

Silence, Expression, And Subjectivity: Representation of Female Agency in the Selected Short Stories of Tagore

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ABSTRACT: This paper examines two distinctive female protagonists who have been delineated by the cultural pioneer of the Bengali Renaissance Rabindranath Tagore, who has performed superbly to stand out from the commonplace through some of his short fictions among his vast number of literary creations. The analysis portrays that Tagore's short stories are elaborate descriptions of female actions and deeds. Most of the female characters at that time were compelled to face oppression due to patriarchal and societal constraints. Stories such as "Punishment" (Shasti in Bengali) and "Fury Appeased" (Manbhanjan in Bengali) portray two of Tagore's female characters- Chandara and Giribala with respect to their silences, their voices, and their role as subjects of short stories. The interposition of women's roles and their revolt in Tagore's short fiction makes the writings everlasting popular to all. In view of this, the paper aims to explore the manifestation of two women's silence, the expression of those women characters, and the depiction of those women as subjects in two selected short stories by Tagore.

KEYWORDS: Female protagonists; oppression; patriarchal; societal constraints; revolt.

1. INTRODUCTION

Representation of women in literature refers to how female characters, experiences, and voices are portrayed in literary works. This includes how women are described, what roles they play, how much agency they have, and whether their perspectives are fully developed or stereotyped. Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) was the first Bengali writer to take short story as a serious art form and deal with real and contemporary life. He established a new artistic and intellectual standard to Bengali literature with this genre.¹ He has been acknowledged as one of the best short story writers, and often has been compared with the best of the European writers. He was also the founder of the short story form in Bengali literature.

Indian women's rare quality of courage, piety, obedience, love, and devotion are the themes of many of Tagore's stories. The treatment of women and their position in society were of serious concern to Rabindranath Tagore. Being a sensitive man and the supreme romantic poet of Bengal, he understood women in all their joy and sorrow, hope and despair, their yearnings and their dreams. Tagore found in the women of his country an immense wealth their courage against all odds, their power of survival under the worst possible conditions and oppression, their forbearance, their self-sacrifice and gentleness. It pained him to see such a colossal waste of so much human treasure.

The female characters in Rabindranath's stories are more brilliant and the characters attain a perfection that is rare for men. By making women perform small duties and go through the cycle of small joys and sorrows, the author has given them a completeness and harmony that is extremely rare in male characters. Male characters may be larger, but female characters are more complete. Male characters are complex in the assembly of many elements and many emotions, while female characters are simple in comparison. This simplicity is also a reason for perfection. Because in any case, the female characters in the stories are more brilliant and meaningful than the male characters. I think there is no disagreement on this.²

Bengali family life is quite unvarnished; moreover, some old and worn-out reforms have given rise to a mentality of resentment among us that even in this diverse family life, we do not see the occasional remarkable events and personalities that emerge in pre-Rabindra literature. In Bankim's entire literature, the idea that a woman can have any independent voice in family life, other than considering her husband as a god, has been ruthlessly ignored. The married woman of Bankim's literature is a saintly woman and a husband's soul. Moreover, Bankim couldn't think that she could stand up as an independent identity in times of hardship. However, it is not impossible that a woman can suddenly stand up as a strong and independent personality in family life, but the characteristic of other writers is the strong display of resentment and denial of women's independence. In Rabindranath Tagore, we first see the respectful view of women with which he was able to understand almost every role of women in this country in family and social life and portray it in stories.³

The violence, both psychological and physical, against women in Bengali society was found everywhere. Its functioning

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was sometimes blatant but often subtle, insidious, and invisible. What was worse was that the society as a whole, even the women, seemed to have gotten used to this slow poisoning without realizing the effect it cumulatively had on it. There was very little protest and the poison had gradually settled in the 'body-society'. Through his stories, and novels Tagore wanted to shape public opinion, personal beliefs, and the society's self-perception. He wished to bring out into the open, and consciously and critically look at the position of women in our society. He wanted these stories to be the mirror in which men would see themselves and would want to change, for it was necessary to bring about a change in the way men looked at themselves in order to change the lives of women.

Among the female characters in the stories of Tagore- Chandara, Giribala, Kadambini, Ratan, Mini, Subha, Mrinmayi, Uma, the dumb girl in the story Shubhodrishti, Didi, Jaykali, and others are bright and successful. One reason for this is that the female characters live in a simple, natural yet narrow environment, where it is not difficult to achieve perfection. But for some reason, when they are separated from that environment, they are cut off from the storehouse of life and die; for example, Subha and Phatik. Again, Uma and Giribala are examples of another kind of irony. Chandara in the story of "Punishment" and Giribala in the story of "Fury Appeased", Shashi in the story of "Elder Sister," are all examples of successful silent self-sacrifice. Among them, Chandara and Dakshinababu's first wife have sacrificed themselves so silently that they have been deprived of even public fame. Shashi and Giribala have left an imprint of rebellion. On the occasion of drawing the character of Giribala, Rabindranath said that he created her by mixing the colours, flavours and affection of nature with human nature.⁴

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

To justify the undertaking of this research, it is very much necessary to evaluate the relevant works. A sound review of literature generally opens before a researcher the knowledge gap. In literary discussion, 'representation of women' is one of the most focused themes. Many researchers and critics try to examine the issue of various authors.

Pooja Kohali and Kavita Bisht examine Rabindranath Tagore's portrayal of women and Nature in his four short stories ('Subha', 'Vision', 'Postmaster', 'Debits and Credits') highlighting the deep and symbolic bond between the two.⁵ The analysis demonstrates that Tagore consistently associates women with care, empathy, and environmental sensitivity, suggesting a shared experience of marginalisation and exploitation. His narratives reveal an early ecological awareness that closely resonates with eco-feminist thought, particularly in critiquing patriarchal domination over both women and the natural world. Dr. C. Ramya analyses ('Vision', 'Wife's Letter', 'Living and the Dead', 'Personality') the fictional art and forte of Rabindranath Tagore's five stories with a focus on the sufferings, agonies, distractions faced by modern woman searching for self-identity.⁶ Anchal Tiwari, in this present paper, focuses upon Tagore's gender oriented views as contained in his short stories ('Profit and Loss', 'A Wife's Letter', 'Haimanti', 'Giribala', 'The Gift of Sight').⁷ Tagore, who was himself quite supportive of traditional ideals of feminine, found it problematic to altogether wipe women away from social sphere. Men were superior, provided the women were subservient- this philosophy did not appeal to Tagore. He strived in his own way to expose the fault lines which exist in our perceptions and behaviour regarding women.

Irona Bhaduri analyses some short stories ('Haimanti', 'Living and Dead', 'Dena Paona', 'Shasti') of Tagore in his research paper which reveals women in extreme situations in the household and they were sort of pushed towards the ultimate step of death.⁸ Tagore not only created many emancipated women characters but also depicted the unyielding reality of the marginalised women of those times. Saikat Banerji, in his research article, shows that Tagore has been very successful in depicting woman psychology. In this paper through Tagore's selected short stories, "Aparichita or Woman Unknown", "Giribala" and "The Laboratory" seeks to investigate the fact that how the thoughts and actions of the woman protagonists in these short stories are unfazed by the male domination or the patriarchal societal norms and finally how through their progressive thought, courage and determination they protect their rights and in the process are emancipated.⁹

Dr. Saikat also analyses Tagore's some short stories in his other research work where he focuses on the female protagonists of the short stories titled, "A Wife's letter" and "Musolmanir Galpo" that how they remained unperturbed although the society in which they lived were dominated by male patriarchal norms and in what ways they have been successful in protecting their rights thereby becoming the champions for women mainly through their progressive thought, courage, and determination.¹⁰ Huda Tufail and Asmat A. Sheikh investigates three of Tagore's short stories ('The Exercise Book', 'The Living and the Dead', 'Subha') to portray the role of patriarchy in the marginalization of women and as a result turning them into subalterns who can't speak for themselves and have no voice of their own.¹¹

Dr. Arindam Modak and Debi Prasad Misra also show patriarchal oppression in the story "Punishment".¹² Prasanna TVN portrayed some revolutionary women characters in his research paper.¹³ Madhumita Roy, in one of his research paper, focuses on three of Tagore's female protagonists- Mrinmayi, Uma and Mrinal from The Conclusion (Samapti), Exercise-Book (Khata) and The Wife's Letter (Streer Patra) to show how their repeated individual scripting are mercilessly thwarted by social interventions.¹⁴ Sanghita Sarkar tries to bring out the fragmented lived-experiences of a woman's life in Bengali community.¹⁵ Her paper aims to explore the differential status of the man and woman in the contemporary Bengali society. The paper also aims to critically

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analyze the effects that this differential status had on the formation of the woman-self and actions of the woman psyche.

Ronald M. Vaughan and Dr. Varsha Saraswat analysed some 'Innovative Women' in three short stories ("The Living and the Dead", "The Gift of Sight", and "Mahamaya") of Tagore.¹⁶ The study presents the women fighting for their equality and freedom and for their voice against the conventional disparaging attitude towards them. Dr. Rashmi Vajpayee portrayed some Tagore's prominent female characters (Binodini, Charulata, Mrinmayi, Mrinal, Kalyani and Kamala) who have multi-dimensional, manifesting strength, power, sharpness, and a deep sense of self-awareness.¹⁷ Dr. Bibhas Chand, in a research article, shows the picture of the evil sides of the dowry system portrayed by Rabindranath Tagore in his short story "Profit and Loss" which is still relevant in contemporary Indian society.¹⁸

In a research paper, Soham Pain delineates a comprehensive presentation of the range and diversity of Tagore's insight into the feminine (Kusum, Nirupama, Kadambini, Chandara, Subha) where the intersections of class and gender are much more pronounced.¹⁹ Alongside the struggles of ladies from aristocratic, the predicaments of ordinary women are also documented with remarkable credibility. A research paper by Gitanjali Roy presents psychological hermeneutic perspectives of some female characters (Binodini, Mrinal, Kalayni, Giribala) for understanding the similarity and differences in the portrayal of females now and decades ago.²⁰ Tagore's literature portrayed female characters with spitfire personalities. Charulata, Kalyani, Binodini, Mrinal, and Giribala are a few such characters who have gained popularity in Bengali literature and media. His female characters are anything but submissive muses to the patriarchal society.

3. RESEARCH GAP AND SAMPLE SELECTION

After reviewing several research papers, it is observed that the researchers try to focus on the role of almost all popular female characters of Tagore (like Nirupama, Kallayni, Mrinal, Kadambini, Shashi, Chandara, Joykaly, Ratan, Giribala, and others) from different angles and perspectives. Among them, some are symbols of settlement without giving any conditions, while others are symbols of revolution. So, I have found a gap to portray two of Tagore's female characters- Chandara from "Punishment" (Shasti in Bengali), and Giribala from "Fury Appeased" (Manbhanjan in Bengali) with respect to their silences, their voices, and their roles as protagonists and subjects of two purposively selected short stories. Among the two short stories analyzed in the research work, one was set in East Bengal when Tagore was nominated to take charge of revenue collection by his family, and the other was in Kolkata. These short stories are translated by a renowned English literary figure, William Radice.²¹ The interposition of women's silence, voice, and their revolt in Tagore's short fiction makes the writings everlasting popularity to all.

4. OBJECTIVE

This research paper will explore how female characters in selected short stories of Rabindranath Tagore inhabit silence, articulate voice, and ultimately constitute themselves as subjects of their own narratives.

5. METHODS

This study based on the exegesis or content analysis method to explore the main texts of Tagore's selected short stories. Books on short stories, articles, dissertations, relevant essays and critical analysis published in journals and other media have been used as the sources of data for this study. A detailed analysis extracted from the sources has been the process of reaching to a conclusion. The data have been studied in three phases: preparation, organisation and reporting. In the first phase, the texts have been carefully pursued to understand in detail. In the second phase, data have been categorised and organised in detail. In the last phase, the research report is prepared on the basis of the data assembled from the sources.

For source citation, the Notes-Bibliography style outlined by Kate L. Turabian (9th Edition- Print) or Chicago Manual of Style (17th Edition- Online) has been followed.

6. DISCUSSION

Rabindranath Tagore's celebrated short story "Punishment" ("Shasti" in Bengali) was published in July 1893 AD. A couple of months earlier, in a letter in 'Chhinnapatrabali' written on May 10, 1893 AD, Rabindranath, in reference to the poor peasants of Shilaidaha, spoke of the socialists 'dividing all the wealth on earth'. And many references to men's oppression of women are scattered throughout Rabindranath's numerous works of this period.²² Bankimchandra, in his book 'Samya', identified two main examples of 'violation of the rule of law'. Firstly, the inequality between farmers and landlords, and secondly, the inequality between men and women.²³ The first can be called economic exploitation and the second social exploitation. In the story "Punishment", both these images of exploitation are realized as a unified and one-sided art. Two brothers from the agricultural 'Rui' family are plagued by exploitation by the landlord. Again, after one of the two brothers kills his wife, the punishment for his crime is imposed on the innocent wife of the other brother. But the story is not divided into two parts as a result of these two plot plans. In fact, as an impeccable creation, "Punishment" by Tagore is also a shining star in the brilliant art world of the story collection.

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In the story "Punishment", we find a strong female character, Chandara. The amazingly skilful way in which she is portrayed is truly incomparable. She has a sense of humour and curiosity about everything in the world. 'She was like a brand-new boat: neat and shapely, gliding with ease, not a loose joint anywhere. Everything amused and intrigued her; she loved to gossip; her bright, restless, deep black eyes missed nothing as she walked to the ghāt, pitcher on her hip, parting her veil slightly with her finger.'²⁴ Rabindranath rarely gives a detailed introduction to the characters' appearances in the manner of a brat. But in the story "Punishment", he has drawn the protagonist Chandara, who is not more than seventeen or eighteen years old, has a plump face, a round body, very long, tight and healthy, and there is such a harmony in her limbs that nothing seems to hinder her from moving around and getting on and off. 'She was buxom, well-rounded, compact and sturdy- so trim in her movements that in walking, turning, bending or squatting there was no awkwardness at all.'²⁵

Chandara does not know how to complain about not getting life; she loves the present life with all the affection of her heart. The instinct to embrace life with all its joys and sorrows, to enjoy it, is strong in Chandara. When she fell victim to the selfishness of men, she did not cry out in a little feminine lament. The strong personality we witness in Chandara as she faces the gallows is, in a word, unparalleled. She, sometimes, is a bit wild; at least she is not in all one of those societies where she can accept the selfish monopolization of men without hesitation as the natural law of society. Her wild fervour makes her aware of the question of equality with her husband. 'Chandara found that her husband used work as an excuse for travelling far and for staying extra days away, yet brought no earnings home. Finding this ominous, she too began to overstep the mark. She kept going to the ghāt, and returned from wandering round the village with rather too much to say about Kashi Majumdar's middle son.'²⁶

Radha fell into the lap of her younger sister-in-law and died not a moment later. 'In the lap of younger sister-in-law' with whom there was so much 'commotion'- she died by clinging to his lap. There is sadness in the language, but how restrained! Chandra screamed in blood-soaked clothes, "What have you done?" Chidam pressed her face. The scene is symbolic: the man has grabbed the woman's face. At that moment, the world is silent. In this way, Rabindranath sharpens the sharpness of the sorrow by calming the tension of the incident. Chidam was able to stop the weak female voice by covering his mouth. In the story of "Elder Sister" (Didi in Bengali), the villagers received the news in the morning that Shashi had died of a contagious disease during the night and that her cremation had been completed that night. It is the primal instinct of living beings to protect themselves by hiding the crime in some way. But when Chidam could no longer hide it from Chakraborty, who was surprised by his tears of sorrow, Chidam suddenly said, "In their quarrel, Choṭobau struck at Baṛobau's head with a farm-knife."²⁷ He did not think of the possibility of 'any other danger' apart from the 'present danger'. He lied to save himself from the 'grim hand of truth', but he didn't realize that 'a lie can be even more terrible'. For now, he took the opportunity to silence Chandara by blaming her.

To escape from the terrible truth or to silence her, Chidam requested Chandara to confess her crime this time. "Chidam asked Chandara to take the blame onto herself. She was dumbfounded. He reassured her, "Don't worry- if you do what I tell you, you'll be quite safe.' But whatever his words, his throat was dry and his face was pale."²⁸ Again, in Chidam's frightened and helpless face, a foreboding of Chandara's fate was captured when he told Ramlochan Babu, 'Thākur, if I lose my wife I can get another, but if my brother is hanged, how can I replace him?'²⁹

The main attraction between Chidam and Chandara was suspicion and distrust towards each other. Once, Chidam told Chandara about the meeting with Kashi Majumdar's son, 'If I ever hear that you've been to the ghat on your own, I'll break every bone in your body.' With natural anger, Chandara said, 'that would be a blessed release.' Then, immediately, Chidam 'grabbed her by the hair and dragged her back to the room and locked her in'. But it is impossible to hold Chandara, who had fled to her maternal uncle's house. With great difficulty he persuaded her to return. Earlier in this way, Chidam tried to silence Chandara but she raised her voice and showed her revolt. Here, her uncontrollable excitement, the nature and crookedness of womanhood had been revealed.

When Chandra was asked by her husband to confess to the murder, the two black eyes of the stunned Chandara started silently burning her husband like black fire. The imagination of black fire is not possible without an exceptionally talented artist. But after Chandara, the amazing image of a 'woman's eyes in black fire' was created again in the poem 'Nandini'. Like Chandara, Nandini's eyes were 'like flickering flames of black light'.³⁰ After the fire of anger and the fire of hunger, this black fire of a woman's black eyes seems to have tried to burn the cowardice of men to ashes. Chandara's entire body and mind gradually contracted and tried to get out of the hands of her 'cruel husband' and all her inner self turned away. She did not listen to the words of Chidam taught by Ramlochan, she sat like a wooden statue.

Chandara has been interrogated a total of four times. Under interrogation by the police, the inspector, the deputy magistrate and finally the judge, Chandara repeatedly said the same thing- she killed her elder sister-in-law without any provocation. The 'stubborn girl/woman' is absolutely leaning towards the gallows, nothing can hold her back- 'what a terrible arrogance!' 'Such an obstinate girl was never seen! She seemed absolutely bent on going to the gallows; nothing would stop her. Such fierce, disastrous pride! In her thoughts, Chandara was saying to herself husband, 'I shall give my youth to the gallows instead of to you. My final ties in this life will be with them.'³¹ It seems that she again said to her husband in mind, "Do you want to throw me away today as a murderer and bring me back tomorrow? I will not return. You have no respect for me, but you are

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greedy, I will not give me into your hands in any way. I left you and took this new youth of mine and welcomed the gallows - my last bond in this life is with him.”³²

When the judge informed Chandara that the punishment for his crime was hanging, she was annoyed and eager to remove herself from this cruel world. Then, she said in a brave voice, “Then please, please give it to me, sir. Do what you like - I can’t take any more.”³³ This life of carrying the memory of her husband’s cowardice that had imposed the blame for the false stigma had become unbearable for Chandara.

When Chidam was brought to the court, Chandara turned her face away in anger and pride; even when the judge ordered Chandara to look at the witness and tell me who that was for her. Chandara did not look at Chidam, but covered her face with both hands and said, “He is my husband.” In response to the judge’s question whether Chidam loves her or not, Chandara also said, “like crazy.” Here, the tone of sarcasm in the sound of expression can be heard as soon as we open our ears. She herself had become a play doll in her in-laws’ house, leaving behind the girl’s play doll. Is being a play doll her ‘virtue’? No, she is now rebelling in her heart-silently observing everything and knowing the time, silently or loudly protesting and answering, showing the strength of her character.

In the final scene, before the execution, the kind civil surgeon of the prison allowed Chandara to see her mother once. We have already seen that she thought of Chidam as a ‘Cannibal Husband’ - Debdas Joardar saw the archetype of Sita from the Ramayana in Chandara’s desire to see his mother for the last time, along with this ‘Cannibal Husband’.³⁴

The landlord punished Dukhi and Chidam, Dukhi punished Radha, and Chidam punished Chandara by unfairly imposing the punishment that Dukhi deserved. In protest of Chidam’s injustice, Chandara strongly rejected Chidam’s desire to see the end and gave Chidam the final punishment by saying ‘To hell with him’ (‘Moron’ in Bengali).

If we think deeply, we will realize that the thought, ‘When love becomes a traitor, then let death be love’, seems to be embedded in the very core of Rabindranath Tagore. Chandara’s “‘to hell with him’ (‘Moron’ in Bengali)” is a single thought that has become an essence and is embedded as a sound of pride, protest, and revenge. It is with this thought that she said to Chidam, ‘in his heart’- ‘I have left you and taken this new youth of mine and accepted the gallows’. The reader has subtly noticed that Chandara was not hanged for murder at all- she voluntarily accepted the gallows with an unwavering heart. Chandara is a rural folk’s idol of the moon goddess Hecate.³⁵

In this story, Tagore delineates a woman with a different kind of revolt. Her protest is indeed exceptional. She challenges the male-oriented society and her victory, through death, lies in the fact that she does not yield to her husband and makes the decisions of her life on her terms. She proves her worth and dignity by accepting death, which indeed has brought liberation and freedom to her in the true sense.³⁶

When the short stories were arranged in different stages in ‘Rabindra Granthavali’ in 1904 (1311 Bangla), “Fury Appeased” (“Manabhanjan” in Bengali) was included in the ‘Rangachitra’ stage.³⁷ Readers and critics attracted by the extraordinary writing style have also questioned whether Rabindranath could have written such a radiant story of sunshine about female power. In the beginning of the story we, the readers observed that Gopinath fell in love with a theatre actress avoiding his beautiful wife Giribala. At this stage, the wife of a noble family is seen to endure everything silently. At times, Giribala is seen sending a maid to monitor her husband’s activities and even raising her voice about her husband’s presence in the house. At the climax of the story, it is seen that Giribala has also adopted the profession of an actress. The ending of the story is filled with laughter and joy as Giribala takes her revenge against her husband’s brutality by becoming a ‘mental follower’ of her husband, and Giribala becomes the sole subject of discussion in the story.

In the story, Gopinath subjects his wife Giribala to extreme and sustained humiliation, having fallen completely under the spell of a theatre actress. So, one evening, Giribala secretly went to the theatre with Sudho, a maid. Coming from the ‘walled, desolate, joyless inner city’ to the lightened, full of people, musically-filled stage, she felt that she had arrived at ‘the edge of some beautifully decorated and festive place’- she began to feel that ‘it was like a dream’. At that moment, dreams and reality had clasped their hands in friendship in Giribala’s mind, as if she had become Radha in her mind and began to feel her own infinite glory. Despite being a neglected, humiliated, and abandoned wife, Giribala decided with a wonderful infatuation that she too had the power to cry so cruelly. The reason why Giribala, despite being largely disillusioned with the loopholes of theatre, cannot escape its allure is that theatre has become a battlefield for her- the only escape route from the prison of life, and she has been able to join the struggle for self-establishment only after being released through that one window.

On the first day, she saw her husband in the theatre, expressing ‘mad excitement’ at the performance of an actress; this is why, instead of feeling sad, a sense of longing arose in her mind. With strong contempt for her husband, Giribala thought with a depressed heart that if such a day ever comes, her husband falls like a burnt- winged moth at her ‘footstool’, and she can radiate neglect from the edge of her own claws and walk away full of arrogance, only then will her failed form and youth find meaning.

Suddenly, one day, Giribala’s opportunity came. Gopinath returned home at midnight. Giribala got up, renouncing all values. Today, she would cry and cry; she would make all his solitary imaginations come true, she would become victorious- this was her firm resolve. But Gopinath was infatuated with the actress in such a way that he took away all the ornaments of Giribala

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on the 'Basanti Purnima' of the month of Chaitra, and humiliated her by kicking her. That was the triumph of a husband to silence a wife or a female. But Giribala is not a silent woman; rather, she raised her voice by saying- 'I'll give you the key and everything it locks, but tonight I shan't let you go out'. When Gopinath rejected the condition, she again said, 'I shan't give you the key'.³⁸

'She thought of killing herself, of tearing to shreds her incomparable beauty, to avenge her loveless state. But she realized that nothing would be gained by that: the world would remain unaffected; no one would feel the loss. There was no pleasure in living, but no consolation in dying.'³⁹ Giribala raised her voice and even rebelled, but she had to be temporarily defeated by Gopinath. Since the girl in the story "The Skeleton," took revenge by poisoning the doctor and then committed suicide herself. The critics say that it is the sweetness of the main emotion of the protagonist, but in the story "Fury Appeased", the satisfaction of anger and peace in taking revenge is the main emotion, so here the sunshine is the main emotion.

Giribala is independent, self-dependent, popular, and spreads an awakening for women folk. She decided to break the tradition of housewife, not sobbing for her loss and taking revenge on her husband by joining the theatre. Tagore, through Giribala, sought the solution for women's oppression, i.e., giving back what people make you go through.⁴⁰ In the article 'Kabi-Sangeet', Rabindranath, as if keeping Giribala in front of his eyes, says, "Those whose true self-respect is strong always disdain to express pride. When their feelings are hurt, they either clearly redress it or silently ignore it."⁴¹ Giribala did not silently ignore it; she clearly redressed it.

In each image of Giribala's description, there is a strong sense of stopping and starting. Only the housewifery that grew up in this circle of keys in her lapel is the chain that holds her back. The day Gopinath wants to take away that circle of keys, there will be no more obstacles for her to disappear freely. Like Charulata of "Nostalgia", the childless Giribala has no work to do in the rich house. She has a husband, but he is beyond her control. 'How did Giribala, despite having grown so fully from childhood to youth, avoid her husband's eyes?' Now she is alone, and despite having many things to say, it is a pity to find a husband to talk to.

In the play 'Manorama' at Gandharva Theatre, Lavanga played Manorama. Gopinath, who was present at almost every performance, would sit in the front row and give her loud applause and throw bouquets on the stage. Finally, one day, after Gopinath entered the green room in a bad mood and severely beat up a performer, the officials of the theatre could not bear it any longer and expelled him with the help of the police. The theatre owners had announced the performance of their new play 'Manorama' with great pomp a month before the Puja. At this time, Gopinath, to avenge his insult, took Lavanga, the lead actress of the play, on a boat and disappeared to an unknown place. The theatre owners were at a loss. Fortunately, after finding a new actress to play the role of Manorama, there is no more room for spectators at the venue. Hundreds of people were turned away from the door. There is no limit to praise on paper. That praise reached Gopinath in a distant land. Just as the jealous Giribala wanted to see the theatre after hearing Gopinath's praise for Lavanga, Gopinath, hearing the praise of this new actress, came to the Gandharva Theatre 'full of hatred and curiosity' to see the performance. This dramatic turn of events is noteworthy. Giribala's abandonment of the family in the month of Chaitra, and her reappearance as a dancer in the following autumn during the Puja. The fact that no news of Giribala reached Gopinath even in these five months is indicative of Gopinath's eccentric, ostracized lifestyle.

Gopinath lost his temper at the suddenness of Giribala's appearance. Gopinath's ultimate defeat was complete amidst the loud delirium of killing Giribala in a broken voice, like a madman. He was expelled from the theatre for the second time. 'The police came and ragged him from the theatre'⁴² under the pressure of the combined public opinion of the audience who were tragically angry at the sudden loss of humour, Gopinath had abandoned Giribala; today, Gopinath is the one abandoned by everyone. Leaving his wife, Gopinath was playing with the actress. The wife also became an actress. 'All of Calcutta continued to feast their eyes on Giribala's performance; all except for Gopinath.'⁴³ In this final sentence of the story, the readers find the victory of female power.

Earlier, we found "Fury Appeased" as a story of sunshine. Its permanent nature is anger. But what Giribala did instead of committing suicide is indeed a self-rejection, but in a deeper sense, isn't this also a self-rejection? What she didn't get in life, she got on stage. But instead of real life, this is a fake life. That is, on the outside of the story, there is the excited joy of a neglected woman, but on the inside, there is a deep cry. The emotion is sunshine but the main transmitter is pathetic. And this is where the story has become a high-class creation compared to the many propaganda stories of women's liberation.

Unfortunately, in our country, namely in Bengal, all kinds of disrespect and injustice done to a wife by her husband have to be tolerated and forgiven. Therefore, there is no doubt that in our society, women are always proud. But it is certainly not beautiful everywhere, because that which reveals the permanent inferiority of anyone can never be beautiful. The rebellion of Giribala in the story is against the 'permanent inferiority' caused by the insult of this loveless marriage. "Whatever the object of love, blindly clinging to the feet of a lover is not called love; it is called mud-slinging. Once the mud has entangled its feet, it does not want to let go, no matter whose feet they are, whether they are of a god or a commoner."⁴⁴ Giribala's true self-respect is so strong that she finally returns the kicks to her husband.

7. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we can say that the author paints two remarkable women in both the stories. In "Punishment", the author presents a dignity-conscious woman, a living protest against the selfishness of men. She voluntarily hangs the noose around her neck - that too is a rebellion, a rebellion against the likes of her selfish husband. From the very beginning, Chandara is aware of her own worth; she does not accept that as a human being she has any less right than her husband. When her husband starts spending the night outside on the pretext of work, she too 'comes home after visiting the neighbourhood and starts explaining a lot to the Kashi Majumdar's son'. In Chandara, Rabindranath Tagore first presented the desire for women's liberation in Bengali literature. The question that arose in Nirupama is fully expressed in Chandara.

We find Chandara in another form in Giribala of "Fury Appeased". The mentality that we observe in Giribala is nothing but the independence and dignity of women in the present era. At the beginning of the story, in the context of describing Giribala's beauty, the author has portrayed her freedom-seeking personality with amazing skill. Sometimes, she suddenly tore a leaf from the tree, raised her right arm to the sky, and flew it into the air. Then her voice rose, her territory spread, and the graceful movement of her arms flew away towards the cloud kingdom in the infinite sky, like an invisible bird freed from its cage. She picked up a lump of clay from the tub and threw it aimlessly; standing tall on her toes, she peeked out at the vast outside world through a hole in the wall. This curiosity about the outside world made her look outward in search of the dignity of her humiliated womanhood. She saw that no matter how much humiliation and shame there was within the confines of family life, a new light had shown outside, the light of liberation. Arriving in that liberated kingdom, Giribala took revenge for the humiliation of her previous life by throwing a sharp, contemptuous look at her husband Gopinath like a flash of lightning. This was like a mockery of the oppressed society on behalf of the entire oppressed, a mockery of the new way of life on the old medieval customs, behaviour and beliefs. There is no doubt that the ideals and beliefs of the Middle Ages would be greatly hurt by Giribala's behaviour. Therefore, at the end of the story, the entire medieval conservatism seems to be rising through Gopinath. He ran away- 'I will kill her', but modern religion did not forgive Gopinath. The day had come for Gopinath to bury his head in the four walls of the old-fashioned house of old-fashioned views and old-fashioned rules. At that time, Gopinath had no place in the new Western lifestyle of Calcutta; but Giribala's self-awareness had value, and his liberation campaign was praised there. Therefore, the audiences of the entire city of Calcutta started watching Giribala's performance.

P. K. Dutta aptly states that Rabindranath's most of the stories dealt with women as individual subjects engaged in negotiating with a problematic relationship in their marriages and with their household, but also women who created alternate life, some of which involved being single.⁴⁵ S. Banerjee found out that the women portrayed in Tagore's stories are both liked and criticized by society but their personalities are magnetic and flamboyant to leave an impression. Why Tagore? His short stories deal with the human mind and behavior, especially women's psychology.⁴⁶

Tagore's stories end with a twist when the reader's curiosity about the story is almost acute. Usually, the tragic end of the central character, very often suicide, is presented by the author in a sentence and says nothing else. These abrupt endings or incompleteness help the writer to show the continuous flow of life and make the reader think over problems of life. Having read the end of the current two stories, the readers feel that though that was the end, the story did not end there. The pathos of the stories is transplanted into the minds of the readers and it remains there in some corner of their hearts till their death. Therein lies the beauty of pathos, which only a few geniuses like Tagore can create.

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