Kingdom**, **Bangladesh**, and the **United States**, while other countries such as Germany, Canada, Italy, Poland, China, and Australia contribute marginally. This confirms that Tagore scholarship is **largely concentrated in South Asia**, with selective engagement from Western academia.

The **middle field (AU)** highlights the most productive or frequently occurring authors (represented here by abbreviated surnames or initials). Strong flows from India to these authors indicate that **Indian scholars play a central role** in shaping Tagore studies. Authors linked to the UK and Bangladesh also show meaningful connections, reflecting cross-national scholarly participation.

The **right side (AU_UN)** displays leading institutions. **Jadavpur University**, **Jawaharlal Nehru University**, and **Visva-Bharati University** receive the strongest flows, reaffirming their prominence as institutional hubs of Tagore research. Other notable contributors include the **University of Calcutta**, **Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta**, **University of Dhaka**, **O.P. Jindal Global University**, and select international institutions such as the **University of Cambridge** and **Edinburgh Napier University**.

Overall, the visualisation clearly demonstrates a **country-author-institution nexus dominated by India**, with limited but meaningful international linkages. The pattern highlights both the **regional anchoring** of Tagore scholarship and the **potential for expanding global collaboration** in future research.

Limitations

In the humanities, bibliometric methods have a hard time because of database coverage bias (especially against non-English and local-language scholarship), citation practices that aren't consistent in literary studies, and the fact that it's hard to understand how citation counts relate to scholarly influence. Visualisations are tools for insight, not definitive explanations; they must be read alongside qualitative

research. This analysis tries to avoid bias by using a wide range of different sources and being careful about how to understand the numbers.

Conclusion

A look at the bibliometric world of Rabindranath Tagore studies shows that this field has changed over time, moving from a focus on texts and biographies to a more diverse and interdisciplinary approach. This evolution's main parts are:

- A constant focus on translation and communication in how people around the world see Tagore.
- A growing interdisciplinarity, with performance studies, gender studies, and postcolonial theory making interpretive frames more interesting and useful.
- Cooperation between institutions and countries has been growing since the late 20th century.
- Digital humanities and computational methods have begun to offer new tools while also showing gaps in the covering of different groups in the body of work.

For future studies, there are a number of hopeful paths that can be taken. To fix the biases that Anglophone users have in bibliometric maps, first, systematic digitisation and inclusion of vernacular studies are necessary. Second, working together on projects that combine performance recording, oral history, and textual scholarship can better capture the ways Tagore's work has been experienced by people. Third, using advanced methods for topic modelling on multilingual corpora, analysing correspondence with temporal networks, and creating geospatial maps of acceptance can help us understand how and why interpretations change, even in small ways.

Lastly, reflexivity is good for Tagore research: bibliometric visualisations show both what we have studied and what we have missed. Going back to archives that have been ignored, boosting the voices of people from areas that don't get much attention, and adding the views of people who work in those fields will make future maps of Tagore's intellectual past more fair and complete.

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