



Concept of New Women in Tagore's Plays

Parveen Kumari, Lecturer in English,
Secondary Education Department, Haryana

Abstract: In this article concept of women in Tagor plays discussed. For the research work secondary data related to Tagor in the specially on the Women personality discussed. Tagore's view on educating women is inherent in Chandalika. Similarly in *Religion on Man* Tagore mentions the spiritual foundation for education. According to him spiritualistic educational system purifies the body, mind and soul. He highly believes that the teaching of religion can never be inculcated in form of lessons.

ISSN 2454-308X



Rabindranath Tagore was a Bengali polymath from Indian sub-continent, a poet, musician and an artist. He reshaped Bengali literature and music, as well as Indian art with co-textual modernism in the late 19th and 20th century. Author of *Gitanjali* and it's, "Profoundly sensitivity, fresh and beautiful verse". He became in 1930 the first non-European to win Nobel Prize in literature. He is sometimes referred to as "The Bard of Bengal". Although Tagore wrote successfully all literary genre, he was first all a poet. Among his 50 and odd volumes of poetry are **Manasi**(1890)[The Ideal One], *Sonar Tari*(1894)[The Golden Boat], *Gitanjali* (1910)[Song Offerings], *Gitimalya*(1914) [Wreath of Songs], *Balaka* (1916)[The Flight of Cranes]. Even today, "he is offen remembered for his poetic songs, which are both spiritual and mercurial.

By applying the feminist ideologies developed during his life time and after, it becomes appropriate to study Tagore as a feminist writer far ahead of his time through the close scrutiny of his plays. Tagore's concern for suffering of women finds echo in his short stories. *Ghater Katha* (story of the Ghat) is Tagore's first short stories in which he has shown the silent suffering of women under patriarchal system. A young women ends her life because her husband becomes a priest after deserting her. The husband rigidly follows his own principles and neglects his wife. The subject of dower has found place in his short stories *Dena Paone* (Profit and Loss). In this story Nirupama is always insulted by her In-laws for bringing less dowry. Her father Ramsunder unable to give them enough Dowry. She discourages her father to fulfil their demands for dowry by saying that it disgrace her as an individual. Her In-laws treats her badly and as a result she dies. NirupamaTells her father

If u give a single paisa more to my father-in-Law;

I swear solemnly you will never she me again.....

Do you think I have no honor? Do you think I am just a moneybag,

The more money in it, the more higher my value?

Another important precursor in feminist criticism is Virginia Woolf. She emerged as a spokesperson for women's cause in the early decade of the 20th century. Virginia Woolf also probes the socio-cultural predicament of women. Her major concerns is about the differential roles assign to and women in our society. The prominent place is assigned to man in history, literature, philosophy and religion women have to suppress their desires and abilities because their sex. According to Virginia Woolf the rights of woman as an individual are severely circumscribed. *A Room of One's Own* by Virginia Woolf metaphorically suggests intellectual freedom but that freedom cannot be achieved without



the freedom of the body. John Stuart Mill analyzed the economic position of women in society. He argued that women's dignity essentially required the power of earning. His emphasis the need of full equality for women so that society could be made perfectly balanced. Mill also advocates freedom of education to women. He expounds the view that if women freed from the bondage of domesticity, it will be better not only for them but also for the whole society. Tagore doesn't think that rationality is essentially a male attribute. His heroines are rational as well as emotional. In all her emotionality Prakriti in Chandalika proves to be a rational one. Prakriti becomes emotional after the inspiring words from the monk. But as soon as enlightenment is drawn upon her, she becomes rational and rationally think what the monk will get after coming there.

Tagore's view on educating women is inherent in Chandalika. Similarly in *Religion on Man* Tagore mentions the spiritual foundation for education. According to him spiritualistic educational system purifies the body, mind and soul. He highly believes that the teaching of religion can never be inculcated in form of lessons. His methods of education gives a sense of humanism to the students. He is completely against any outside punishments on students. "He advised teachers to make the students learn by trail and error methods. He believed that education creates awareness and leads to the pupils self-improvement and character building". His play Chandalika is based on Buddhist Legend of "Sardulkarna Abadan" in R.L. Mitras the Sanskrit Buddhist literature of Nepal. In original story a Chandal girl tries to bewitch a handsome monk to marry her. He tells her that he is unable to marry as he has taken vow of celibacy. Prakriti invites him to her home. She tries to molest him with the help of her mother's black magic. The monk reports it to the lord Buddha. When Prakirti follows the monk in Buddha Monastery, Buddha orders her to shave her head. He preaches her the futility of worldly aspirations. Prakriti realizes her folly and becomes a nun. The story highlights the monk's integrity and Buddha's greatness and presents Prakriti as lascivious girl.

Tagore represents Prakriti as a girl suffering under patriarchal caste system. Nobody has ever spoken kind words to her prior to Ananda. She discloses to her mother that "for the first time I poured water into his cupped hand___the hand of a man the very dust of whose feet I would never have dared to touch". Prakriti's case seems to be that of a rational feminist as defined by Karen. She later says, "women being aware of the difference in women and men biological functions in society. Going deeper into the whole matter we visualize the individualistic claim for uncompromising self-realization." Prakriti is not ready for any compromise. In Prakriti Tagore has portrayed a woman of action, strong will and determination. Her mother is concerned about her and offers personally to invite the monk to graciously come to their house for alms. Prakriti doesn't conquer and says that she will not call him for outside but she will send her call into his soul. Prakriti is a dauntless girl. Her mother tries to dissuades her from a course fraught with grave danger. Prakriti in her boldness says, " no, nothing will be left, the burden and heritage of birth after birth___nothing will remain."

The play *The King and The Queen* is a powerful expression of Tagore concern for female. The King is presented as a lustful man, ignoring his duties towards his state and his wife. The Queen Sumitra is depicted as a woman who is aware of the difficulties faced by the people of the state. The play exposes the domestic sexual violence perpetuated on women by their husband. Sumitra does not surrender herself to the unjust demand of her husband. Tagore has very convincingly portrayed Sumitra as a challenging heroine. She is one of Tagore's ultra-modern heroine. King Vikram complains to Sumitra of coming late



to him. When queen Sumitra replies that she was busy with the service of the house, he orders her to, “leave the house and its service, alone. My heart can’t spare you for my world, I am jealous of its claims.” For Queen Sumitra the service of the people is as important as her husband Vikram. He wants to see her as a shy and silent creature. Tagore seems to portrays active heroines and passive heroes. In the play *The King and The Queen*, the king does not take any action himself to extirpate the rebels. First he asks his ministers to strikes at the root of the evil and orders his general to fight the rebels. On learning that the general himself is a foreigner, he orders to open the treasure for the poor people. None of his commands is relevant. On the other hand the Queen has propensity and courage to take bold decision. She directs all the ministers to call all the chiefs. The king cherishes the image of woman as a wife, mistress and a sex object. Tagore in this play portrays aggressive heroine who protest against sexual violence. The queen threaten to leave the king. On the contrary the king calls her a proud woman and warns her not seek any help from him. He does not believe in the news of her leaving. The king is sure that one day her pride will fritter away and she will return to him. He says that, “she finds the world is not her lover, and that man’s heart is the only world for a woman.”

Rabindranath Tagore is a poet, artist, social reformer, philosopher, educationist and dramatist. He has written nearly seventeen plays. Feminism in the west arouse as a reaction against in human condition of women. it was believed that women live in an inert and passive world of their own. Man never recorded in history the contributions made by women and their resultant suffering. Tagore has interest, sympathy, concern and love for women, so he takes up the cause of newly emancipated section of women. The strong, assertive Indian woman depicted by Tagore can be seen not as habitually but accidentally and exceptionally, so it is necessary for all of us to read and study Tagore’s woman so that we can make our girls, women as strong characters.

References:

1. Tagore, Rabindranath. Chitra. London: Mac Millan, 1914.
2. The English Writing of Rabindranath Tagore. 2 vols. Ed. Sisir Kumar Das. New Delhi: SahityaAkademi, 2002.
3. Bhatt, S.K. Indian English Drama: A Critical Study. New Delhi: Sterling, 1987.
4. Borthwick, Meredith. The Changing Role of Women in Bengal (1849-1905). New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1984.
5. Pathan, M.D. “Feminism Reflected in Rabindranath Tagore’s Play: ‘Chitra’, ‘Natir Puja’ and ‘Chandalika’”. International referred Journal 17 (2011).
6. Woolf, Virginia. Room of One’s Own. London: The Hogarth Press, 1959.