



Role Of Women In The Writings Of Rabindranath Tagore

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Abstract: *Rabindra Nath Tagore (7 May 1861 - 7 August 1941) winner of noble prize was the man of versatile personality and achievements. He was Leonardo da Vinci of the India. He was an influential poet, highly imaginative painter, great musician, socialist, worshiper of nature, and an excellent fiction writer of his era. Rabindra Nath has selected his mother tongue Bengali to express his feelings. The most interesting thing about him, that he himself has translated his several in to English. He was the inventor of 'Rabindra Sangeet'. Many movies also have soundtracks featuring selections from Tagore's Rabindra Sangeet. The meaning of 'Rabindra Sangeet' is the 'Tagore song'. Tagore is the only person in the world to have written the national anthems of two nations. They are: Bangladesh's Amar Sonaar Baanglaa and India's Jana Gana Mana. Rabindra Sangeet influenced the styles of such musicians like Vilayat Khan, Buddhadev Dasgupta, and composer Amjad Ali Khan. He is also known as 'Gurudev'. The title Gurudev glorified his personality.*

Key Words: noble prize, versatile personality, achievements, imaginative painter

The greatest poet, philosopher and artist Rabindra Nath Tagore wrote many stories, plays, dramas and novels; he has painted over 3,000 pictures. 'Gitanjali' (song offerings meaning in English translation) is the masterpiece by Rabindranath Tagore. It is a collection of songs and famous world-wide. He wrote numerous short stories like 'Sampatti', 'Samarpan', 'Jeebita O Mrita', 'Swaranmiraga', 'Jai Parajaya', 'Muktir', 'Upaya' and 'Ekti Asharey Galpa' are his famous stories. His articles like, "The English and the Indians," "Fear of the English", "The Right if Justice", "The Ruler and the Ruled", "Hesitations of Politics," reveal his deep love for his motherland.

Literature plays an important role in the establishment and growth of the society. As an aware novelist he was well aware about the social evil prevailed among the society on that time. As a conscious socialist, Tagore exposed all these evil practiced in his short-stories and novels. He deals with the problem of women like inequality, dowry system, and rape. His novel "Jogajog" accentuates the issue of marital rape. Not only this, but so many other social issues were also picked up by Tagore in his writings, such as child marriage, wife burning,

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etc. Short stories like 'Chandalika' and 'Shyama' also revolve around female characters.

Tagore has presented women in traditional role but not in stereo type image. He has presented them in varied way. His female characters are outspoken. They know to raise their voice against injustices. His female characters are full of inner strength and have dreams and desires. They are full with fighting spirit. They well know how to protest against the bias social norms that certified women as weaker and to be ruled. Tagore's female characters are the representative of the new women of the modern era. Through his women character Tagore seeks for the new change in the society. Usually he has depicted the three aspects of women's life-relationship between men and women, their social oppression, and the avatar of a new woman who is confident and makes her own decisions. He recommended women to find their own identity, as wifehood and motherhood are just part of their entire self.

Through his various female characters Tagore has suggested that women are not being passive but they should be assertive and full of enthusiasm. Although his protagonists are shown



under the pressure of male domination but they have fighting spirit against the conventional thought. They speak against the religious hypocrisy and all the evils. Tagore has portrayed his female character in the role of loving mother and in the role of lover. They advocates for the higher education and jobs for women. About Tagore's women liberation and portrayal William Cenkner, former Associate Professor of History of Religions at the Catholic University of America in Washington D.C. writes: His woman "emerges as a catalytic figure in the dynamics of society, the nation and even the world. Tagore finally images woman with a global consciousness."

In his book, "Heroines of Tagore: A Study in the Transition of Indian Society" (1968), Bimanbehari Majumdar describes that he turns to Indian epics and even Buddhist legends to draw inspiration before portraying his women characters. The heroine of his novel, Karuna, was illiterate. Tagore has very well interpreted the condition of women in his writings. Whether it's, urban woman or educated woman, Tagore has sketched them alive through his characterization. Tagore has also exposed the worst condition of the widows in Bengali society. He has presented the pitiable condition of widows. Widows have given enough places neither in the home nor in the society. They have compelled to live a secluded life in the name of widowhood. To an extend he got success in the interpretation of the harsh, wretched and pitiable picture of widowhood through his pen. Tagore has dealt with dual conflict of women within the society and inner self of a woman.

About his fair sex we can say that they all have a long journey from darkness to new dawn, harsh reality to real fact, from known to unknown with perfect fighting spirit, from injustice to justice. Though Tagore has portrayed his female characters in traditional role but they are not passive and silent one. They are straight forward towards their approach. They know about their real need and deed. They aren't silent strider. Tagore emphasized that women should not be passive under any circumstance. His campaign for women's liberation

was ahead of its time. So the portrayal of women in his work can be regarded as one of his most important contributions to the society.

'Chokher Bali's protagonist Binodini is a widow. She has discarded the social norms and traditional setup for widow woman. She is not ready to leave her identity as a woman and her desires of love. Tagore has portrayed Binodini beauty with brain. She loves Mahendra but he is interested only in her physic. Her approach of true love remains unfulfill. Her friend Bihari loves her truly. She has to struggles with her own passion and unfulfilled love. Another female character in short story, Damini, for her part, ignores social norms and conventions and prepares for life with her new husband. Tagore wanted to reform the condition of the widows by giving them the equal rights. He initiates his concern with the characters of Damini and Binodini. As a human being they also have the right to live a respected life.

Mrinmoyee, in 'Samapti' is presented by Tagore is very ambitious. She wants to live her life on her terms and conditions. She refuses to change her personality and identity even after marriage. She was brought up in free atmosphere she used to climbing tree and playing cricket with boys. She has different dressing sense against the contemporary grab. That's why she refused to wear heavy jewelry and tying her hair. She questions why it is the girl who has to make all adjustments post marriage and even after marriage. Her spirit is too free to be confined within the domestic walls.

In 'A Wife's Letter' Tagore has depicted the real picture of women with her suffocations and sufferings in the Indian society. Mrinal, the central character of the story has expressed her deep concern for women in her letter to her husband. Through her pen she has revealed the tyranny of society against the women. According to her woman has no right to leave her husband's home after marriage. And if she thinks so, she is submitted to punishment. She was unable to save the life of her sister-in-law's younger sister. In a powerful letter to her husband, she accuses the society of not taking a stand against the practice of disallowing a girl to return to her



home after marriage, despite the nature of the marriage itself. She also indicts him of killing her talents and passions and only considering her as a 'bahu' of the house, the poor creature.

In his another story 'Tyaag' Tagore has describe the caste system. It is story of a Brahmin boy and a Kayastha orphan girl. She gets married to the boy. Her uncle hides her original identity that she belongs to the Kayastha family. This this disturbs her psyche that her new married life began on basis of lie. She reveals her true identity to the groom. She is blamed to pollute their Brahmin caste. But the boy accepts the girl as his loving wife in the society. In this story Tagore has painted the new dimensions of new thought by the views of Brahmin boy. His thoughts are above all caste system. According to Tagore love has no caste, limit and boundary.

The portrayal of women in the writing of Rabindra Nath Tagore can be regarded as one of his most important contributions to the society. He has presented women in different role like mother,

wife and a lover. He has created his women character from women perspective not as a male perspective. Tagore has given the multi-dimensional entity to his protagonists. No artificial description of their beauty and physic but the real interpretation of their condition prevailed in the society. His female characters are the embodiment of struggle, strife and protest in the life. Rabindra Nath Tagore can be labeled as a feminist writer. His heroines are the embodiment feminist activist of past and present as well.

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