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REFLECTION OF WOMANHOOD : TAGORE'S SELECT FICTION



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ABSTRACT

Tagore's literary works and novel do not have an expiry date. Even today we read Tagore with great zeal and enthusiasm. Tagore was one of the greatest minds of India. Many scholars and the researchers read and study Tagore even today. His dramas, legends, poems etc. are studied by various research scholars. But the present research paper focuses on the novels of Tagore. The Scholar will study Tagore's Gora, Chaturanga, Yogayog. Among these

novels, scholars select women characters and present the reflection of womanhood. His women Characters like Sucharita and Lolita from Gora, Damini from Chaturanga, Kumudini and Shymasundari from Yogayog these women characters depict the reflection of womanhood.

KEYWORDS

Womanhood, Chaturanga, Sucharita, Damini, Kumudini

RESEARCH PAPER

Womanhood:

Simple definition of womanhood is that the state of being a woman is called womanhood. Being woman means being a valuable member of society. Being woman also means is an adult female human whose encouragement sharpness, sweetness, compassion, tenderness, warmth, apathy, obedience, expressivity, modesty and being emotional, kind helpful, devoted and understanding have been cited as stereotypically feminine.

Woman in traditional Society:

The role of women in traditional society as a housewife traditionally was the dominating social role of the woman. Taking care of the family being focused on children and their happiness, men are supposed to look after the home. It means that traditionally care taking comes naturally to woman. The status of woman in traditional society particularly at the down of the British rule in India reached the lowest level in the society. Being a wife, woman faces from a male dominating society child marriage, harmful traditional practices enforced widowhood, Sati, Devadasi, *Purdah*, dowry, female infanticide, feticide...etc.

How it comes in Tagore's fiction:

Rabindranath Tagore's novels were written about a hundred years ago. Though his novels highly influential in introducing Indian culture to the West and vice versa, Tagore was mostly concerning as the outstanding creative artist of early 20th-century India. In 1913, he becomes the first non-European to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Tagore's plays, poems, dance, drama, short stories, novels and his essays give vastness of his corpus. It is a daunting task to bring together novels on his entire corpus. His novels revolve round the various social issues; particularly woman and womanhood are relevant to a variety of fields. No doubt, there are various aspects of the issues of woman in society. Tagore's select novels reflect burning issues related to woman and womanhood. Such as Feminism, gender discrimination, psychological elements, widowhood, marital cape, Sexual liaison, lack of equality etc.

Some Contemporary writers:

Some contemporary writers of Tagore were contributing for Indian Freedom as well as Indian woman. Among them, Subramania Bharati, a Tamil writer popularly known as Mahakavi Bharathi, he fought with British for the emancipation of women against child marriage. He is also in solidarity with Dalits and Muslims, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Indian novelist, composer of *Vande Mataram* and he is known as Sahitya Samarat in Bengal, Female leaders like Sarojini Naidu, won an Indian political activist and poet. He is a proponent of civil rights, women's emancipation, imperialistic ideas, drama especially women's education; Pritilata waddedar, Bengali revolutionary nationalist from the Indian Subcontinent, Begum Rokeya a pioneer of women's liberation in South Asia.

The treatment given by Tagore:

In his novel, Tagore portrays women as leading spirits, his woman characters played a crucial role in discovering womanhood and issues related to womanhood. Tagore was truly a person with an exceptional brain. His women characters are unique keeping traditional ways of life but truly revolutionaries and make equal dignity and rights for woman.

How they prove their womanhood:

Rabindranath Tagore's fiction is characterized by womanhood. His woman characters are progressive and reveal a fresh position to the minds already filled with traditional Indian values. Tagore giving a voice to women through his novels, his leading heroines who were held talented and empowered challenged to the root of patriarchal notions of 19th Century India. Tagore's novels set in late 19th and early 20th century Pre-partitioned Bengal. His woman character took bold steps under patriarchal burden in the nostalgic old Bengal under Colonial rule. He focuses on different issues related to womanhood. In 1911, Tagore took over the leadership of the Adi Brahma Samaj he broke orthodox conventions and shows signs of revival as his female protagonist shows in his novels.

Tagore's select novels.

6.1. The story of Gora:

Gora is the masterpiece in the fictional world of Tagore. The story of Gora set in Calcutta in the 1880s during the British Raj. It is the longest novel of him. Theme includes liberation, universalism, brotherhood, gender, feminism, caste, class nationalism and the Brahma samaj. In Gora, there are two parallel love stories of two pairs of lovers, Gora and Sucharita, Binoy and Lolita. Both Lolita and Sucharita are heroines of the novel. Lolita is regarded as the most effective lady character if we compare Lolita with the elder sister Sucharita. We find a lot of difference between the two, Lolita is outspoken and lively while Sucharita is too serious, silent and clam. Lolita is frank, never pretends to be brave, enough to rebel against the whole society, she has full youthfulness and vitality. Lolita is the representative of modern girl. She is witty, lively, talkative, rash, bold and careless about the criticism of the society. She is attractive and lovable female character on the novel.

6.2. The story of Chaturanga: It is a brilliantly written novel which makes even dry subject comes alive in words. Tagore's novels stand apart from other and close to reality and are as uncertain and indefinite as life. Chaturanga is a novella, Tagore has dealt with lots of philosophical questions regarding atheism and religion. In this novel, there are has four main characters Sachish, Sribilash, Damini and uncle Jagmohan. Sachish is sure of his religious aptitude, he is swayed by the love and devotion of Damini, a widow of Swami Lilanda's disciple at his juncture, he is confused between the three points of a triangle, social atheism, superstitions religion and natural attraction for woman.

6.3. The Story of Yogayog:

In this novella, the portrayal of the society is made as it existed. In the early 20th Century, Bengal are the warring families of the Chatterjees and Gehoshals. Yogayog depicts the decline of the landed aristocracy in Bengal and emergence of an entrepreneur class. The central character Kumudini is caught in this clash of values. The last daughter of a Zamindar family of a refined taste, but deepened resources she is married off to a self-made man who is proud of his enormous wealth. Kumudini, the protagonist of the story is an independent woman who loves to learn and lives in her own world. Kumudini chooses to be with her brother even when financial scales are firmly in hands of her husband. In the end, when she finds herself in a situation that makes her go back to her marital home. She knows that it is only to deal with the situation and not to accept the situation. It is a story fiercely independent woman.

Reflection of womanhood:

Thus, Rabindranath Tagore presents womanhood in his select novels. Tagore played a major role in introducing Indian Literature to the world, his women portrayal was very intricate and detailed, he did not simply portray them as a damsel in distress, the angel of the house or as an evil temptress His women were layered and presented his more nuanced personality. Thus, there is the reflection of womanhood in Tagore's Gora, Chaturanga, Yogayog. Tagore created women characters who were allowed and much ahead of their time may be reflection he wanted to hold up for society.

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