

Inhuman treatment of women in Rabindranath Tagore's the Renuciation

K.Ravi

Assistant Professor of English, Annai Fathima College of Arts and Science
Thirumangalam, Madurai Dist, India

Abstract

Rabindranath Tagore's compassion and sympathy towards societal issues of his contemporary society finds expression in his works in a deep insightful manner, but at his humanistic way. The method of the study is chiefly based on Tagore's sense of identity for women and thereby enabling them to revolt all types of tyranny and injustice. "The Renuciation", Women characters are struggled for their rights, identity and human dignity.

KEYWORDS: Dignity, tyranny, injustice, rights and sympathy

Introduction

Human beings are rational beings. They by virtue of their being, human possess certain basic and inalienable rights which are commonly known as human rights. Since these rights belong to them because of their very existence, they become operative with their birth. Human rights, being the birth right, are therefore inherent in all the individuals irrespective of their caste, creed, religion, sex and nationality. These rights are essential for all the individuals as they are consonance with their freedom and dignity and are conducive to physical, moral, social and spiritual welfare. Human rights are also sometimes referred to as fundamental rights, basic rights, inherent rights, natural rights and birth rights.

There are certain groups of human beings which either by nature or because of deep-rooted customs is weak and vulnerable, such as, a child, women and persons belonging to a particular race or caste. The conditions which the downtrodden is enforced are really shocking though one can only share their aches and agonies. Their plight is so dire that even for the fulfillment of the basic needs like water and food; they had to depend on the mercy of high-caste Hindus. This short story is a faithful record and a transcription of the pathetic plight of the downtrodden who were subjected to immitigable social indignities only because of their lowly birth.

Critical Analysis

In "The Renuciation" Hemanta is the protagonist of this story. Harihar is the father of Hemanta. He was the head of the community and he belonged to old generation. He supported the customs of feudal patriarchal society. In the story, Peari Sankar had been one of the victims and he decided to take revenge on Harihar. Harihar usually follows the custom of prohibiting of inter-caste marriage. Peari Sankar planned to take revenge upon Harihar. He encouraged Hemanta to fall in love with Kusum.

The next morning, Hemanta came to the house of Peari Sankar and he welcomed him to his house. Hemanta told him that Peari Sankar had defiled their caste through the marriage of Kusum. Hemanta asked him if he had preserved his caste but Peari Sankar smiled with a slight like sarcastic. He wished that his Brahmin- fury could reduce Peari Sankar to ashes in a moment but his rage burnt only himself. Peari Sankar sat before him without any health problem.

Peari Sankar asked one question to him and explained what his only daughter had done against her father. He explained that his son-in-law (Nabakanta) ran away to England after stealing his daughter's jewels and he returned as a lawyer after five years. In the meantime, Hemanta studied at school in Calcutta. Hemanta's father declared;

"If I sent my daughter to her husband's home, I must renounce her for good, and never again allow her to cross my threshold".(Tagore,2010,p-519)

Sankar felt at his father's feet and implored him, saying: 'Brother, save me this once. Hemanta's father remained obdurate and Peari Sankar said goodbye to village and he settled in Calcutta. He told him that the troubles had followed him again through Harihar. When Sankar had made every arrangement for his nephew's marriage, Harihar stirred up the girl and broke the match off. He decided to take revenge against Hemanta's father.

When Peari Sankar was attending college, Bipradas Chatterji used to live next door near to his lodings. The poor fellow is dead now. In his house there lived a child-widow called Kusum, the destitute orphan of a Kayestha gentleman. The old man desined to shield her. The girl's behaviour excited suspicion in the old man's mind because she often went to the top of the roof, to hang her washing out to dry and she made frequent mistakes in her household duties. Peari told Chatterji that Chatterji had long desire to go on pilgrimage to Benares and he asked him to leave the girl to me and he was ready to take care of her and take her as her father from the house of Sripati Chatterji. Today Peari Sankar was very happy because he told everything to Hemanta about Kusum. Hemanta rose and took his departure without waiting for this hospitality. Hemanta was sitting on the site of the bed next to the open window, gazing at the darkness in front of him.

Kusum lay on the floor, clasping her husband's feet with both her arms and her face hesting them. And they approached Haihar Mukerji but he told them that he could not allow the girl to his house and the girl should be sent out of the house soon. Kusum, as she heard this, enlarged her husband's feet with all the ardour of a lifetime, kissed him with love them with kiss, and touching her forehead to them, withdrew herself unlike other weak intellectuals. Hemanta told his father that he should not forsake his wife. "The Renunciation shows the writer's deep faith in love. The love of Hemanta for Kusum elevates him to a higher ideal and gives him the strength to struggle against the injustice of society" (Dominic,2009,p-82). Through this story, Tagore reveals the practice of child marriage prevailing in the society. He also encouraged inter-caste marriage to abolish Communal riot among the people.

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