

The Varied Aspects of Feminine in Tagore's Philosophical Paradigm

Anindita Mukherjee

Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy,
Bangabasi College, Kolkata

Abstract

The paradigm of the great poet and Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore's philosophical thinking can never be overlooked or disregarded. In his literature, women have been depicted repeatedly in different guises, in different forms. Feminism is an indispensable part of the scope of philosophy as well as Rabindranath's philosophy. The main topic of this article is to discuss the contemporary relevance of women in Rabindranath's thinking from the perspective of feminism in philosophy.

Around the world, feminist movements were developed as a means of fighting against women's oppression in the 19th century. The essence of women reverberates the fact that there is no inherent difference between men and women, other than the sole difference of the biological one - and throughout the ages, activists accepting this view have been regarded as liberal feminists and those who don't accept it are called moderate feminists. Although Rabindranath, on one hand, has presented us with the notion of the modern woman, on the other hand, he has also prioritized the amelioration of such women as well. But simultaneously a question arises regarding whether his notions about women should be accepted as progressive or regressive ones.

Various female characters in Rabindranath's poems, plays, and works of literature, novels, songs, and short stories have created an irresistible curiosity for today's feminist consciousness. A question still lingers - among these female characters, who are being regarded as the ideal women or the free women, and more importantly, why? The illustration of women's thought processes in his literature goes through their characteristic interpretations with the evolution of time and cements their entire being as the narrative progresses.

Keywords: Rabindranath, Literature, Feminist movement, Bengali Culture

Introduction

Rabindranath is one of the greatest propagators of Bengali culture. Till today, only he has been able to establish Bengali culture and literature to reach its pinnacle. His span of life encompassed the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the twentieth century. At this time, the evolution of modernity had already hit India as well as the whole world. Some people who were excited by such new ideas and new ways of thinking wanted to move forward by shaking off old prejudices. On one hand, Tagore was moved by this trend and on the other hand, he also felt somewhat confused. This fluctuation in Tagore's life had an effect on his literary creation. The concept of 'Woman' appears in Rabindranath's literature in various ways; it is sometimes portrayed as the role of a mother or inspirer or sometimes only as a beautiful loving being or sometimes it is even accepted as *Kalyāni*. Sometimes a woman is modern whereas sometimes she is silent as well as introverted. When we discuss these different forms of women in respect of the eyes of the poet, there naturally arises a handful of specific questions about the position of women in that era. Including this, we might observe different pictures of the position of women in different eras as well.

Place of women and feminist movement in the Pre-Tagorean era

Historically and religiously, women were relatively highly established in the pre-Vedic period. Also, in Greek and Roman civilization, women had high status. In that period women along with men used to participate in various religious and social events and they used to take part in the study of the *Vedas* as well. This example was also found in our *R.g Veda* which itself proves that women had equal power and rights to men in attaining higher education at that time. It is also known from the *R.g Veda* that in the pre-Vedic period the higher social establishment was also supportive of women. But in the later Vedic period the position of women in higher social circumstances was greatly reduced. So, in the later Vedic period, it can be said that women were no longer treated equally to men. They did not even get the same rights and privileges as men. They used to participate in various social functions with men only as silent spectators and not as active participants. According to Manu, men in that era had uncontested authority over women. At that time anti-social practices like child marriage, polygamy, and *sati-dāha* were prevalent. However, in the fifteenth century, the status of women began to change somewhat. During some of the movements of that time, women's equal rights and equal social establishment were talked about. In terms of the contemporary period, the position of women was relatively good at that time. However, if we review the overall aspect, it can be said that during the Vedic period women had fewer privileges than men. But, in modern times, the position of a woman is better than it was in bygone times.

During the period of the East India Company, many social reformers such as Raja Rammohan Roy, Vidyasagar and Jyotiba Phule did many movements to improve

the social status and empowerment of women's education. Pyaricharan Sarkar established the first school for girls in Calcutta in 1847. At that time, with the help of Lord Bentinck, Raja Rammohan Roy was able to abolish the practice of *satidāhaprathā* in 1829, and with the help of Vidyasagar, the Widow's marriage Act was implemented by him in 1856. Even the women social reformers such as Rani Lakshmibai and her companions also struggled for women's empowerment. Rani Lakshmibai was one of the important characters who fought against British oppression to save her kingdom. At that time women were seen as capable of having equal power to men. Except for Rani Lakshmibai, there were also a few other important female characters at that time such as Annie Besant, Aruna Asaf Ali, and Sarojini Naidu.

We get to observe different kinds of views about the Western concept of 'women'. The famous philosopher Plato accepted, "Thank God he made me a man instead of a woman" – from this quote, it is not difficult to guess the exact position of women at that time. In its entirety, it has portrayed a typical patriarchal society. Aquinas referred to women as "imperfect men". Patriarchal societies have relegated women all over the world. In most cases, they wanted to show their bravery. But in that primeval time of creation, God has created two streams of life just like male and female and both of them cannot be stopped by each other. If we look into our history it can be seen that women have expressed themselves in various ways by uprooting the dominance of men and as a result, feminist movements were developed as a means of fighting against women's oppression in the 19th century. The essence of a woman reverberates the fact that there is no inherent difference between men and women, other than the sole difference of the biological one - and throughout the ages, activists accepting this view have been regarded as liberal feminists and those who don't accept it are called moderate feminists.

Role of women in Tagore's house and the thinking of women in Rabindranath's Philosophy

In Rabindranath's Jorasanko house, there was an atmosphere of women's empowerment including the freedom of women. Rabindranath's talent developed through this type of environment. Rabindranath's poetic life was fulfilled and his personality was developed by the arrival of Kadambari Devi at the age of seven. His *MejoBouthan* was already educated with modern education and manners. These types of education also influenced Tagore's house. For example: in Rabindranath's '*Europe - Pravasir Patra*', we have seen many instances of women's freedom in *Thakurbari*.

In Tagore's house, there were many arguments about the freedom of women. In terms of the progressiveness of a woman, there were so many differences within the household. The special reason for Rabindranath's progress was the influence of Satyendranath, Jñādanandini, Jyotirindranath, and Kadambari Devi. The new

era of Bengal was also embarked from the *Thakurbari* only. Along with men, girls also went to practice dancing, rode horses in the fields, studied at schools, wrote books, painted pictures, published books, and served their country. Tagore's elder sister, Swarnakumāri was the first significant female writer in Bengali literature. Jñādanandini Devi has been a stalwart in the activities regarding liberating girls by ignoring all the obstacles. Her journey to the LaalBhavs, her solo voyages, and her overseas travels were instances of true extraordinary in the then society. She was also the first woman to teach Bengali girls the new way of wearing sarees. Next, Swarnakumāri Devi, the brightest astrologer of the Tagore family, was a contemporary thinker of Bankimchandra. She was also equally praiseworthy for her endeavors to uplift women in her own ways. Even, novels written by Kusumkumari and Saratkumari Devi were praised profusely by phenomenal personas like Bankimchandra and Vidyasagar.

The main aim of the Renaissance was Humanism. The feminist movement in Western culture was one of the aspects of this renaissance. This influence of the West has started to fall in our country including Kolkata and other cities and their adjacent rural society. Even in the first half of the 20th century, this country was unable to maximize women's freedom. At various stages of the Tagorean era, education started to spread in this country and the light of education amongst women became a means of developing their thoughtfulness, self-intelligence, and the brilliance of modernity. Rabindranath and the Western culture could not keep themselves away from the influence of the phenomenon of women's liberation.

Rabindranath's philosophy of women is apparently compatible with liberal feminists. Rabindranath had tried to present women at the crossroads of modernity but he had also prioritized women's welfare and motherly behaviors as well. But here a question arises: is thinking about women a progressive or regressive act in its entirety? Or whether it should be granted as something divisional or self-contradictory? He initially got involved in various arguments on the question of 'women' with Saraladevi or Krishnabhamini Devi. At this time, in his writings, he repeatedly asked for the '*Kalyānimurthy*' of the woman who is desired by several men and has been presented as the ideal image of women in general. But later he made the transition of women to '*Sabala*'ⁱ Here he writes -

“Why should you not let women empowered be
With right to conquer her own destiny”ⁱⁱ

On the other side of his idea of women's emancipation is short stories like '*Laboratory*' or novels like '*Chaturanga*' and there is also '*Chitrāngada*'ⁱⁱⁱ:

“I am not the one you hail in the altar, worshipping,
Nor am I the one you keep behind you, in negligence.
Once you recognize my essence, keeping me beside you
Amid your deep hours of crisis,

Allowing me to be a true partner in your life's journey,
A true accomplice in your missions,
Only then you will know my true self'.

The Status of Women in the Novels of Rabindranath Tagore

The first thing that becomes noticeable in Rabindranath's works of literature is that he has shown various aspects of women in his novels. In *Rabindra Katha*, Women become important characters in his literature. On the one hand, Rishi Bankimchandra has shown the importance of a patriarchal society over the feminist movement, but Rabindranath's female characters are nothing alike. They were shining in their own pride. Rabindranath in his novel '*Yogayog*' (1929) highlighted the grosser story of the *Bonediana* aristocracy. In this story, Kumudini and Madhusudan are entangled in their marital turmoil and its consequences have affected the primary part of his thinking at large. Here we could see that Kumudini was influenced by her elder Vipradas. In this particular psychological background, Rabindranath has beautifully portrayed Kumudini. '*ChokherBali*' is Rabindranath's first worthwhile modern social novel. 'Asalata' and 'Binodini' have beautifully brought out their contrasting characteristics. Here he has shown that a child widow Binodini was affected by men and this notion of Rabindranath became a revolutionary one. Binodini's personality took the form of a strong woman in the imagination of the poet. On the other hand, Rabindranath has also decorated her as '*Swami Sohagini*', and '*KalyaniMurti*' in this world. Through the character of Binodini, the repressed desires of women have been revealed. But keeping in mind the social system of that time, he finally reduced Binodini's character to choosing a single and simple life. She did not marry either Mahendra or Behari. At the conclusion of this novel, Binodini says –

'Oh, for shame, even the thought is shameful. I am a widow, I am tarnished, I shall bring dishonour to your name in the eyes of society—no, no, this cannot happen. For pity's sake, never say these words again.'^{iv}

At the end of this novel we can see Mahendra going back to Asha and Bihari choosing an ordinary bachelor life to move on. Ignoring the heat of life, socializing, keeping in mind the public shame, and restraining the needs of youth, he portrayed Binodini as a moderate woman.

We observe the characteristics of a unique woman in the novel '*GhareBaire*' (1916). Set against the backdrop of the Swadeshi movement, in this novel Tagore conducted specific experiments on the nuances of women's progress or women's freedom. However, the question arises how many women, even in this era are ready to protect or ready to achieve their freedom? It is more difficult than accepting or adapting to become a unique personality while maintaining their individuality in the environment.

The female character of the said novel is Bimala. She presents herself as a motivator to her calm and reserved husband Nikhilesh. On the other hand, Sandeep has won Bimala's heart in the guise of a maddened national servant. To him, Bimala has caught herself as the bee queen of lust. The character Bimala is an independent woman who believes in individual freedom. Rabindranath has created two contradictory counterparts in the character of Bimala. Hence, in the 20th century, the character Bimala has therefore become the representative of women of this era. Due to the attraction of Sandeep's fake world, she has to leave the bonds of the house and step into the outside world but finally, she has to come back to Nikhilesh. So, we have seen women's education, and women's freedom have emerged in different ways in the character of Bimala.

In the novel '*Chaturanga*' (1915) Rabindranath further condensed the mystery of life by creating a female character like Damini. Through this novel, the psychological conflict between Sachish-Damini's romantic relations has been revealed slowly. Rabindranath painted Damini with the colors of rebellion and beauty:

“*Damini* means lightning and Damini was like the lightning thunderous monsoon clouds. Her outward form brimmed with youthful vitality; and in her soul danced a restless flame”^v |

In this novel, Damini is not afraid of the flashes of lightning, or stormy clouds. To her, the pursuit of religion is not something boring but is a fun practice to win a heart. So it is very desirable for Damini to bind Sachish bodily, mentally, and affectionately. On the other hand, Sachish is a different person. Even though he loved Damini, he could not accept her. So Damini had to go back to Srivilas. Through the character of Damini, Rabindranath wanted to make the love of a widow an inevitable part of the existence of femininity. Damini's love for Sachish has also been shown to be subordinated by family surroundings. Thus, in the penultimate stage of the novel, Damini who was brilliant and controversial for her femininity alludes to Srivilas on her deathbed, quoting:

“My longings are still with me. I go with the prayer that I may find you again in my next life”^{vi}

And thus the story of this novel comes to its final ending. Rabindranath in one of his finest novels, *Sheser Kabita* (1929), portrays Labanya as a character whose love story with Amit has been portrayed from a materialistic point of view. Labanya is a woman who dreams of a kind of surreal romantic love. To keep their love eternal, she was even able to refuse Amit's marriage proposal. The reason is that: “...this is no place for us, we are rather bound within the sacred seven rites for eternity”^{vii} and Lavanya is very much aware of the same.

By refusing Amit, Labanya remained to be an entity with an abundant effluxion of love. At that time the character Lavanya has become every man's dream and

the results of which are somewhat prevalent even today. Labanya is someone who, even after putting aside the charms of Sobhanlal's world can immerse in the ocean of Amit's love and assert:

“Whatever I gave you
It is now your absolute possession.
What I have to give now
Are the hourly offerings from my heart?
You are incomparable, you are rich!
Whatever I gave you
It was but your gift
You made me so much indebted
As much as you took.
My friend, farewell!”^{viii}

So, Labanya is a unique example in Bengali literature based on the concept of platonic love.

The last novel of Rabindranath was '*Char Adhyaya*' (1934). He presented the character of Ella in this novel with a combination of rational modern-mindedness with the grace of an unscientific spirit. It is not unknown to Ella that the difference between men and women is not only physiological. Ella is the epitome of a liberal feminist and that is why Rabindranath echoed in Ella's voice,

“I cannot deceive myself, Antu. Insulted by nature since birth, we enter the world as little more than vectors of a biological imperative. By the cunning use of the guile and witchery that nature has armed us with, we can cheaply ascend thrones that we do not truly deserve.”^{ix}

He has sown simultaneously the seeds of eternal love and patriotism in Ella's character. So Ella's love for Atin has been transformed from particular to universal. This woman was built up with logic and the spirit of patriotism; so finally, she broke all the rules and immersed herself in the concepts of individual love. Thus Ella's love for Atin seems to be more desirable than her country and ideals.

In the novel *Gora* (1910), Pareshbabu's daughter Lalita, who belongs to the Brahmo society, was oppressed by both her generous father and opinionated mother Bardasundari. As a result, she grew up to be a very stubborn character and is shown to be jealous of her father's friend's foster daughter Sucharita, who was of a calm disposition, gentle and steady. Through this female character, Tagore has mixed a complicated friendly relationship with a brilliant and arrogant woman. In this novel, we have seen the characterization of two different kinds of women in our enlightened society - Lalita and Sucharita, revealed by their strange and contradictory characteristics. Lalita's love for Vinay which was born out of

various moods, changes and intensifies with time. On the other hand, Sucharita's various initial setbacks lead to the full culmination of love and individuality. Sucharita went through a deep love but she kept it in her hesitant heart and was reluctant to express her love whereas Lalita was able to express her love unreservedly.

The Existence of Women in Tagore's short stories

Even in Rabindranath Tagore's short stories, various female characters have maintained their individuality in different ways. Not only have they always shown the courage to oppose the patriarchal social system, but even after having a mere veiled presence in the household, they have also become the true consorts of men in ways more than one. The inherent meaning of a marital relationship between a man and woman is the mutual sharing of emotional and social equilibrium. The patriarchal society in many cases is but a hindrance. A narrow-minded and parsimonious man often tends to forget the sweetness of marriage in the battle of ego and considers women to be nothing but a pet kept to be controlled by his own whims. One such story dealing with this delicate subject is Rabindranath's '*Strir Patra*' (1914)^x. A fountain breaks through solid rock; likewise, Mrinal of '*Strir Patra*' made a vocal debut ignoring the flimsy cover of brickwork and asserted: 'I too shall live, I am living'^{xi}. Mrinal, who is enriched with a modern tasteful personality, is therefore not only revealed to be a complete woman but also becomes a human being with a fine concoction of sense and sensibilities. Rabindranath has developed this Mrinal character with some creative talent. This quality is independent of its own:

“And I had something else, outside all the domestic duties of your household, something that none of you knew. Secretly I wrote poems. No matter if it was all rubbish; at least there the boundary wall of the inner compound could not stop me. There lay my freedom, there I could be myself. Whatever it was in me that kept your Mejo-Bou detached from your family, you didn't like it, didn't even recognize it; in all these fifteen years none of you ever found out that I was a poet.”^{xii}

Rabindranath illustrated the character Mrinal with his poetic extraordinaire. He has brought out the rebellious nature in Mrinal's character as well.

In the story, '*Nashtanir*' (1902) Rabindranath portrays men's negligence towards women. In this story, Charulata's husband Bhupati is so busy with official duties that the presence of his wife often escapes his mind. At that time, Amal's presence created a storm in Charulata's life, but Amal also had to leave Charulata to pursue his career and establish himself. Abandoned by two men, Charulata is left destitute and lonely. Such a cruel picture of patriarchy is really rare in Bengali literature.

In Tagore's literature, the tragic consequences of the dowry system can be seen in his various stories. '*Durbuddhi*' is one of them. The curse of this dowry system in women's life is shown by the poet in the case of Nirupama, Haimanti, Kalyani in the story '*Dena Paona*', '*Haimanti*', '*Aparichita*' respectively. Nirupama had to die because she had failed to pay the dowry money. Haimanti's self-respecting married life becomes cursed in the light of women's education. Similarly, Kalyani had to accept eternal virginity by standing against the dowry system. The female education trend started sometime around then, but they had been humiliated many times for their education. Uma in the story '*Mata*' was also insulted by her elder brother because of her passion for education.

Through the character of Giribala in '*Manbhanjan*' (1895), Rabindranath showed the extraordinary ability of women to take revenge on the patriarchal system. The daring Giribala becomes an indomitable protesting power in Rabindranath's fiction. The title character of the story '*Mahamaya*' (1892) is a mysterious woman from Kulina. Mahamaya becomes the paradigm of female beauty and personality. Rabindranath's opposition to the patriarchal system is reflected in the character of Mahamaya. Harsundari in the story '*Madhyavartini*' (1893) became an outstanding female character standing against various tortures, exploitation, and the evil claws of patriarchy. Moreover, the character Shashi in the story '*Didi*' (1894) becomes an invaluable character in the light of femininity and motherhood and in the story '*Shasti*' (1893) there is also mentioned the character of '*Chhotabau Chandana*'. Female figures like these remain to subvert patriarchy and become self-sacrificing strong entities as well.

In the story of '*Minu*' from '*Lipika*', a bride from a rural background has to constantly endure the tyranny of patriarchy. She had to bear the pain of losing her child and endure various tortures. In '*Badnam*', Soudamini is pictured as a patriotic woman. Soudamini did not hesitate to come forward to protect her husband's dignity.

So, the female characters in Rabindranath's short stories are to be found sometimes modern, sometimes rational and somewhere in between all these they are gradually progressive. Again they are benevolent, loving, and respectful of all social values. They are unique in the light of women's rights, femininity, and motherhood.

Variant Personalities of Women in Tagore's Drama

Tagore's works of esoteric excellence portray the depth of his female characters and illustrate the nuances of female agency and expressions, acting as the mouthpieces of acute artistic vitality as well as a dichotomy of consent and confinement. The present paper will throw light on a few such works and will vividly depict Tagore's female characters that act as a centrifugal force in most of his works. The most renowned of such works is '*Chitrangada*' (1892) wherein

after being raised by her father as a man, *Chitrangada*, the warrior princess of Manipur, finds her suppressed feminine desires rekindled after she meets *Arjuna* and desires him as a husband. To enamor *Arjuna*, *Chitrangada* seeks the blessings of *Vasanta* and the God of love, *Madana*, who grants her the *Mohiniroopi*.i.e. exquisite beauty, and thus she finally charms *Arjuna*, marrying him shortly after. However, mortified by the burden of such a borrowed exterior, *Chitrangada* finds herself stuck in the contrariety of desire and disguise. Appalled, she strived for her true identity and agency, further desiring to be loved by *Arjuna* for her true self. Tagore's *Chitrangada* stands at the crossroads of feminine desires and the exploration of one's true self - one who tried to eke out the meaning of being loved for who one truly is, rather than taking part in the process of love as a mere perfunctory gesture. Mired in the quotidian aspects of her existence, *Chitrangada* bemusedly asks the greater questions, "What is beauty; what is love; what is the true and ending basis of man-woman relationship?"^{xiii} Thus, *Chitrangada* herself becomes the microcosm of the *Modern Woman*- one who lets women think beyond the compass of their myopic ideologies and claim their agency without paying heed to a superfluous exterior.

Almost a hundred years after the publication of *Chitrangada*, feminist studies have gone through countless alterations and diversification thus leaving the character of *Chitrangada* to be studied under a broader lens of female agency and further inclusivity. To discuss *Chitrangada's* character, it is essential to understand her predilection towards her duties as the matriarch of the state, performing the part of a ruler to utmost perfection, so much so that to her people she was.^{xiv}

In *Raktakarabi* (1926), Tagore's attempt to provide a smart smack on the facade of the then society regarding the stereotypical representation of femininity as emotive and frail presented an alternate narrative where women are portrayed as the sustainers of society. In this drama, beyond the boundaries of mere grace and beauty, *Nandini* becomes the centrifugal force who dares to challenge the supreme King of the *Yakshapuri* who lives hidden behind a clandestine "network of intricate pattern". She braves the existing patterns of the unforgiving *Yakshapuri* and learns to both pity and loathe and supreme ruler. "*Nandini* is a sign of Love and Happiness."^{xv} On the other side "*Ranjan* is a sign of youth and happiness"^{xvi} The drama vividly depicts how arrogance and fragile masculinity crumble the innate warmth of a man's nature and thus leave a woman to be the sustainer of society - one who makes the society a unified whole by amalgamating the different sects of the society; one who can love all and be loved by all, irrespective of standard or stature. Shedding the cocoon of a traditional female character, *Nandini* becomes an active participant in the process of prosperity and amelioration - thereby paving the way for greater enrichment, simultaneously inspiring the other characters around her such as the King, *BishuPagla*, *Palawan*, and *Kishore Ranjan*. This drama encapsulates the aspect

of female existence which is characterized by stereotypical traits and socially moderated qualities of a feminine identity.

Tagore composed the stupendous *Visarjana* as an aftermath of being inspired by the first part of his 1887 drama namely *Rajarshi*, the plot of the former however, he claimed, had appeared to him in a dream. In the backdrop of Tripura, this drama illustrates the warring state of the two opposing casts of *Bramhanas* and *Kshatriyas* wherein animal sacrifice plays a pivotal part throughout the entire narrative. The drama portrays the polemic viewpoints of King *Govindamanikya* who wants to get rid of the inhuman practice of animal sacrifice and the head priest *Raghupati* who repudiates the king's pleas to maintain the sanctity of the sacred ceremonies. Amidst such a fiasco, Tagore presents the characters of *Aparna* and *Jaysingha* who find themselves falling in love with each other and eventually *Aparna* becomes the symbol of pure love and devotion. Devoid of any superstition or the shackles of ignorance, *Aparna* appears to be a rebellious female character who believes that motherhood is synonymous with compassion and nurture and thus it is in her companionship that *Jaysingha* experiences true love and eventually sheds his superstitious nature.^{xvii}

Tagore's 1910 drama *Raja* portrays the life of a King who lives in recluse and even seldom visits his queen *Sudarshana* who eventually becomes restless for the King's visits in the darkened dome. However, Tagore illustrates how *Sudarshana*'s concept of love is based on the tangibility of the physical realm and thus she fails to see how she has always tried to look for the King in the 'External' rather than looking for him in the interior realms of existence. Inspired by the notions of the *Upanishads*, Tagore illustrates how love becomes the be-all, end-all philosophy of man's life and how the path of love is seldom elegant. In the end, *Sudarshana* submits to the all-encompassing love of the King and finds the true sense of devotion in the form of her lover. She sheds the superfluous demarcations of 'love' and 'loving' and welcomes the notions of tenderness and reality.^{xviii} The realization of the true essence of love achieved by the perilous states of separation and relinquishment enriches the character of *Sudarshana* into a woman who explores the nuances of love most barely.

Tagore's *Bansuri* (1933) depicts the life of a woman who holds a university degree and is presented as the prototype of the modern woman. In his earlier works, Tagore portrayed his women as illiterate or less educated but with the passage of time, they bloomed into the quintessential modern women of the then society and thus went past the manacles of the worn out ideas and the set standardizations as well. Gradually the women became one with the society and contributed to the establishment of a progressive surrounding in unison with men and thereby proved to be individual's worthy of claiming their own agency. *Bansuri* revolves around the characters of *Sushma*, *Shomshankar*, *Sanyasi Purandar*, and *Bansuri* herself, whose modernity calls for a closer study wherein

it is revealed that her ability to question societal norms and her restraint in her devotion to her lover is an illustration of a complete woman - one who dares to question and who dares to go beyond the set standardizations of society. Tagore reiterates how such exceptional women can only be cherished by exceptional men and thereby exercises coexistence in a more profound manner.^{xix}

Concluding Remarks of Tagore's Literature

Rabindranath Tagore's writings repeatedly mention women's suffering and humiliation. His eyes reflect the picture of the undignified agony of his daughter Madhurilata's last days. The insults of other girls were not hidden from the poet's perspective. While walking on the banks of river Padma, the bonds, the liberation, the insults, and the protests of girls living in the country or abroad were caught in his eyes. That is why in his writings we find such echoes:

“I am a woman, I am queen!
My song is twinned with the veena
Of the moonbeams of the sleepless moon
Without me
The rising and evening star would be of no use
The blossoming of flowers
In the garden would be no use too”^{xx}

We find another manifestation of women's liberation in the flow of *Nandini's* character in '*Raktakarabi*'. We have seen how the female character of Tagore's dance drama '*Tasher Desh*' (*The Land of Cards*) Haratani' asserts - “But for someone who regards even the courtyard beyond her room as an alien land”^{xxi}, and comes forward at the prince's call. Shailabala in the story of '*Chirakumar Shava*' despises the conservative social system. Shailabala perched herself in an equal position with men in a patriarchal society. Apurba fell in love with Mrinmayi's masculine nature as he could not accept the notions of conservatism. Sohini of the novel '*Laboratory*' does not hesitate to sell herself to protect her creation from her love for her husband. These female characters have created an irresistible curiosity in today's feminist consciousness. However, in the end, a question still arises - in Tagore's literary stratosphere, Damini or Mrinal, Ela or Bimala, Haratani or Shailabala, who among these women is a worthy role model for women's liberation? There might be a handful of debates and discussions regarding the same but in reality, nevertheless, all these remarkable women created by Tagore, being individually stupendous with brimming self-confidence and self-esteem, continue to inspire and enrich us in our own lives and literature along with teaching us the importance of overstepping the set boundaries of the society and claiming one's own agency for the fulfillment of the ideas of liberation and empowerment in its entirety.

Notes and References

1. Lal Malashri (Edited by), *TAGORE AND THE FEMININE: A JOURNEY IN TRANSLATIONS*, Sage <https://www.telegraphindia.com/opinion/thoroughly-equal/cid/1436150>
2. Lal Malashri, Rabindranath Tagore, "Woman Empowered"/ "Sabala: Tagore and the feminine: A journey in translations, Edited by Malashri Lal, [Telegraphindia.com/opinion/thoroughly-equal/cid/1436150#](https://www.telegraphindia.com/opinion/thoroughly-equal/cid/1436150#)
3. <https://learningandcreativity.com/rabindranath-tagore-chitrangada-english-translation-part-v-vi/>
4. Contributors Sreejata Guha, Kaiser Haq, Hiten Bhaya, Maloshree Sandel, *THE TAGORE OMNIBUS*, Volume 1, ch 52 Penguin Classics, Penguin Random House India, 2005, pp 242,
5. Trans. By Haq Kaiser, *Rabindranath Tagore: Quartet (Chaturanga)*, Heinemann, 1993, pp 30, ISBN 0435 95086 X
6. Trans. By Haq Kaiser, *Rabindranath Tagore: Quartet (Chaturanga)*, Heinemann, 1993, pp 93, ISBN 0435 95086 X
7. Tagore Rabindranath, Seshar Kobita (Transcription) Rabindrarachanaboli, 9th part, Sardhosotoboshosangskoron, Paschimbanga Bangla Academy, pp 759. ISBN 978-81-7751-231-1
8. <https://lyricstranslate.com/en/%C5%9B%C4%93%E1%B9%A3%C4%93rakabit%C4%81-last-poem.html>
9. Tagore Rabindranath, *Char Adhyaya*, (Transcription) Bengali Year 1934, pp 24
10. GuptaPrasenjit, English edition *A Wife's Letter*, Parabaas, 2009
11. <https://parabaas.com/translation/database/translations/stories/gStreerPatra1.html>
12. <https://parabaas.com/translation/database/translations/stories/gStreerPatra1.html>
13. Kripalani Krishna, Rabindranath Tagore – A Biography, Visva Bharati, 1980, pp143.
14. Tagore Rabindranath, Rabindrarachanaboli-5, WB Govt. Chitrangada, pp. 268.
15. Bandopadhyay Kanak, Rabindranather Tottwanatok Pub: S Banerjee 1372 b,Pp 178 (Author's Translation)
16. Bandopadhyay Kanak, Rabindranather Tottwanatok Pub: S Banerjee 1372b, Pp.200 (Author's Translation)
17. Tagore Rabindranath, Rabindra Natya Sangraha 1st Part, Kolkata, Biswabharati Granthan Bibhag, pp 264-66
18. Tagore Rabindranath, Rabindra Natya Sangraha 1st Part, Kolkata, Biswabharati Granthan Bibhag, pp 745-47

19. Tagore Rabindranath, Rabindra Rachanaboli 6, WB Govt. Bansuri, pp 386-87
20. Dasgupta Sanjukta Translator of In Memoriam Smaran and Palataka Rabindranath Tagore, Published by Sahitya Academy, 2020, ISBN 978-93-90310-27-2, pp: 28
21. Translated from the Bengali by Radha Chakraborty and Introduction by Mahasweta Devi, *Rabindranath Tagore: The Land of Cards*, Published in puffin by Penguin Books, India, 2010, Scene 4, pp: 86