

Scripting of women: In the writing of Rabindranath Tagore

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Abstract:

The paper explores Rabindranath Tagore engagement with the wave of feminist approach in his writings in the nineteenth century Bengal. Known distinctly for his collection of poems, stories, prose, novels, Tagore keep the women always in the forefront in his novels to convey the feminism. His pen became the weapon for expressing his belief for the upliftment of women or empowering women through his different writings. His writing generally focuses on women's equality, liberalization, freedom, dignity and rights. In his writings for the women empowerment he attempted to contribute to the social world regarding his thought of **“Where the mind is without fear and world is held high, where the knowledge is free and world has not been broken into fragments.”** This paper focuses on female protagonists by content analyzing the different portrayal of women by scripting their lives. Tagore portray the merciless society has obstructed the thoughts of the women to convey their thoughts and feelings.

The methodology used in the study is content analysis on the type of literature Tagore provided in his study about the women in his different stories and novel as for example “Choker Bali”, portrayal of a young women and her desire towards her life, “Kabuliwala”, a connection of a little girl with a refugee hawker, “Strir Patra”, portrayal of a women who put up her voice in regards for her self- identification. Like this the study deals with the different portrayal of women and comparing those nineteenth century women with that of today's women and their status in today's scenario and the changes which took place till today.

Introduction:

Rabindranath Tagore being a protagonist always tries to bring the women's contribution to the society. Though the women portrayed in his writing were in their traditional forms but still they influence the society

of that time. His writing contributed much to the today's society and come up as a alarming bell for the ladies to today to put their voice for their liberalization. The example quoted could be the case of rape victim in 2013, named as Nirbhaya kand, where the girl was returning with his friend from the movie and was brutally raped. Later people called her by any names and one of the names given were Damini, which was acquired from one of the novel of Tagore, Chaturanga (1916).

The Nobel Prize winner, Rabindranath Tagore was born on 7 may, 1861. He belongs to a well versed family where grandfather was a business tycoon and owned huge estates, and also a confederate of Ram Mohan Roy, Known for Reawakening Bengal. Rabindranath Tagore father Debendranath (1817–1905), was also a apostle of Raj Ram Mohan Roy and after his demise he he revived the Brahma Samaj. His life was very disciplined and controlled after being the son of such a wealthy father and his preaching can be seen in the writing of Rabindranath Tagore. Rabindranath Tagore was gifted with all the members in the family with art, poetry and writing which could easily been seen in his one of the writings.

“Most of the members of my family had some gift ... some were artists, some poets, some musicians, and the whole atmosphere was permeated with the spirit of creation.” *

Rabindranath Tagore being the writer and poet put forward his words for the upliftment of the women empowerment in that society which can be witnessed nowadays also. Today's women can be compared with one of the rhapsodic Nobel of Rabindranath Tagore “Shesher Kobita”, in which the main part played by a female combatant “Lavanya”, who is a well- educated, high thinking, ideological girl who hails from a middle class family falls in love with an Oxford returned man named “Amit” and Tagore brings about the institution of love marriage at that time.

With the changing scenario of the image of the women has also changed with national integration. Today women now won't feel like a dominant person but now they have come up as equal genders with the men in the society.

The extraneously contradictory point of view share an important commonality which provide the recognition to the modern womanhood into modern changing nation into women nationhood, being in the sovereign state, it somewhere follows another path from that of the men.

Literature Review:

Rabindranath Tagore, being the greatest poet, philosopher was known for writing poems, drama, play and novels. In most of the Tagore writing one can find more about women struggle, their inner strength and the role played by them in different situation and at different places according to the changes taken place by the society. In Tagore friction, women are portrayed in different ways, their life's were being characterized into different forms that is the relationship between men and women, their social oppression, the new form of self-driven and confident women.

From his first work of short story, Beggar Girl (1877) to his final work, The Bad Name (1941), the readers discover how women can be the most transformation within social life. The personality changes by every plots and this led to the alterations made in the social society.

In the early period of Tagore writing (1810-1897), the women's are part of injustice done by the society and the harsh realities faced by the women in the rural surroundings. The description of women needs not to be the passive is well depicted in his book, "Heroine of Tagore", "A study in the transition of Indian Society" (1968).

In the second period of his writing (1893- 1913), being the most imaginative period of his life. The era witnessed the portrayal of urban and educated women in the society; example is the Heroine in the bachelor's club (1990) pleads for human rights.

He not only portrayed the urban, rural and educated women but also shown the side of the widowed were carefully presented. They served as the two sides of the coin, one side the conflict of the society relating with the widow and on the other side the conflict of the women with themselves. The Choker Bali (1903),

depict the story of widow Binodini, her unfulfilled love and struggle with her own passion. On the other hand, another widow Damini, ignoring all the social rituals and dilemma, start her new beginning with her new husband.

In the maturity stage of the Tagore writing (1914-1941), this era witnessed the new form of women who spoke outrageously in front of the society for the well-being of the abolishing ills of the society like, caste system, untouchability, religious hypocrisy and raised their voice for women education and their professional careers, this has shown in his writings of *Laboratory* (1941), in which he shows the mental make-up of two ladies, a mother and daughter, where mother Sohini was high in conventional social values and traditions and her daughter Nila, come up as a catalyst from this conventional thoughts like her mother and violating traditional values for the sake of science. In Tagore poem *Geetanjali*, one of the phrase justify his type of women portrayed, *“Hidden in the heart of things thou art nourishing seeds into sprouts, buds into blossoms, and ripening flowers into fruitfulness.”*

Comparison of Women of today with that of Tagore portrayal:

The greater number of people voluntarily or involuntarily tends to be the part of the movies and media to influence their society. As Rabindranath Tagore has framed the structure of society through his writings, poems, novels, drama, the same media has created the socio-cultural influence in the society.

The media has changed the age old belief of women that women are meant to do the household chores and doing their work without pain hassle and getting tired. Now the scenario has changed and women have power to make their decisions like their male counterparts as also depicted by Rabindranath Tagore in his writings which can be seen in today's changing world.

Today media has played a vital role in unraveling the women empowerment and reflect the lifestyle, social development, cooperation level, educational standards and image building in the society. New media has framed the image of women not only as the sexual objectification but the other side of the coin where the women has portrayed as brave, courageous, and social uplifting human being.

Studies have found the social issues related to women's equality and adhering opportunity, as media, whether it be a film, television, print, advertisement let the people think about the women in not as a sexual toy but as the women who can stand side by side with the men driven society and make their own position in the men's society.

Conclusion:

Though women went through the significant changes in today's world but this change was seen in the writings of Rabindranath Tagore during nineteenth century. The women activism shown in Rabindranath Tagore writing can be easily seen in today's century which was only in the writings of Tagore and now women are following and doing that.

Each of the women in todays and in nineteenth century was verbalization of empyrean soul, or the soul in the form called Aatma. If every person attains this value and become the identical part of each human being whether male or female as one and equal opportunity for each other and this generate love and concern for the fellow beings. In the words of *Vrihadaranyaka*, Yajnavalka:

The wife loves her husband not because he is her husband, or the mother loves her son not because he is her son. This love blooms only because the same self is immanent in all, only because the wife finds herself in her husband, and the

Mother in her son. Ibid., p. 50.

The above lines tries to procure the impression of unanimity, It explains the role of women as a wife and a mother that love never changes only the dimension of the love changes it sights, love never binds the interest among the beloved, the same is portrayed in Tagore literature with that of the todays women.

Rabindranath Tagore also confines the boundary of ego and self-respect among the women and men and also the position given to the female in this male dominating society, where the life to the freedom of portraying their feelings and their optimism which was now shown by the media and portraying female as the powerful status in the society. The following example from one of the poem of Rabindranath Tagore Arogyo, poem 33, *Rabindra Rachanabali*, vol. 3, p. 835. can be quoted:

*Let the veil of 'I' fall apart
and the pure light of consciousness
break through the mists
revealing the everlasting face of truth.*

Rabindranath Tagore wrote an exceptionally huge number of essays and books. In his works, he exteriorizes his broad socio-political, as well as spiritual, dogma, and in effect presents us with a Choate philosophy and perception of life and the universe. The following tribute paid to Tagore by Haraprasad Shastri taken by (Cf. 'Foreword', in Ramananda Chatterjee (ed.), *The Golden Book of Tagore*, and Calcutta: The Golden Book Committee, 1931, p. iii.

He has tried all phases of literature – couplets, stanzas, short poems, longer pieces, short stories, fables, novels, and prose romances, dramas, farces, comedies and tragedies, songs, operas,...and last but not least, lyric poems. He has succeeded in every phase of literature he has touched ... His essays are illuminating, his sarcasms biting, his satires piercing. His estimate of old poets is deeply appreciative, and his grammatical and lexicographical speculations go further inward than those of most of us

Reality of the new world:

In the writing of Rabindranath Tagore, he portrayed the today's fearful women who is not at all of the nineteenth century and keep on ruling her life in her conditions and keep on changing the society and try to live in that society where the men leads the women, somehow this situation was also seen in the

twenty first century women that they are also protesting for their well-being, for their equality, and for their presence in the society rather than only that for men. They are trying to come of this male dominating society and to some extent they have secured this even but as always there are always two sides of the coin, the one is light and another one is the darker part of the coin.

The worse part of the whole story is that there is no or some revolution from the counterpart of men, no change to prejudice prognostication and there should be no regrets from any part of the society. We have somehow taken the whole spectrum of dialogues, stories and portrayal of women as way of our life or as if of no concomitant. People has not realized that if this consequences of disrespect will fall for the women then the womanhood will be at its end and no future generation will be respecting the women in any manner, whether, mother, sister, wife or justa women in the society. Therefore, it is advisable that, media must air the programmes relating to improvement of women's status that they are free to profess themselves as human beings, socially part of the society, morally and politically with men. There should be pragmatic depiction of women taking note of their role in all aspect of life. This will help the women to come out of the stereotype projection of the world and society.

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