



VERSATILITY IN TAGORE'S SHORT-STORIES

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ABSTRACT

Rabindranath Tagore the great master in Literature arouses human feelings and emotions through the medium of short-stories. He is a genius in producing versatility themes in his works. He turns the readers with tears, satisfaction, laughter and many feelings. "The Hungry Stones and the Other Stories" are his collection of short-stories which deals with the human behaviour in a realistically way. 'The Hungry Stones' and 'Living or Dead?' are the stories which had mystery and paranormal elements. In the story 'Living or dead?' he gives a vivid picture of a woman who was longing to lead a happy life. At the end, he gives an oxymoron sense that "Kadambini proved that she was not dead by dying". 'The Hungry Stones' had some paranormal elements which deal with wandering souls. 'My Lord, The Baby' is a story of service and loyalty in extreme where a servant gives his own child to his master. The servant 'Raicharan' is the soul of loyalty. 'Cabuliwallah' is the story which portrays the affection of the father's towards their daughter. The narrator's heart feels for the daughter in the unknown place. 'Vision' is the story about the relationship between husband and wife. The Wife Kumo who lost her eyes because of her husband's wrong treatment and her mental struggle. 'Renunciation' is the story talks about true love which happens after marriage. Tagore here deals with the issues on caste system. The hero Hemanta renounces everything for a woman who trusted him completely. 'Once, There was a King' is a story which had some autobiographical elements. It is a story within a story. Thus, Tagore proved the world that he is a versatile genius.

Key words: Human behaviour, happy life, soul of loyalty, relationship.

Short-story is the brief work of Literature which was written in a narrative form with considerable length. The form Short-story is derived from the oral storytelling tradition. The short story also has characters, plot, and theme. It is the shortened form of novel. The central aim of the short story is to create an 'impression' and convey a moral. Characterization, plot-construction and atmosphere are very important in the short story. According to A.H.Upham the short story writer must have "an idea or an impression to communicate from the first to last".

In English Literature, Short- story was introduced by Geoffrey Chaucer in his "Canterbury Tales" and Giovanni Boccaccio "Decameron". But Short -story became a popular medium in the 20th century. The famous Short- story writers are Edgar Allan Poe, Thomas Hardy, O Henry, Guy de Maupassant, Aldous Huxley, Rudyard Kipling.

In Indian Literature too Short-story plays a vital role. The birth of Short-story in India is also by the oral tradition of telling a story of God, adventures of a great hero. Mainly it was developed by myth. Hindu Purana's and epic like Mahabharata and Ramayana contains many short stories.

In India we have many short story writers among them Rabindranath Tagore was the great master in writing a short story. Rabindranath Tagore was born on 7th may 1861, sobriquet Gurudev. He is considered by many to be an Indian writer who has made Literary Impact on both East and West. He is the first Non- European to win the Nobel Prize in Literature for his collection of self-translated poem Gitanjali in 1913. He was a prolific writer. He modernised Bengali literature by spurning rigid classical forms and resisting linguistic strictures. His novels, stories, plays, essays talks about the topics of politics and personal. The Home and the World is his well-known work deals about the affection between husband and wife, and about the freedom movement. He showed his patriotism not only in his writings but in his real life too. His Anti-nationalistic views made him to denounce the RAJ Award which was given by the British Government. Many Indian writers of his time try to create awareness about freedom movement. But among them Tagore is different, because he created awareness among the people with artistic taste. He is the pioneer of Bengali Renaissance in the field of literature.

Tagore is considered as a versatile genius. Versatile not only in the sense of writing, various genres like novel, prose, poem, drama but to write in one genre and giving various realistic views in the same genre. Tagore is known as a Philosopher, Novelist, Playwright and Short-story writer. It is really great task for the writer to create an impression and to move the readers' heart. Only few writers in this world were the masters in this technique. Among them Tagore was the one who moved the audience with his writing. In order to change the mindset of the people he does not a long narrative form like Novel, he not even need a dialogue form like drama. He simply changed the people with his realistic views on human behaviour through his Short-stories.

Yes, we all knew Tagore as a great poet who received a Nobel Prize for his self-translated poem 'Gitanjali' in 1913. Many critics said that Tagore as a great poet but the truth is, Tagore is one of the greatest Short story writers in the world. It is easy for the writer to make people laugh, but it is really a great task for the writer to move the readers with tears and awe.

Tagore is the great master who knows the pulse of the reader and arouses their feelings. He wasn't a writer for the children, not for youngsters, not for the older people, but for the people of all the ages. Because he was not particularize his writing for any group, but for all. Tagore's Short-stories were the inspirational one for the students. Even though it doesn't convey a moral to the society, it influenced people with its humanitarian approach. It helps the people to understand the human feeling. Here, I present some of the short stories of Tagore in which I found the human feelings.

"Victory" is the story of a singer who lost in a singing completion. But in his final breath he achieved one thing what he believed as a victorious one. The court poet Sekhar was extremely good in music; unfortunately he

lost position against his rival. He succeeded in getting his position as a 'successful poet' in the heart of the princess whom he never seen but wishes to see her face. Most of Tagore's work has Oxymoronic sense, like the poet loses his competition but at the end he portrait as a victorious one. When the story ends the readers feel sorry for the court poet Sekhar. This story inspired young people because it had some love elements. The sound of the golden ankles, the shadow behind the veil which captured the eyes of the poet are all the love elements which attracted the young readers.

"Once There Was A King" is a story which has some autobiographical elements. The story portrays the mentality of the nine years old boy. It is a story with in a story where nine years old Tagore wanted to escape from his lessons and happens to hear the story of a Brahmin boy who wants to know the princess in the palace with seven wings and what is his relationship with the Princess. Tagore with his simple narrative skill made the readers to sit in the edge of the seat and ends the story with the death of the Brahmin boy whom till the end doesn't know the truth that the Princess is his wife. The little Tagore and the readers feel sorry for Brahmin boy. The readers wished the boy would come back to his life by some incantation as Tagore wished when he heard this story from his grandmother. The title itself showed that it is the story for the children.

"Vision" is another story by Tagore which talks about the affection of woman with her husband and her brother. Kumo is the simple country girl who lost her 'vision' because of her husband's medical experiment. Kumo loves her husband so much, that's why rejected the medicines which was given by her Dada (brother). Kumo's husband Abinash realises his mistake after ruining her eyes. He always called her as his 'Goddess' and she also called him as her 'God'. Both the husband and wife lead a happy life. Abinash became famous doctor in the town and earned money. It changed him a lot; he wanted to marry another woman. Here Tagore portrays an affection of a brother. Kumo's brother wanted to save his sister's life. So, he married Hemangini whom Abinash wishes to marry. At the end Kumo had her vision, not literally but her sense awakens and she started to see everything in a dark. She said to Abinash "*I am not going to be a goddess any longer. I am simply your own little wife. I am just an ordinary woman*". Here Tagore expresses little bit feminism. Finally Abinash changed and said "*Never again put me to shame by calling your God*". Kumo forgive her husband at the end.

"Renunciation" is the story which talks about the caste system in the society. Harihar Mukherjee was the man of orthodox Brahmin. Unfortunately led his son's marriage with the girl who belongs to the Kayestha. This story has a wonderful hero named Hemanta who loved his wife sincerely and boldly renounce his religion.

Comparing Hemanta with Abinash, both these characters are created by Tagore. The later try to renounce his wife, because of her weakness. But the former renounce everything for his wife Kusum. The later called his wife as 'Goddess' but he never treat her in that way. Hemanta never called his wife as Goddess, but he proved that she is his Goddess by renounce everything.

Tagore not only talks about the love and caste system. He also talks about the loyalty through the work of "My Lord the Baby". Raicharan is the perfect portrait of sincerity and loyalty. He gave his own son to his master Ankul, who lost his son because of Raicharan.

Raicharan who mistakenly lost the child of his master Ankul, went through many hard labour and brought up his own son in rich manner and gave him to his master's wife to ends her twelve years agony. This character is the portrait of faithful and loyalty.

"Home Coming" is a story which gives an vivid image of a fourteen years old boy named Phatik Chakrovati. A fatherless boy who always fought with his brother Makhnan and troubled her widowed mother. In order to lessen her burden, her brother Bishamber took the responsibility of Phatik and took him to his place, where Phatik struggled a lot mentally and physically and longing to go back to his mother. This story portrays

the mental agony of Phatik, at the end the author make the reader to turned with tears where Phatik in a unconscious state asking his mother whether the Holiday comes or not.

“Cabuliwallah” is a story which shows the love affection of the father. In this story, Tagore indirect portraits the condition of the people who leave their motherland to earn money. He also set an emotional state of those men who are all leave everything in their country.

Rahmun was a fruit-seller came from Afghanistan to India. He had a little customer named Mini, Rahmun liked her so much, because Mini resembled his own daughter Amina. Mini’s father was quite interested in his daughter’s new friend. Fate does not let Rahmun to go to his native, he stabbed a man and imprisoned for some years. When he was released, he came to see Mini, whom now turned as a bride. Mini’s father glad to see his daughter’s old friend but not in the time. Rahmun was still the same as when Mini was young. He was eager to see Mini, after seeing her; he revealed his story to Mini’s father. He had nothing but an ink-smear hand lay in the paper which was the touch of his own daughter, it proved that she had been always on his heart.

As a father of daughter, Mini’s father understand Rahmun’s feeling and his heart began to feel for the daughter of unknown place. He helped Rahmun with money and ask him to go back to his native and have the happiness of meeting his only child Amina. This story turns most of the readers with tears. Tagore stirs the readers mind with true emotions and feeling. Cabuliwallah not only story which talks about the true love and affection of the father towards their daughters, but also talks about the social system of Bengal and the child marriage.

All these works talks about the reality and normal life but here are two examples of Tagore which gives us an image of mystery and paranormal things. “Living or Dead?” and “The Hungry Stones” are talk about the realm of mystery and paranormal. In the story ‘Living or Dead’ the women Kadambini, who was a widow when she was young proved the world that she was not died by dying. Here Tagore gives us an confused statement that “*Kadambini prove the world that she was not died by throwing herself from the roof and dying*”. It shows the genius of Tagore, he portraits the versatility of human life in his Short-stories.

Writing a short story three things are considered important. They are Character,plot and atmosphere. Tagore use all these thing in his writing and proved to the world that, he is not only the great poet but also the great master in writing shot stories. All his Short stories create an ‘impression’ from the beginning to the end. His stories communicate ideas of love, family, loyalty, society, condition of women and their desire for life and caste system in India.

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